Research Notes on
Rebirth in Mainstream Buddhism:
Beliefs, Models, and Proofs

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Much has been said and written on the subject of rebirth and karma by traditional Buddhist preachers and scholars as well as by modern researchers. The following pages do not claim to bring any substantial contribution. In line with the editorial policy of this journal, I have just strung together some research notes made over the years. They are far from comprehensive, and the bibliographical material is minimum. If there is anything remotely deserving the name of 'contribution', then this is Section 3.2. (at least some parts of it) dedicated to the rebirth proofs adduced by Āryaśūra in the *Brahmajātaka*.

Apart of an overview of the topic, I also hope that these pages can help remind us that rebirth (automatically associated by the tradition with the law of karma) is a key tenet of utmost importance for pre-modern Buddhists. This is all too obvious for anyone familiar with the canonical sources and history of Buddhism. It appears, however, to be conveniently skipped over in many New Age discourses and presentations watered down to suit our Zeitgeist.[1] Compared to other palatable doctrines, rebirth is indeed a topic hard to pitch to modern audiences. Yet, it arguably is as central as the belief in God in the Abrahamic religions.

The following passage from the *Triṃśikāvijñaptibhāṣya* (*Commentary on the Demonstration of Representation-only in Thirty Stanzas*) by Sthiramati (c. 480-550) eloquently speaks for the centrality of rebirth and karma in Buddhism.[2] Sthiramati states,

> Faith […] refers to the firm conviction (*abhisampratyaya*), the serene acceptance (*prasāda*)[3] of the mind, the [sincere] aspiration (*abhilāṣa*) [directed] at the [law of] act (*karman*) and fruition (*phala*), the [four Noble] Truths (*satya*), and the [three] Jewels (*ratna*).

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[1] I have nothing against New Age approaches and re-interpretations of Buddhist philosophy in a modern key. On the contrary! I think they should be as bold and creative as they choose to be. Such creativity is not only in tune with the paradigm of our times but also helps Buddhism develop as a living system of ideas and practices. What I feel rather objectionable is that (quite?) a few modernising approaches present themselves as faithful reflections of the traditional Buddhist doctrines and practices. Boldness should, I believe, be also directed at the admission that our modern adaptations, or at least part of them, may depart from the historically attested corpus of teachings and praxis.

[2] For Sthiramati's dating, see Deleanu 2019, 19-22.

[3] Skt. *prasāda* can also be translated as 'clear acceptance'.

(*śraddhā* […] *karmaphalasatyaratneṣv abhisampratyayaḥ prasādaś cetaso 'bhilāṣaḥ. Triṃśikāvijñaptibhāṣya* 76.6-7).

Admittedly, Sthiramati is a representative Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda thinker, but his definition transcends narrow doctrinal borders between the Śrāvakayāna and Mahāyāna. There are quite a few common concepts and motifs running throughout the entire Buddhist history, but unfortunately, the tradition has left nothing approximating the Nicene Creed. If history had been different, and a common statement of belief had been adopted by a unified Buddhist Synod, I venture to surmise that the three pillars of faith outlined by Sthiramati would have been included.

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The following notes have been arranged under three headings: beliefs, models (or mechanisms), and proofs. They answer three of basic questions which any serious philosophical tradition has to answer: 'what' (statements and definitions), 'how' (mechanisms and relations between ideas), and 'why' (proofs and criteria for the arguments made). These questions/answers also represent degrees of philosophical refinement. It is easier to state an idea than to describe its functioning. And it is less challenging to provide a functional mechanism than to prove its veracity. Indeed one can speak of a mature philosophical system only when a coherent edifice of demonstration and argumentation has been perfected. In this sense, Buddhism has reached its maturity.

Contents
1. Beliefs: Wandering from one life to another
2. Models: How does it happen?
3. Proofs: Corroborating by simile and logic

1. Beliefs: Wandering from one life to another

1.1. Origins of the rebirth belief

The origins of the rebirth-cum-karma paradigms in Buddhism, Jainism, and Hinduism remain obscure and controversial. Prestigious Vedic scholars like Toshifumi Gotō (2009) and Junko Sakamoto-Gotō (2015), for example, stress the continuity of the Vedic beliefs

in afterlife into the Buddhist model of rebirth. The latter, however, is not to be found as such in early Vedic literature. Aptly capturing the priorities of the Vedic model, Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty remarks that '[t]he theory of rebirth does not appear in the Vedas; but the theory of re-death appears at a very early stage indeed' (1983 [1980], 3).

On the other hand, equally prestigious Indologists like Johannes Bronkhorst (2007, 73ff.) stress the non-Brahmanic origin of the rebirth-cum-karma model whose roots go to the religious traditions of the *śramaṇa*s or 'ascetics' in the so-called Greater Magadha region, i.e. the lower plains of the Ganges. These traditions or elements originating in them were gradually absorbed into the Brahmanic system. The process begins with the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, *Chāndogya*, and *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad*s, texts in which the Magadhian ideas still feel like a 'foreign intrusion into the Vedic tradition' (ibid. 120).

A different twist to the latter scenario is argued by the New Zealander scholar Jayarava Attwood (2012, 53-55), based on the insights offered by the German Indologist Michael Witzel (2010). According to their hypothesis, the idea of karma and an ethicised view of the afterlife was among the Iranian elements brought by the Śākyas, ethnic group(s) of Scythian origin. 'This [idea of deeds being weighed after death] was first an Egyptian, then a Zoroastrian and Iranian concept. It is connected with the idea of personal responsibility for one's actions (*karma*)' (Witzel 2010; Attwood 2012, 53).

The problem is far too complex, and my competence much too limited, but suffice it to cautiously say that the two perspectives may not be irreconcilable. It is conceivable that the earlier Vedic beliefs in afterlife prepared the ground for the adoption of the Magadhian elements, some of which may have originated in Iranian religious imports. This led to the crystallisation of a proto-rebirth-cum-karma paradigm which was developed and interpreted in unique ways by each major religious and philosophical tradition. It is this ethicised view of afterlife which will become the dominant model on the Indian subcontinent from the last centuries of the 1st millennium BCE on.

1.2. Rebirth in the Early Canon[4]

Whatever its origin may be, the idea of a cycle of rebirths or, more literally, 'wandering' (*saṃsāra*) from one life to another, is accepted as a matter of fact from the earliest strata of the Buddhist Canon. Let us look at a few verses from the *Suttanipāta* (*Collection of*

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[4] For more thorough analyses of the concepts of rebirth (as well as *kamma/karman*), see McDermott 1983 [1980]; McDermott 1984; Nakamura 1993, vol. I, 811-826, 971-987; Nakamura 1994, vol. II, 737-770; Bronkhorst 2011; etc.

Discourses),[5] believed to be one of the oldest Buddhist texts (if not *the* earliest).[6]

> Having examined all mental constructions,[7]
>> [as well as] the cycle of rebirths [and the sentient beings in their]
>> passing away [from on life] and birth [into another],
> Being free from stain and blemish, pure,
>> having attained the destruction of births – him they call 'awakened'.[8]

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[5] All renderings below are mine. It goes without saying that earlier translations, many coming from the pens of prestigious Buddhist scholars, have been an important source of inspiration (though at times I beg to differ in my readings). The most problematic terms will be discussed in the footnotes, where I shall also mention equivalents and interpretations found in other translations.

[6] See Nakamura 1984, 435; Nakamura 1989 [1980], 27; Nakamura 1993, vol. I, p. IV; Nakamura 1992, 573-732 (a large appendix dedicated to the philological, historical, and cultural criteria for determining the formation history of the early Buddhist Canon; it also contains numerous references to the antiquity of the *Suttanipāta*). According to Nakamura, there is a chronological difference in the formation of the various parts of the *Suttanipāta*, with the *Pārāyanavagga* being the earliest one (actually *the* very first text in the entire Canon; see Nakamura 1989 [1980], 27). Similarly, von Hinüber 1997 [1996], 49, points out that the last two *Vagga*s, *Aṭṭhakavagga* and *Pārāyanavagga*, 'seem to be very old texts.' (None of the three examples below come, however, from the earliest strata of the text.)

[7] The exact meaning of *kappa* (Skt. *kalpa*) here is difficult to ascertain. Fausböll trans. 1898, 88, translates *kappāni* […] *kevalāni* as 'all times (kappa)'. Similarly, Nakamura trans. 1984, 110, renders 'all cosmic aeons' あらゆる宇宙時期 while Aramaki, Honjō, and Enomoto trans. 2015, 132, translate as 'processes of the formation and destruction of the Universe' 宇宙の生成・消滅過程, obviously spelling out the meaning of *kappa/kalpa* as a cosmic time unit. This is a possibility which cannot be ruled out especially as the ascetic referred to in this verse examines not only *kappāni* but also the cycle of rebirths and the living beings as the die and are reborn. The latter covers a huge range in space and time, and *kappāni* in the sense of 'aeons' may have simply reinforced the idea of contemplating *saṃsāra* (and the accompanying *dukkha*) in its infinity. Without excluding this reading, I give, however, precedence to Norman's (2001 65) line of interpretation which is based on the gloss of *kappāni* in the traditional commentary (see Sn-a II 426.22-23). The latter takes *kappa* in its sense of 'imagination'. Norman 2001, 65, renders the word as 'figments'. This interpretative line implies that the ascetic examines the cycle of rebirths <u>as well as</u> the mental constructions (*kappāni*) which becloud our minds and make this wandering go on forever.

[8] 'Him or her – they call "awakened"', I should hastily add and perhaps translate. In Pali, the personal pronoun *taṃ* is the accusative form for both genders. It makes, however, the translation too modern – at least for my admittedly old-fashioned stylistic tastes. The use of 'him/her' in the translation of a 2400-2300 years' old work would take away much of the archaic poetical charm. Actually, in most of the sources cited below the texts employ masculine forms. I shall hence give precedence to this grammatical form on grounds of faithfulness to the original choice. Altering the original style to

[Verse 517]
(*Kappāni viceyya kevalāni,*
    saṃsāraṃ dubhayaṃ cutūpapātaṃ,
Vigatarajam anaṅgaṇaṃ visuddhaṃ
    pattaṃ jātikhayaṃ tam āhu buddhan" ti. Sn 95)[9]

The mendicant in whom there is nothing born of anxiety,[10]
    which is [the very] cause for return to this shore,[11]
Leaves this [as well as] the far shore –
    just like a snake sheds its old worn-out skin. [Verse 15][12]
(*Yassa darathajā na santi keci,*
    oraṃ āgamanāya paccayāse,
so bhikkhu jahāti orapāraṃ
    urago jiṇṇam iva tacaṃ purāṇaṃ. Sn 2)

Avoiding [wrong] views,
Virtuous, endowed with insight,
Having subdued greed for sensual pleasures,
[The ascetic] will surely never again enter into a womb.[13] [Verse 152]

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conform to our standards of political correctness is a decision which I respect but personally do not feel inclined to follow. I take full blame if this be jarring to other eyes, and offer my sincerest apologies.

Needless to say, I make no sexist presuppositions, and in my own sentences throughout the paper I make sure to use 'he/she'. Personally, I believe that women can practise the Way and attain Liberation in the same way as men can do. To a certain extent, this also appears to be the presupposition underlying many Buddhist works. I say 'to a certain extent' because sadly, there is an undeniable corpus of texts and ideas which discriminates against women. This trend seems to be, however, less prominent in the sources connected to ascetics and/or dealing with spiritual praxis and attainments (cf. *Therīgāthā*). The *Suttanipāta* can also be seen as part of the ascetic strain in Buddhist literature. It is therefore conceivable that the authors, redactors, and communities behind such texts would not have found objectionable a rendering like 'him/her – they call "awakened"', but with no possibility to travel back in time and check out with them, I shall stick to the stylistic convention advocated here.

[9] For texts in verse, I give the verse number after the English translation, and the PTS page number after the Pali original.

[10] Pali, *daratha* also means 'care' and 'distress' (the latter being the translation preferred by Norman 2001, 2).

[11] 'This shore' (*ora*) is used in the sense of 'this life' while the 'far shore' (*orapāra*) refers to the 'next life'.

[12] This last verse is a refrain repeated throughout the entire *Uragasutta* (Sn verses 1-17).

[13] More literally, *gabbhaseyya punar etī* should be translated as Norman 2001, 19, renders: 'does not

> (*Diṭṭhiñ ca anupagamma*
>   *sīlavā dassanena sampanno*
> *kāmesu vineyya gedhaṃ,*
>   *na hi jātu gabbhaseyya punar etī ti.* Sn 26)

Also going back to the early layers of the Canon,[14] the *Dhammapada* (*Words of the Teaching*)[15] likewise refers to *saṃsāra* as an idea well-known to the audiences to which it is addressed.

> Through many a birth in the cycle of rebirths have I run, without respite,[16]
> Seeking the house-maker.[17] – Painful is to be born again and again![18]
>   [Verse 153]
> (*anekajātisaṃsāraṃ sandhāvissaṃ anibbisaṃ*
> *gahakārakaṃ gavesanto, dukkhā jāti punappunaṃ.* Dhp 43)

The *Dhammapada* contains a whole 'Section on Hell' (*Nirayavagga*),[19] which makes direct references to rebirth in bad (i.e. more often than not, infernal) realms or good destinations (*gati*) according to one's deeds and views. To give only a few examples,

> The evil ones, due to their evil deeds, are reborn in hell. [Verse 307cd]
> (*pāpā pāpehi kammehi nirayaṃ te upapajjare.* Dhp 86)

Adopting erroneous views, living beings go to a bad destination.

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come to lie again in the womb'.

[14] See Nakamura 1984, 435; Nakamura 1993, vol. I, p. IV, etc. Von Hinüber 1997 [1997], 45, remarks, 'Linguistically, some of the verses seem to be rather old.'

[15] Or *Verses of the Teaching*, since the *pada*s = 'words' conveying the *Dhamma* are versified. A bolder rendering would be *Gnomic Verses of Truth*, but to all intents and purposes I shall stay as faithful as possible. For more on the title, see Norman 1997, XXV.

[16] For *anibbisaṃ*, I follow Norman's rendering (1997, 22) convincingly argued for in the endnote to the verse (ibid. p. 100). Max Müller (1988 [1881], 42-43) adopts a more straightforward reading: 'not finding him' [i.e. the maker of the house]. It is also interesting to note Nakamura's rendering (1978, 31): 無益 'wantonly' (The author does not give, however, an explanation for his choice).

[17] The traditional commentary (Dhp-a III 128.6-7) glosses *gaha*, the house, as the individual existence, and °*kāraka*, its maker, as referring to 'craving' (*taṇhā*), qualified as *vaḍḍhaki* '[being like a] 'carpenter, architect, mason'.

[18] Literally, 'painful is birth again and again'.

[19] For more on the Buddhist notion of hell(s), see Nakamura 1994, vol. II, 737-770.

[Verses 316cd, 317cd, 318cd]
(*micchādiṭṭhisamādānā, sattā gacchanti duggatiṃ.* Dhp 88-89)

Adopting correct views, living beings go to a good destination. [Verse 319cd]
(*sammādiṭṭhisamādānā, sattā gacchanti suggatiṃ.* Dhp 89)

In the *Scripture on Tears* (*Assusutta*; SN II 179-180), the Lord proclaims,

'The cycle of rebirths (*saṃsāra*), Mendicants, has no fathomable beginning (*anamatagga*).[20] No first point in time (*koṭi*) [can] be discerned [since] the sentient beings have been running through and roaming [from one life to another] hindered by ignorance (*avijjā*) and fettered by craving (*taṇhā*).'
(*anamataggoyaṃ, bhikkhave, saṃsāro. pubbā koṭi na paññāyati avijjānīvaraṇānaṃ sattānaṃ taṇhāsaṃyojanānaṃ sandhāvataṃ saṃsarataṃ.* SN II 179.23-25)[21]

The stream of tears which we have shed while weeping in this never-ending saga of suffering is larger than the four great oceans. Liberation is attained by a profound existential experience of disgust with all formations (*saṅkhāra*) and generating complete dispassion towards them.[22]

More elaborate depictions of the *saṃsāra*, probably representing later stages in the development of the concept, divide it into five realms. Depending on his/her karma, a sentient being is reborn in one of the 'five destinations (*gati*) [, to wit, the realms of] hell, beasts, hungry ghosts, humans, [or] gods.' (*pañca gatiyo nirayo, tiracchānayoni,*

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[20] Or simply '[is] without beginning', as suggested by Cone 2001, s.v. *anamatagga* (see also Ch. translation below). The exact meaning of the compound *anamatagga* is difficult to pinpoint. See CPD s.v. and PTSD s.v. Rhys Davids and Woodward (1982 [1922], vol. II, 120) translate '[i]ncalculable is the beginning' while Bhikkhu Bodhi (2000, 653) renders 'without discoverable beginning.'

[21] The Chinese version (T 2.240c-241a) does not mention the ignorance and craving. 'Since the beginningless [series of] lives and deaths the sentient beings have been roaming [輪轉 *saṃsāra*, literally, 'have been rolling on in circles'] in the long night. No origin [本際, literally, original boundary] of the suffering [this cycle entails] is known.' 衆生無始生死以來長夜輪轉。不知苦之本際。 (T 2.240c26-27). Also noteworthy is the fact that the Chinese translation does not take *anamatagga* as 'unfathomable, incalculable', etc. (if that was in their original Indic text) simply referring to the cycle of rebirths as 'having no beginning'.

[22] Cf. *alam eva sabbasaṅkhāresu nibbindituṃ, alaṃ virajjituṃ, alaṃ vimuccitunti.* (SN II 180.21-22) The Chinese version does not have a direct equivalent of this sentence. Instead it contains a more developed passage (T 2.241a9-16) which describes the five aggregates (*skandha*) as being impermanent, begetting suffering, and no(n)-Self. Only this realisation can lead to liberation.

pettivisayo, manussā, devā. DN III 234.7-8).[23]

The *Scripture on the Divine Messengers* (*Devadūtasutta*; MN III 178-187) presents us with an even more elaborate scenario of the afterlife. Not only are we told that those whose corporal, verbal, and mental conduct is wrong (*kāyaduccaritena samannāgatā vacī—pe—manoduccaritena samannāgata* […] MN 179.3-4 et passim) are bound to be reborn in the evil destinations of hungry ghosts, beasts, and hell. The scripture also offers a detailed fresco of infernal torments and regions complete with a storyline of the events awaiting wrongdoers in the netherworld. Those who have erred against mothers, fathers, recluses, brahmins, or elders of the clan are dragged by hell guardians (*nirayapālā*) in front of King Yama, the supreme judge of good and evil.[24]

King Yama cross-examines each sinner about their wrong doings questioning them whether they were aware of the right course of action or not. The sinner invariably replies, 'Your Honour,[25] I was unable [to act according to the moral duties because] I was indolent.' ("*nāsakkhissaṃ, bhante, pamādassaṃ, bhante"ti.* MN III 179.28-29 et passim). (I wonder whether you could get away by pleading ignorance. With the hell full of lawyers, maybe you could get legal advice and manage a plea bargain….) Depending on the gravity of the wrong doings, the sinner will suffer horrendous tortures for as long as it takes the evil act to consume its karmic charge.[26] Vying with a horror movie, the *sutta* continues with shockingly vivid descriptions of infernal tortures, from red-hot iron stakes piercing the body and being pared with axes to climbing mounds of burning coals and being boiled in red-hot metal cauldrons. (I'll definitely need legal counsel!)

The *sutta* also paints a detailed map of the hell sections, one more colourful than the other: the great hell (*mahāniraya*) (MN III 183-184), the hell of excrement (*gūthaniraya*) (MN III 184-185), the hell of hot embers (*kukkuḷaniraya*) (MN III 185), the forest of *simbali*-trees (*simbalivana*)[27] (MN III 185), the forest of sword-leaf trees (*asipattavana*) (MN III 185), and the river of caustic water (*khārodakā nadī*) (MN III 185). And if sinners mentions being hungry or thirsty, the hell guardians will dutifully oblige (literally!) by throwing into their mouths red-hot metal balls or molten copper (MN III 185-186). (You know what? I'll start accumulating merit. And to be on the safe side,

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[23] See also AN IV 459; etc. In other contexts, such as DN III 264 (*asurakāyaṃ uppanno hoti*) etc., rebirth amongst *asura* or 'demigods' is also mentioned. This will become the base of the alternative model of six destinations of rebirth adopted in many later traditions.

[24] *tam enaṃ, bhikkhave, nirayapālā nānābāhāsu gahetvā yamassa rañño dassenti – "ayaṃ, deva, puriso amatteyyo apetteyyo asāmañño abrāhmañño, na kule jeṭṭhāpacāyī. imassa devo daṇḍaṃ paṇetū"ti.* (MN III 179.13-16)

[25] Pali *bhante* usually translates as 'Venerable Sir', etc. or when addressing a monk 'Reverend', etc. but given the court drama setting, 'Your Honour' seems more natural here.

[26] *na ca tāva kālaṅkaroti yāva na taṃ pāpakammaṃ byantīhoti.* (MN III 183.5-6 et passim)

[27] The *simbala* trees have huge prickles and are burning.

also save money for the lawyers in hell….)

If we adopt a linear view of history, this elaborate account of the infernal judgement and punishment should be regarded as a late development. History, however, does not always move along linear trajectories. If the Witzel-Attwood hypothesis should be given any credibility, and I think it should, then this ethicised story of hell may well represent one of the Iranian elements. Attwood (2012, 55) actually considers this *sutta* as typically 'reminiscent of Zoroastrianism, and even of the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*'. It is difficult to determine a timeframe of the introduction of these Iranian elements into Buddhism. They may have slowly trickled in over the centuries through monks of Śākyan ancestry, and found a place in the later layers of the Canon. Or likewise plausibly, they may have found their way into the Buddhist Dharma through its famous Śākyan founder.

Many modern students and followers of Buddhism tend to think of Gotama Buddha as the Teacher of a purely spiritual path free of mythical elements and superstitions. For them, the latter alternative may be quite hard to swallow. There are, however, no a priori reasons to rule out this scenario off hand. What we consider now mythical accounts may have been seen in Gotama Buddha's age as 'scientific' as our Big Ban theory. Their inclusion in the corpus of teachings was, therefore, a legitimate choice. Gotama Buddha simply believed them to give an accurate account of a cosmological plane simply as it is (*yathābhūtam*!).

In the end, it is hard to decide whether such elaborate mythical scenarios (mythical, for us!) are early elements or late developments. I do not believe in a uniformly linear paradigm of historical change, but in this case I cautiously and tentatively surmise that a later date may be more likely. I do not, however, rule out the former possibility. It just seems to me (note the impressionistic tone!) that the *sutta* is representative of a literary genre developed by later preachers in order to make the *Buddhadharma* more accessible and more colourful for larger sections of the population. But again, Gotama Buddha may have worn a colourful preacher's hat from the very beginning, hence a much earlier date to this afterlife account and the *Devadūtasutta*.

What makes things more complicated is the entirely oral nature of scriptural transmission in the first centuries of Buddhist history. Gotama Buddha may have sketched out an account of hell presided by a King Yama as its supreme judge, but this particular account may have found its way into the Canon much later, and in a more developed form, after such anthologies of ascetic lore as the *Suttanipāta* took shape. A more educated guess could come only after taking into consideration all the criteria which can be convincingly identified as indicative of historical development. And this is something which cannot be even remotely attempted here.

Another aspect which further muddles the picture is that apart from the cultural background which may have influenced Gotama Buddha, his own spiritual experiences may have played, and most likely did play, a major role in fashioning the doctrine. These experiences – whatever we may think of their nature from a modern positivistic

perspective – seem to have included a 'direct' and detailed knowledge of the cycle of rebirths. Many canonical accounts consider this *saṃsāric* cognition as part and parcel of Gotama Buddha's awakening. Not only does he know that his own wandering from one life to another has come to an end but he also sees the rebirth destinations of various living beings by dint of the divine eye (*dibbena cakkhunā*), a paranormal faculty acquired by strenuous spiritual practice.[28]

Similarly, the realisation that rebirth has come to an end is an essential part of the stock-phrase describing awakening for an Arhat. '[The contemplative comes to] know, "destroyed is birth, accomplished pure conduct, done is what was to be done – there is no more coming [back] to any existence."' (*"khīṇā jāti, vusitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ, kataṃ karaṇīyaṃ, nāparaṃ itthattāyā"ti pajānāti.* MN III 108.22-23)

1.3. Self, no(n)-self, and rebirth[29]

The cycle of rebirths is never seen as conflicting to the doctrine of no(n)-self (*anattā*). To deny rebirth entirely would be as incorrect as holding that an eternal soul or self (Pali, *attan*; Skt. *ātman*) endures unchanged through all the endless wanderings from one life to another. For instance, in the *Ānanada* (SN IV 400-401), also known as the *Atthatta* (*Is There a Self?*), the Buddha refuses to answer Vacchagota's questions whether there is a self or not (*atthattā* […] *natthattā* […]). The reason, the Lord later explains to Ānanda, is that an affirmation may have been misconstrued as siding with the eternalists (*sassatavādā*) while a negation may have been misunderstood as taking the same position as the annihilationists (*ucchedavādā*).

In the *Acela* or *The Naked [Ascetic]* (SN II 20-21), the Buddha stresses that he

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[28] E.g. MN I 23: *so evaṃ samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anaṅgaṇe vigatūpakkilese mudubhūte kammaniye ṭhite āneñjappatte sattānaṃ cutūpapātañāṇāya cittaṃ abhininnāmesiṃ. so dibbena cakkhunā visuddhena atikkantamānusakena satte passāmi cavamāne upapajjamāne hīne paṇīte suvaṇṇe dubbaṇṇe sugate duggate yathākammūpage satte pajānāmi – "ime vata bhonto sattā kāyaduccaritena samannāgatā vacīduccaritena samannāgatā manoduccaritena samannāgatā ariyānaṃ upavādakā micchādiṭṭhikā micchādiṭṭhikammasamādānā; te kāyassa bhedā paraṃ maraṇā apāyaṃ duggatiṃ vinipātaṃ nirayaṃ upapannā. ime vā pana bhonto sattā kāyasucaritena samannāgatā vacīsucaritena samannāgatā manosucaritena samannāgatā ariyānaṃ anupavādakā sammādiṭṭhikā sammādiṭṭhikammasamādānā; te kāyassa bhedā paraṃ maraṇā sugatiṃ saggaṃ lokaṃ upapannā"ti. iti dibbena cakkhunā visuddhena atikkantamānusakena satte passāmi cavamāne upapajjamāne hīne paṇīte suvaṇṇe dubbaṇṇe sugate duggate yathākammūpage satte pajānāmi. ayaṃ kho me, brāhmaṇa, rattiyā majjhime yāme dutiyā vijjā adhigatā, avijjā vihatā vijjā uppannā, tamo vihato āloko uppanno, yathā taṃ appamattassa ātāpino pahitattassa viharato.*

[29] Needless to say, this is a central Buddhist doctrine and one of the most hotly debated subjects in traditional circles as well as in modern research. Out of the many contributions, I shall only mention Nakamura 1993, vol. I, 455-673 (a thorough examination focusing on Early Buddhism).

teaches the *Dhamma* by means of the middle [path] (*majjhena Tathāgato dhammam deseti*) which avoids the extremes of eternalism and annihilationism. This middle path is identified as the chain of dependent arising (*paṭiccasamuppāda*), which at least in a few canonical passages is understood as a model of rebirth.[30] The same interpretation is also found in Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga* (*Path of Purification*)[31] and Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (*Commentary on the Thesaurus of Scholastics*)[32] where the chain of dependent arising is construed as stretching over three successive lives.[33] More on the models explaining the mechanism of rebirth will be said in the next section.

2. Models: How does it happen?

2.1. *Viññāṇa/citta* as the agent of rebirth

Apart from its primary sense of 'consciousness' or 'awareness [of sensation, etc.]' (e.g. SN III 87.17), there are contexts (DN II 63.2-6; MN III 228.25; MN III 260.27; etc.), often linked to rebirth, in which the meaning of *viññāṇa* is what could be more or less translated as 'sentience'.[34] '[*Viññāṇa*] is not even sensation in these places, but appears to be the centre of a person that transmigrates and eventually finds release' (Vetter 2000, 66). It is thus equivalent to *citta, satta*, *puggala*, *purisa*, etc. which are also found with the meaning of agent of rebirth (e.g. MN I 501.5).

One of the most edifying fragments containing such an occurrence of *viññāṇa* is found in the *Mahānidānasuttanta* or *Greater Discourse on Origination*:

> [The Buddha:] 'And [if] indeed sentience (*viññāṇa*) does not descend into the mother's womb, would the mind and body (*nāmarūpa*) develop in the mother's womb?'
> [Ānanda:] 'Certainly not, Lord.'
> (*"viññāṇañ ca hi, Ānanda, mātukucchismiṃ na okkamissatha, api nu kho nāmarūpaṃ mātukucchismiṃ samuccissathā"ti?*

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[30] See, for instance, MN I 265-267.

[31] According von Hinüber (1997 [1996], 103), the doyen of Pali studies, 'the brackets for Buddhaghosa's dates are about AD 370 to 450'.

[32] Vasubandhu's dates are controversial. I have personally argued for dating him c. 350-430 (see Deleanu 2006, vol. I, 186-194; Deleanu 2019, 12-13), but other dates such as 320-400 and 400-480 have also been put forward, with the latter still being the most widely adopted.

[33] See Vism (Warren ed.) ch. XVII §§ 2ff; AKBh ch. III ver. 20. In East Asian Buddhist studies, this model is often referred to as 'three times twofold overlapping' 三世两重 (Ch. *san shi liang chong*; Jp. *san ze ryō jū*).

[34] For the meaning of *viññāṇa* (as well as the other aggregates) in the Pali Canon, see the excellent analysis of the German scholar Vetter (2000, 63-73).

"no hetaṃ, bhante". DN II 63.2-6)

What appears to distinguish *viññāṇa/citta* from *attan* or the eternal 'soul' is the fact that the former is not depicted as an unchangeable, independent entity.[35] Although the impermanence of *viññāṇa* may be different from that of the body, its punctuated mode of functioning (wakefulness and sleep, etc.) is nothing but a series of moments of grasping objects just like a monkey's faring through the jungle. This can hardly qualify as *attan*. Furthermore, for the Buddhist practitioner, *viññāṇa*, too, must be viewed with disgust like any other aggregate (*skandha*) (SN II 94-95; also SN II 95-97). Similarly, in the four applications of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*), *citta* does not receive any special treatment: it must be observed in its ever-changing flux of states, and such an insight will lead to complete detachment (DN II 299-300; etc.).[36]

2.2. A canonical model of rebirth: The *Mahātaṇhāsaṅkhayasutta*

In the *Mahātaṇhāsaṅkhayasutta* or *Greater Discourse on the Destruction of Craving* (MN No. 38),[37] three conditions are said to be necessary for the rebirth to take place: the union of the mother and father, the mother must be in the proper phase [of her menstrual cycle], and the *gandhabba* must be present [/ready] (*paccupaṭṭhito hoti*) (MN I 265-266). The term *gandhabba* is explained by Buddhaghosa as 'the being [about to assume] the form [of an embryo in the mother's womb] (*tatrūpakasatto*), and *paccupaṭṭhito* as the process in which 'being [who has just died is] propelled by the mechanism of karma'

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[35] According to Nakamura 1981, 157, s.v. 我, the metaphysical 'Self' or 'soul' upheld by most of the Brahmanic and Hindu traditions (but denied by the Buddhists) is qualified by three epithets: 'permanent' 常, 'one' [i.e. indivisible] 一, 'independent' 主, and 'lord/master [over oneself]' 宰. See also the definition in the *Cheng weishi lun* 成唯識論: 'Self (*ātman*) means "lord [/master] (*svāmin*)". *Dharma* means "[that which] holds (*dhṛ*) [its own] norm [/essence]"' 我謂主宰。法謂軌持。(T31.1a24). Cf. the epithet *svāmī* at *Paramārthagāthā*, 167 (verse 1).

There are, however, some passages where the personal *viññāṇa* may have been construed as being absorbed into the great *Viññāṇa* much in the same vein as the *Mahābhārata* (12.180. 5-6; vol. III, p. 2235) which suggests that the fire returns to the ether after its extinction (see Vetter 2000, 67-68, citing Frauwallner's interpretation [in *Geschichte der indischen Philosophie*, Vol. 1, p. 226]). Even if such a view existed in some early Buddhist communities, it never made its way into the mainstream doctrine.

[36] In the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, all four applications, *citta* included, must be considered under their general characteristics (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*). The latter refers to 'the impermanence of the conditioned phenomena, the suffering [brought about by] the contaminants, the emptiness and no(n)-Self of all phenomena' (*sāmānyalakṣaṇaṃ tu anityatā saṃskṛtānāṃ, duḥkatā sāsravāṇaṃ, śūnyatānātmate sarvadharmāṇām*) (AKBh 341.12-13).

[37] Cf. also MN II 156.

(*kammayantayantito* […] *satto*) into the new form of existence (MN-a II 310, § 12).[38] This triggers the rest of the chain of dependent origination. The next passage details how the infant comes in contact with the five strands of sensual pleasures (*kāmaguṇa*) and begins to desire them (MN I 266-267), processes which correspond to the portion beginning with the six sense-fields (*saḷāyatana*) and contact (*phassa*) links in the chain.

2.3. A scholastic model of rebirth: The *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*[39]

Vasubandhu describes the mechanism of rebirth in his magnum opus *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (*Commentary on the Thesaurus of Scholastics*), Chapter III, verses 4-19 (cum the prose autocommentary).[40]

A being in the intermediate existence (*antarābhava*) or rather in the process of moving from one life to another (verse 10) consists of a body of five aggregates (*pañca skandhāḥ*), different from the five aggregates at the moment of death as well as from those which he/she will assume in the next rebirth. This being is called *gandharva* (verse 12c) and should not be confused with *ātman* (verse 18).[41] His/her organs are complete. The *gandharva* moves on account of the impetus (*vega*) of supernatural powers (*ṛddhi*). He/she feeds on odours (*gandhabhuk*) (verse 14). There are several theories concerning the duration of the intermediate state of existence, seven weeks (= 49 days) being only one of them (and not necessarily endorsed by Vasubandhu as the correct one).[42]

The next major step is when

> The distorted mind heads towards the place of its destiny [animated by] lustful desires.
>
> (*viparyastamatir yāti gatideśaṁ riraṁsayā*; AKBh, Chapter III, verse 15ab)

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[38] Cf. McDermott 1983 [1980], 169-170; Ñāṇamoli trans. 1233, note 411.

Vasubandhu also refers to this *sūtra* interpreting *gandharva* as the special form of existence of the sentient beings in the intermediate state (*antarābhava*) between death and life (AKBh ch. 3 ver. 12c) (see next section). Buddhaghosa, on the other hand, conceives the process of rebirth without any intermediate state (Vism ch. 17 § 113-114).

[39] Cf. Buddhaghosa's model (Vism ch. 17 §§ 158-173) which shares quite a few presuppositions and elements with AKBh but also contains original features. Relevant sources to the topic include Kritzer 1999; Abe 2001; Kritzer 2014, etc.

[40] AKBh 114-131. Closely connected to the same topic are verses 20ff. in the same chapter which deal with *pratītyasamutpāda*.

[41] Vasubandhu states, 'ātman does not exist, only the aggregates [do]' (*nātmāsti skandhamātraṁ*). The philosopher clarifies in the auto-commentary how he construes *ātman*: it is an agent of action which can abandon and assume new series of *skandha*s without being karmically determined. Such an entity, Vasubandhu argues, does not exit (see AKBh 129).

[42] See AKBh 125-126.

As the *gandharva* is endowed with heavenly eye, i.e. supernatural perception, he/she can see the place where his/her future rebirth are no matter how far this may be. Three conditions will be necessary for the entrance into the womb:

> [1] The mother is in good health and at the right time [of ovulation].
> [2] The father and mother unite in a sexual act under [the impulse of] lust.
> [3] The *gandharva* is present there.
> (*matā kalyā 'pi bhavati ṛtumātī ca. mātāpitarau ratkau bhavataḥ saṃnipatitau ca. gandharvaś ca pratyupasthito bhavati.* AKBh 121.22-23)

Upon seeing one's future mother and father united in a sexual act, the *gandharva*s without high spiritual attainments (i.e. the vast majority of the sentient beings) become troubled by lust and hostility.[43] If the *gandharva* is gripped by lust towards his future mother and feels hostile towards his future father, he will become a male. And the reverse is true of a female. (The description is remarkably Freudian.)

Animated by sexual desire, the *gandharva* becomes joined to the place where the sexual organs of his parents are united. And following the father's semen and mother's blood (= ovum), the *gandharva* enters the womb. There,

> His [new] aggregates harden, and the aggregates of the intermediate state disappear. This is to say that [the being] becomes [re]born.
> (*tato 'sya skandhā ghanībhavanty antarābhavaskandhāś ca antardhīyante, ity upapanno bhavati*; AKBh 126.24)[44]

3. Proofs: Corroborating by simile and logic

3.1. Simile-based argumentation: *Pāyāsisuttanta*

The *Pāyāsisuttanta* (DN II 316-358)[45] is one of the first canonical sources articulating proofs in favour of rebirth and karma.[46] The Pali version of the scripture is rather unique as its narrative line describes events said to have taken place after the Buddha's death.[47]

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[43] Cf. Ch. 一者、母身是時調適。二者、父母交愛和合。三、健達縛正現在前。(T 29.44c27-29）

[44] In other contexts, this is called the 'moment of connection [/entry into the womb]' (*pratisaṃdhikṣaṇa*) (AKBh 124.20).

[45] The Pali scripture corresponds to the *Bi su jing* 弊宿經 in the Chinese translation of the *Dīrghāgama* 長阿含經 (T 1.42b-47a).

[46] The text seems to belong to the later strata of Canon (see Nakamura 1993, vol. I, 652).

[47] It is Dhammapāla who states that the events described here take place after the Lord's demise (see Malalasekera 1995 [1960], vol. 1, pp. 662-633; cf. Akanuma 1967 [1931], 325-326).

The protagonist explaining the Buddhist doctrine is Kumāra-Kassapa or Young Kassapa, a name most likely chosen to distinguish him from the arch-famous Mahākassapa. But Young Kassapa is far from being a small fry in the Saṅgha. He is depicted as one of the Buddha's top disciples known for his learning, wisdom, and eloquence.[48] In our text, he refutes the wrong views (*pāpakaṃ diṭṭhigataṃ*) espoused by Prince (*rājañña*) Pāyāsi who professes disbelief in rebirth and the karmic law. The Prince declares,

> There is neither any other world, nor are their sentient beings spontaneously born,[49] nor is there any fruit or result of good or bad deeds.
> (*"iti pi natthi paro loko, natthi sattā opapātikā, natthi sukatadukkaṭānaṃ kammānaṃ phalaṃ vipāko" ti*. DN II 316-317)[50]

This is something which Kumāra-Kassapa cannot accept. Here are the main arguments which he adduces in order to refute Prince Pāyāsi and prove the doctrine of rebirth and karmic retribution.

(1) The simile of the moon and the sun (*candimasūriyaupamā*) (DN II 319).[51]

Urged to consider the ontological nature of the moon and the sun, Prince Pāyāsi admits

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[48] DN I 317: *"paṇḍito byatto medhāvī bahussuto cittakathī kalyāṇapaṭibhāno vuddho ceva arahā cā"ti*; Ch. 此童女迦葉有大名聞, 已得羅漢。 T 42c5. Interestingly, the Chinese translation clearly identifies the main preacher as a woman: 童女迦葉 *Kumārī-Kāśyapa.*

On Kumāra-Kassapa, see also AN I 24: *aggaṃ* […] *cittakathikānaṃ yadidaṃ Kumārakassapa* (cf. Ch.: 能雜種論, 暢悦心識 所謂拘摩羅迦葉比丘是。T 2.558a11-12). Two verses in the *Theragāthā* (201 and 202) are also ascribed to Kumāra-Kassapa (see Malalasekera 1995 [1960], vol. 1, pp. 662-633).

[49] The 'spontaneous birth' expressed by *opapātika* refers here to the fact that rebirth in another world would not require parents, the sine qua non condition in the human and animal worlds. Rhys Davids 1977 [1959], 349, translates: 'beings reborn otherwise than from parents'. The Chinese parallel simply renders as 'again born/reborn' 更生.

[50] Cf. Ch. 弊宿婆羅門 常懷異見, 為人説言: 無有他世, 亦無更生, 無善惡報。 (T 1.42c).

Let us note that such 'bad views' are very similar to those advocated by Ajita Kesakambalī, which are cited in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* (DN I 55) (for other sources and details, see Malalasekera 1995 [1960], vol. 1, pp. 37-38; cf. Akanuma 1967 [1931], 13-14). Judging from the account given in this text, Ajita Kesakambalī appears to have been an exponent of the naturalist or materialist current (*lokāyata*) of thought. Walshe 1987, 545, note 111, identifies him as 'materialist' while Rhys Davids 1977 [1899], 73, note 1, considers he was 'a typical sophist'.

[51] I borrow the names of the proofs from the Myanmar version of the Pali Canon (consulted through the *Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana Tipiṭaka* CD-ROM 4.0.) which gives each respective section a title containing °*upamā* 'simile, example'. (The PTS edition has the running text without any titles.)

that they are gods, not humans (*devā te na manussā*). By this, he is obliged to accept the possibility of another world, different from this one.[52]

(2) The simile of the robber (*coraupamā*) (DN II 319-322).

The Prince argues that he has asked dying friends and relatives who had led a sinful life to come back and tell him if there is such a place as hell (*niraya*). But none has come back, says Pāyāsi, to bring testimony to its existence. Kassapa counterargues that coming out from hell is impossible. Is it possible – he continues – for a robber sentenced to death to be set free by his executioners to go home to tell his kinsmen and friends about his plight?

(3) The simile of the cesspool (*gūthakūpapurisaupamā*) (DN II 322-326)

Prince Pāyāsi goes on with the opposite example: he has asked those who had led a virtuous life to return or dispatch a messenger from the happy destination of the heavenly world where they would presumably be reborn (*sugatiṃ saggaṃ lokaṃ uppajjissanti*). Yet, no news of confirming such a realm has ever reached him. To prove the impossibility of this 'empirical' test, Kassapa makes use of the following simile. Suppose a man falls into a cesspool and he would be helped out, thoroughly cleaned from the filth, shampooed and anointed, then lavishly adorned and invited to indulge in the pleasures of the five senses in a palace. It is inconceivable that such a man would go back and plunge into the cesspool. Likewise, to anyone reborn in a heavenly realm, the human world is nothing but a cesspool. Returning to it is out of the question.

(4) The simile of the Thirty-Three Gods (*Tāvatiṃsadevaupamā*) (DN II 326-327)

The Prince adduces a similar proof: none of those virtuous enough to be reborn in the company of the Thirty-Three Gods, the second of the heavenly worlds in the realm of desire (*kāmadhātu*), has ever returned to bear witness of its existence.[53] The reason, replies Kassapa, is simple: one day and one night in this heaven amounts to a hundred years in the human world. The newly arrived denizens will want to enjoy the place for a couple of days before returning to bring the good news. By this time, however, the Prince will have been long dead.

(5) The simile of the person born blind (*jaccandhaupamā*) (DN II 327-329)

Prince Pāyāsi does not, however, give up easily: how can you, Kassapa, know that the Thirty-three Gods exist and those reborn in their company are so long-lived? This knowledge, Kassapa states, is based on the testimony of those ascetics and brahmins (*samaṇabrāhmaṇā*) who have purified their divine eye (*dibbaṃ cakkhuṃ visodhenti*), a supernatural faculty allowing them to see other worlds and the beings reborn there. Just as a person blind from birth cannot discern colours or objects is not correct in saying they

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[52] More on the rationale of this argument will be said in the discussion of Proof I in Section 3.2. below.

[53] On the depictions of this heavenly world in the Pali Canon, see Malalasekera 1995 [1960], vol. 1, pp. 1002-1004; cf. Akanuma 1967 [1931], 681-683. For more on the *Tāvatiṃsadeva*, see Nakamura 1994, vol. II, 664-677.

do not exist, even so an ordinary man like Pāyāsi has no right to deny other worlds only because he cannot see them.

(6) The simile of the pregnant woman (*gabbhinīupamā*) (DN II 329-332)

If the afterlife is certain for a virtuous person, Pāyāsi asks, why don't recluses and brahmins commit suicide to reach such places sooner? That would be both foolish and selfish, Kassapa retorts. To illustrate his point, the Buddhist monk tells the story of a brahmin who had two wives. By one he had a son of ten or twelve, the other was pregnant. The brahmin died before his second child was born. The son by his first wife was very eager to lay claim to the entire fortune left by his father. That is too early to decide, the second wife replied. If her infant is a boy, one portion will be his. But the first son wouldn't listen. He kept repeating his claim, so much so that the pregnant woman rushed to open her belly with a sword in order to find out whether she carries a boy or a girl. The rash act obviously costs her own life as well as that of her unborn infant. Likewise, Kassapa makes clear, it would be unwise for recluses and brahmins to kill themselves hastening the ripening of the still unripen (*apakkaṃ paripācenti*) virtues and attainments. Furthermore, by committing suicide they would shirk their responsibility to practise for the welfare and happiness of the multitude of living beings, out of compassion for the world (*bahujanahitāya ca paṭipajjanti bahujanasukhāya lokānukampāya*).

(7) The simile of the dream (*supinakaupamā*) (DN II 332-334)

Prince Pāyāsi comes with an empirical argument: I have closely watched the execution of robbers, but I have never seen a soul (*jīva*) leaving the body. How about dreams?, counterargues Kassapa. We don't see the soul entering and leaving one's body as we dream.

(8) The simile of the heated iron ball (*santattaayoguḷaupamā*) (DN II 334-335)

The Prince goes on with another empirical proof against the existence of a soul which would be reborn: the body of a robber weighs more after execution than while he was alive. (The implication is that one would expect to find the dead body lighter after the departure of the soul, itself presumably having a mass). Kassapa likewise rebuts the argument with an empirically testable example: an iron ball weighs less when it is heated than when it is cool. A living body, with its accompanying factors of life (*āyu*), heat (*usmā*), and sentience (*viññāṇa*), does not necessarily entail less mass.

(9) The simile of the trumpeter (*saṅkhadhamaupamā*) (DN II 335-338)

Pāyāsi adduces another argument from his empirical knowledge of executions (and he seems to have quite an extensive one): watching how a robber is slowly killed by flaying, cutting his flesh, breaking the bones, etc. does not reveal a soul leaving the body. And although the sensory organs are left intact, the corpse does not perceive anything. This, Kassapa retorts, does not prove anything. It is just like a trumpeter who can produce sounds with his conch-shell (*saṅkha*), but the conch-shell itself does not contain any sound in itself. It is the combination of a man, his effort, and the air he blows through the conch-shell that produces the sound. Similarly, the body can perceive only when the three

basic factors of life, heat, and sentience are present.

(10) The simile of the matted-hair fire-worshipper (*aggikajaṭilaupamā*) (DN II 338-342)

The Prince's gruesome record of experimental executions provides him with yet another proof: a very minute process of flaying a robber and finely cutting his flesh and bones (with a maniac precision, one should add) reveals no place where the soul can be found. His eloquent opponent comes up with another simile to illustrate the Buddhist position. A fire-worshipper (*aggika*) with matted-hair, which is the typical mark of an ascetic, asks his adopted son to keep the fire while he travels away. If, however, the fire happens to go out, no need to worry. The boy can rekindle it. For this, the ascetic gives him an axe, some sticks, and fire-sticks. The boy inadvertently lets the fire go out, and then tries to relight it by chopping the fire-sticks with the axe. But no matter how fine he chops and pounds them, he gets no fire. You, Prince – Kassapa steps up his rebuttal – are as 'foolish [/childish], ignorant, superficial [/incorrect]' (*bālo avyatto ayoniso*) as this boy.

(11) The simile of the two caravan leaders (*dve satthavāhaupamā*) (DN II 342-347)

Prince Pāyāsi frankly admits he is unable to provide any further argument, but he won't renounce his opinions even if it were merely out of wrath (*kopenapi*) and spite (*paḷāsenapi*). He is widely known, after all, for his rejection of rebirth and karma. Sticking to bad advice will result in ruin and disaster, admonishes Kassapa. The Buddhist master tells him the story of two caravan leaders (*dve satthavāhā*), each in charge of five hundred carts. As they are about to cross a vast stretch of unknown land, a stranger coming from the opposite direction advises them to throw away all their provisions of straw, wood, and water. There is plenty of grass and water ahead – he assures them, no need to slow down and tire your teams. One caravan leader blindly follows the advice, the other wisely keeps all the provisions. As the wilderness ahead proves to be arid, the caravan led by the former meets with ruin and disaster while the latter safely crosses it. This is what happens to those who stubbornly follow bad advice and stick to wrong views.

(12) The simile of the heap of dry dung (*gūthabhārikaupamā*) (DN II 347-348)

The Prince, however, wouldn't renounce his beliefs. You are, Kassapa tells him, like the swineherd who found a heap of dry dung and carried it back on his head to feed his pigs. An unseasonable heavy rain splashed the muck over his entire body making him the laughing stock of the passers-by. Yet, the swineherd wouldn't give up the oozing load of dung just like you, Prince Pāyāsi, wouldn't recant your wrong views.

(13) The simile of the gamblers (*akkhadhuttakaupamā*) (DN II 348-349)

But Pāyāsi's obstinacy is as extreme as his morbid taste for experimental dissections. He still won't admit defeat. Fortunately, Kassapa's eloquence and narrative talent is out of the ordinary. He goes on telling the story of the two gamblers who played *akkha*, apparently a dice game using seeds of the *vibhītaka* tree.[54] One of the gamblers cheated

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[54] See Rhys Davids 1977 [1959], 368, note 1, citing Lüders's study 'Würfelspiel der alten Inder'.

by swallowing the extra seeds whenever he got an unlucky dice. The other gambler managed to smear over the dice (= seeds) with poison. Blissfully unaware ('blissfully' for a very brief while…), the swindler continued to swallow the seeds which brought him death. Adhering to one's wrong views is just like swallowing on poisoned seeds in the hope of winning a stupid game.

(14) The simile of the bundle of hemp (*sāṇabhārikaupamā*) (DN II 349-352)

Still not enough for the Prince! Kassapa gives one more simile: two friends go around looking for something valuable. They first find a pile of hemp, and they both make a bundle and carry it away. But then they find hemp-thread. One of the friends throws away the hemp, and makes a bundle hemp-thread. The other friend, however, wouldn't throw away his bundle of hemp for a simple reason: he had well tied it up and carried it a long way. As the journey progresses, at each new place, they find increasingly valuable things: flax, linen-cloth, cotton, iron, copper, tin, silver, and finally gold. One of the friends would throw away the previous load and pick up the better one while the other stuck to his bundle of hemp. The former obviously ends up a rich man while the latter returns home unable to secure happiness for him or his family.

The Prince finally gives up (about time!), and declares he had been delighted with the master's argumentation from the very first simile but he wanted to grill Kassapa thoroughly (thank the Buddha, not literally!). Not only that Pāyāsi accepts defeat but he converts to Buddhism and gladly listens to Kassapa's instructions.

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The dialogue is a systematic attempt to present various arguments to refute a naturalistic view and prove rebirth and karma. In spite of the author's efforts and the well-orchestrated admission of defeat by the stubborn Prince, the attempt is rather awkward. Kassapa largely relies on similes,[55] which in themselves are structurally similar to mechanisms, albeit couched in a catchy rhetoric garb. They may (ver-)appeal to the emotions, and thus cloud rational judgement, but unless warranted by empirical data or coherent inference build from empirically based propositions and/or universally valid axioms, similes have little more value than 'he said, she said'. Similes may be at most plausible models of reality until more empirical data is gathered and analysed in order to prove or disprove it.

Actually, in simile (5), i.e. that of the person born blind (*jaccandhaupamā*), the authors/redactors of the text come dangerously close to admitting the weakness of the previous simile. Pāyāsi puts it bluntly: on what authority do you, Kassapa, assert that the Thirty-three Gods exist and those reborn in their company are long-lived? The argument

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[55] The first argument is not strictly speaking a simile. By making appeal to a common set of beliefs at that time, i.e. the special ontological status of the moon and the sun as deities (also accepted by the Prince), Kassapa proves his point: Pāyāsi is wrong in his statement that there is no other world other than the human one (also including, most probably, the animals in our environment).

put forward is, however, ingenious and logically far superior to merely providing similes. Kassapa tells the Prince that the basis of his statement is the testimony of those ascetics and brahmins (*samaṇabrāhmaṇā*) who have purified their divine eye (*dibbaṃ cakkhuṃ visodhenti*). Whether we readily accept or not the validity of this testimony, such an argumentation has the clear advantage of introducing empirical evidence accepted as valid by both parties in the debate.

Its many logical holes notwithstanding, the *Pāyāsisuttanta* remains a systematic attempt, probably the earliest in the Canon, to come up with an argumentation in favour of the existence of rebirth and the law of karma.

3.2. Logic-based argumentation: *Jātakamālā*

It will be centuries of philosophical elaborations before Buddhism succeeds in formulating a logically sound argumentation in favour of the doctrine of rebirth and karma. One of the most articulate models in pre-Dignāga literature comes not from a philosopher's treatise (*śāstra*) but from the work of a poet. In just seven verses of his *Jātakamālā*, Āryaśūra brilliantly sets forth the gist of the Buddhist proofs in favour of the concept of rebirth. Later developments in Buddhist logic and epistemology will add much in terms of refinement, but the backbone of the argumentation is similar to the basic points made by Āryaśūra. As Namai (1991, 228) points out,

> We can say that most of the traditional arguments [in later Buddhist philosophy] on this subject [i.e. proof for rebirth] can be traced back to Āryaśūra's description of the Bodhisattva sermon. Accordingly, his argumentations can be considered the prototype for the proof of the existence of other lives in the Buddhist tradition'.[56]

Very little is known about the life and work of Āryaśūra (or simply, Śūra).[57] The

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[56] Apart from this and Steinkellner's (1984) excellent contribution, we have two superb monographs dedicated to the rebirth argumentation in later Buddhist philosophy: Namai 1996 (covering a wide range of thinkers) and Franco 1997 (focusing mostly on Dharmakīrti). Traditionally, Dharmakīrti is also believed to have authored a commentary: **Jātakamālāṭīkā* (see note 58 below). Franco (1997, 132) is rather sceptical about this attribution but does not rule out the possibility entirely, especially in view of the authority of Steinkellner's (1984, 85 and note 25) acceptance of the traditional authorship. (For a very brief overview of Dharmakīrti's arguments, see Westerhoff 2018, 161-163.) Last but not least, mention should also be made of two more sources: (1) the Tibetan edition (*'Jig rten pha rol grub pa*) and outstanding German translation of Dharmottara's (ca 750-810) *Paralokasiddhi* (*Proof of the World Hereafter*) from the pen of the doyen of Pramāṇavāda studies, Ernst Steinkellner (1986); (2) a very useful discussion in an article-long endnote in Karin Preisendanz's magnum opus on Nyāya logic (1994, vol. II, note 92, pp. 335-348).

[57] For a state-of-the art survey of Āryaśūra's life and work, see Steiner 2019.

Jātakamālā or *Garland of Tales of Past Lives*, a masterpiece of Buddhist narrative and poetic literature, remains the only work which can be attributed with certainty to him.[58] The Tibetan *bsTan 'gyur* contains five other texts authored by *Āryaśūra (or *Śūra), but

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[58] The *editio princeps* of the *Jātakamālā* was published in 1891 by H. Kern in 1891. It is a reliable edition but more textual witnesses discovered over the years as well as our increased knowledge of Indic languages and Buddhist literature make a new critical edition a desideratum. This is outstandingly satisfied by Hanisch 2005, but unfortunately the book covers only the first 15 tales. Meiland 2009 comes close to satisfying this desideratum in his edition, which relies on Hanisch and Kern but also includes most of the recent findings in the field. Khoroche 1987 is an indispensable companion to the text as it lists many variant readings for all the tales. Hahn 1992, Hahn and Steiner 1996, Hahn 2001, etc. also bring excellent contributions (variant readings, philological remarks etc.) for the edition of individual *jātāka*s. The *Jātakamālā* is also available in Vaidya's edition (first published in 1959, later issued as a second edition in 1999). The Indian scholar heavily relies on Kern's edition without collating new manuscripts but emends some readings of the *editio princeps*. The other Indian edition, i.e. Chaudharī 2015 [1971], appears to be also based on Vaidya's work. Rare manuscript fragments from Turfan can be consulted thanks to Weller 1955.

The *Jātakamālā* was translated into Tibetan by Vidyākarasiṃha and Mañjuśrīvarman as 'Phags pa dpa' bo [*Āryaśūra], *Skyes pa'i rabs kyi rgyud* (P # 5650 [vol. 128; Ke 1b1-152b1] = D # 4150 [Hu 1b1-135a7). The Tibetan Canon also contains a commentary *Skyes pa'i rabs kyi rgya [rgud kyi] cher bshad pa* (*Jātakamālāṭīkā*) attributed to Dharmakīrti (see note 56 above) and translated by Janārdhana and Śākya Blo-gros (P # 5651 [Ke 152b2-394a8] = D # 4151 [Hu 135b1-340a7).

There is also a Chinese version of the text (T 3.331c-385c [T # 160]) 'translated' by Shaode 紹德, Huixun 慧詢, et al. under the Song dynasty (therefore, sometime between 10th and 13th centuries). It goes by the title of *Pusa bensheng man lun* 菩薩本生鬘論 or *Treatise on the Bodhisattva's Past Lives* (*Bodhisattvāvadānamālāśastra*) by '*Āryaśūrabodhisattva and others' 聖勇菩薩等. Both the presence of 'Treatise' and 'others' is rather puzzling. But that may be the least of the problems plaguing this version. As Brough 1964 argues, it is a 'pseudo-translation'. The first part of this cumbersome patchwork plagiarises earlier translations (with slight editorial alterations) from the *Jātakamālā* or other texts which contain the tales narrated by the *Jātakamālā*. Its second part is a muddled text of (hardly intelligible) discussions more or less relevant to the tales. The *Pusa bensheng man lun* does not include the *Brahmajātaka*, where the passage under consideration in this paper occurs (though it would most probably have been of little value even if it did.) For more details, see Brough 1964.

The *Jātakamālā* has been translated into English several times. We owe the first rendering to Speyer in 1895 (see Speyer 1971 [1895]). His translations were edited and published by Musæus-Higgins in 1914, with the Speyer's approval (Musæus-Higgins 1914, XIII). We have two very reliable English translations: Khoroche 1989 and Meiland 2009. The text was also rendered into English by Haskar 2003. For a Hindi translation, see Chaudharī 2015 [1971]. (The translations mentioned above, especially Speyer 1971 [1895], Khoroche 1989, and Meiland 2009, have been most helpful, but the rendering below belongs to me.)

it is rather improbable or impossible to connect them to Āryaśūra, the *Jātakamālā-kāra*.[59] The paucity of data regarding his life and work has also influenced the dating of Āryaśūra. Since the end of the 19th century, the Buddhist poet has been variously dated from the 2nd century to the 7th century.[60] The recent decades have seen a growing consensus that the most likely date is the 4th century CE.[61] Michael Hahn (1993, 37), the top authority in the field, concludes: 'The difference in style between Āryaśūra's and Haribhaṭṭa's works points to a span of 50 to 100 years lying between them. This would bring down the date of Āryaśūra to the middle or even beginning of the fourth century AD.'

The *Jātakamālā* does not contain doctrinal elements which could link Āryaśūra to any particular Buddhist school.[62] It is one of those works which strikes a chord with both the Śrāvakayāna and Mahāyāna 'ailes'. Āryaśūra's main interest is finding the best literary form which could illustrate ethical ideals common to the entire Buddhist tradition. This earned the *Jātakamālā* a special position. 'It was a work that enjoyed near-canonical status among the Northern Buddhists' (Khoroche 1989, XIV).

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The *Brahmajātaka* or *Denizen of the Brahma World*, i.e. Tale 29 of the *Jātakamālā*, narrates how Bodhisattva, the future Śākyamuni, converts King Aṅgadinna of Videha from his false beliefs which include denial of rebirth and attachment to the enjoyment of

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[59] See Khoroche 1989, XIII-XIV; Vaidya 1999, IX; Steiner 2019, 70; etc.

[60] The 2nd century has been proposed by scholars like Alsdorf, Tsuji, Machida, etc. (see Namai 1996, 158, note 1) or admitted as the earliest possible date (Warder 1974, 235; see also note below). On the other hand, Kern places the poet between 550 and 650 (see Khoroche 1989, XII). It must be stressed, however, that the possibility of an earlier date has considerable weight. For a pertinent discussion, see Schmithausen 2020, vol. 2, pp. 235-236 (= note 1537).

[61] See Warder 1974, 235 (placing Āryaśūra in the 4th century but admitting that the date could be lowered as early as the second half of the 2nd century); Khoroche 1989, XIII; Saigusa 1987, 22 (dating Āryaśūra 3rd to 4th centuries); Hahn 1993, 37; Okada (cited in Namai 1996, 158, note 1); Vaidya 1999, IX; placing Āryaśūra between 350-400 AD); Hanisch 2005, XX; Hahn 2007, 8; Meiland 2009, XVIII-XIX; Steiner 2019, 70; etc. Once again, however, the possibility of an earlier date cannot be ruled out (see note 60 above).

[62] See Hahn 1985, 255; Khoroche 1989, XVII-XVII; Hanisch 2005, XIX-XX; Meiland 2009, XX-XXI; Steiner 2019, 71; etc. It is true that, as noted by Khoroche 1989, XVII-XVIII, the *Jātakamālā* places more emphasis on self-sacrifice than in the Pali *Jātaka*s and there is a mention of the *yānavara* or 'best vehicle', which could be an oblique reference to Mahāyāna. But none of these represents a 'marked sectarian bias' (Khoroche 1989, XVIII), let alone a critical attitude towards other traditions. (This also warrants the inclusion of the *Jātakamālā* in this paper which is limited to a survey of the concept of rebirth in Mainstream Buddhism.)

life here and now.[63] The tale begins with a strong admonition:

> [Of all] blameworthy [flaws] (*avadya*) wrong views (*mithyādṛṣṭi*) are the worst.[64] This is why particularly those attached to [such pernicious] views should be pitied by the virtuous.
> (*mithyādṛṣṭiparamāṇy avadyānīti viśeṣenānukampyāḥ satāṁ dṛṣṭivyasana-gatāḥ. Jātakamālā* 268)[65]

As a result of his exceptionally arduous practice of meditation (*dhyānaviśeṣa°*), the Bodhisattva has attained rebirth in the celestial spheres of Brahma's World (*brahmaloka*),[66] but feeling pity for the deluded King, he descends to the human realm and shows his resplendent appearance before the stunned monarch.

The main arguments for the existence of rebirth are adduced in verses 7 to 13. They are rendered below alongside the preceding dialogue between the Bodhisattva and King Aṅgadinna.[67]

The King said: 'Does another world (*paraloka*) really exists?'[68]

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[63] The *Brahmajātaka* contains elements which correspond to the Pali *Mahānāradakassapajātaka* (Jā VI 219ff). The narrative thread of the latter is much more developed, and although it contains a passage maintaining that rebirth can be proved, the argumentation follows different lines from the *Brahmajātaka*.

[64] Skt. *avadya* also means 'imperfection, vice, censure, disgrace', etc. (see Monier-Williams 1986 [1899], s.v.). I take *mithyādṛṣṭiparamāṇy* as a *bahuvrīhi* compound literally meaning 'blameworthy [flaws] have wrong views as extreme'.

[65] I follow mainly Meiland's ed. 2009. The *Brahmajātaka* found at vol. II, 267-297. This was double-checked against Khoroche's list of *variae lectiones* (1987, 64-66) and collated with Kern ed. 1891, 192-200 and Vaidya ed. 1999, 200-208. (The punctuation and section titles given below are mine.)

[66] This is the highest of the Buddhist Heavens which comprises no less than 20 spheres, 16 in the material realm (*rūpadhātu*), i.e. inhabited by corporal gods and denizens, and 4 in the immaterial realm (*arūpadhātu*), whose inhabitants are incorporeal. As stated in verse 6 of the *Brahmajātaka* (p. 272), only those beings who have attained stainless virtues (*śīla*), mastered meditative absorptions (*dhyāna*), and exercise perfect restraint of their senses (*indriyasaṃvara*) are reborn in one of the spheres of the Brahma world (cf. also AN I 227, etc.).

[67] The original of this passage is found at Meiland ed. 2009, vol. II, 272-274. Cf. Kern ed. 1891, 193-194; Vaidya ed. 1999, 201-202.

[68] Skt. *paraloka* literally means 'another world, other world[s]', often being what we would call 'world hereafter'. It refers to the next rebirth whether this happens in the same destination (*gati*) or another. It also includes the world/locus where this rebirth happens as well as a different ontic plane (the latter hinted at in Proof I below). Dharmottara (c. 740-800) dedicates an entire text to the

The denizen of Brahma's World [i.e. the Bodhisattva] said: 'Yes, Your Majesty, another world exists.'

The King said: 'But, dear sir, how could I also believe this?'

The Bodhisattva said: 'This, Your Majesty, is a plain [truth] which can be grasped by reasoning (*yukti*) [based upon] means of valid cognition (*pramāṇa*) [such as] direct perception (*pratyakṣa*), etc., [a plain truth in keeping with] the method taught by the Trustworthy Persons (*āptajana*) and ascertainable by [following the proper] course of investigation (*parīkṣā*).[69] Consider [these points], Sire.'

(*Rājovāca: "kiṁ satyam evedam asti paraloka iti?"*

Brahmovāca: "ām, asti,[70] *Mahārāja, paralokaḥ."*

Rājovāca: "kathaṁ punar idaṁ, mārṣa, śakyam asmābhir api śraddhātuṁ syāt?"

Bodhisattva uvāca: "sthūlam etan, Mahārāja, pratyakṣādipramāṇayukti-grāhyam, āptajananidarśitakramaṁ parīkṣākramagamyaṁ ca. paśyatu, Bhavān.")

Proof I, based upon perception (*pratyakṣa*)

'The Heaven, with the Moon, the Sun, and stars bedecked, as well as the many various beasts –

This is another world (*paraloka*) [nonetheless] perceptible [by the sense-organs].[71] Let not thy mind be benumbed by doubt as to this [fact].'

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demonstration of the other world, i.e. *Paralokasiddhi* (Steinkellner ed. and trans. 1986). (For Dharmottara's dating, I follow Steinkellner and Much 1995, 67.

[69] Skt. *parīkṣā* also translates as 'examination' or 'test'. The latter is the rendering chosen by Meiland 2009, vol. II, 273, and Khoroche 1989, 207. Haksar 2003, 206-246, similarly has: 'can be tested through scrutiny'. Speyer 1971 [1895], 271, construes the word as 'accurate examination'. Speaking in the context of early logical discourse in medical literature, Preisendanz (2010, 29) translates *parīkṣā* as 'examination' and explains it as literally meaning '"viewing from all sides", i.e., comprehensive viewing (*pari-√īkṣ*)'. More on the *parīkṣā* will be said below.

[70] I read *ām asti* following Meiland ed. 2009, vol. II, 272, as well as Vaidya ed. 1999, 201. It is quite possible, however, that the original may have been *āmāsti*, *āma* being the Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit form (see BHSD s.v. *āma*: 'yes'). Vaidya ed. 1999, 201, note 3, actually mentions that all Mss read '*āmāsti* = *āma+asti*'.

[71] Skt. *pratyakṣarūpa* literally means 'in perceptible form'. Cf. Meiland (2009, vol. II, 275): 'these are the next world in its perceptible form'. Skt. *pratyakṣa°* can also be used as an attribute or predicate, in which case it means '[directly] perceived' or 'perceptible' (see Schmithausen 1972, 160). In composition with *°rūpa*, here it qualifies *paraloka*. On *°rūpa* as a reinforcing quasi-suffix, see Schmithausen 2020, vol. 2, p. 444 (= note 2881).

[Verse 7]

(*candrārkanakṣatravibhūṣaṇā dyaus, tiryagvikalpāś ca bahuprakārāḥ.* |
pratyakṣarūpaḥ paraloka eṣa. mā te'tra saṁdehajaḍā matir bhūt. ||7||)

Proof II, based upon the testimony of the Trustworthy Ones (*āptajana*)

'And there are now and then those possessing memories of [their former] lives
due to the practice of meditation and the sharpness of their memory.

From this, too, the [existence of] another world should be inferred. And am I
not myself [having come from Brahma's World] giving evidence of this?'
[Verse 8]

(*jātismarāḥ santi ca tatra tatra dhyānābhiyogāt smṛtipāṭavāc ca.* |
ato'pi lokaḥ parato'numeyaḥ. sākṣyaṁ ca nanv atra kṛtaṁ mayaiva? ||8||)

Proof III-a, based upon investigation (*parīkṣā*)

'And [the functioning of] the intellect (*buddhi*)[72] is established only by the

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[72] Skt. *buddhi* means 'intellect, mind, discernment, understanding, judgement, perception, notion, idea', etc. (see Monier-Williams 1986 [1899], s.v.; Wogihara Unrai 1986 [1928-1978], s.v.) In the context of our text, *buddhi* is similarly understood as 'intellect' by Meiland (2009, vol. II, 275), Khoroche (1989, 207), and Speyer (1971 [1895], 272) (cf. Haksar 2003, 207: 'intelligence'). The precise range of mental functions covered by the term is difficult to pinpoint in spite of the brief definition in the next stanza: *jñeyāvabodhaṁ ca vadanti buddhiṁ* '*buddhi* is said to be cognition [/perception?] (*avabodha*) of the objects [of knowledge]'. This cognition is further qualified as 'rudimentary' or 'initial' (*ādyā*). Roughly speaking, in this context, the term *buddhi* would therefore appear to refer to what we would nowadays call foetal cognitive functions.

Furthermore, the argument made by this stanza uses *buddhi* as an equivalent of *vijñāna* in the sense of agent of rebirth (see Section 2.1. above) which requires a preceding moment of *vijñāna* as an immediately contiguous condition (*samanantarapratyaya*), *vijñāna* being conceived as an unbroken chain of mental events. Although appearing in another context, we actually find *buddhi* in the sense of a moment in the mental/cognitive flow in Buddhist literature (e.g. AKBh 193.19; cf. AKVy 346.29-33). In Buddhist sources, the word also has the meaning of 'awakening', e.g. AKBh 371.13; cf. AKVy 580.31-32, but this has little relevance here.

Let us also note that *buddhi* is one of the objects of valid cognition (*prameya*) accepted in Nyāya philosophy. Its definition is quite broad, amounting to cognition in general. E.g. 'Intellect, comprehension, and knowledge – their meaning is not different' (*buddhiḥ upalabdhir jñānam ity anarthāntaram. Nyāyasūtra* III.1.15, Vidyābhūṣaṇa ed. 7). See also *Nyāyasūtra* III.1.17 cited below.

If *buddhi* is a technical term regularly associated with foetal cognitive faculties, one would expect to see it used in traditional descriptions of gestation in medical literature. I only looked at the *Carakasaṃhitā* – which is far from enough! – but apart from a couple of remotely resembling occurrences, the terminology is different. Chapter IV of the of the *Śārīrasthāna*, dedicated to 'Foetal

previous [existence of] intellect. Understand from this, too, that there is a
another world,

Because the rudimentary intellect in the womb is the continuation of the
intellect of the previous life.' [Verse 9]

(*yad buddhipūrvaiva ca buddhisiddhir. lokaḥ paro'stīti tato'py avehi.* |
ādyā hi yā garbhagatasya buddhiḥ sānantaraṁ pūrvakajanmabuddheḥ. ||9||)

Proof III-b, based upon investigation (*parīkṣā*)

'And intellect is said to be cognition of the objects [of knowledge].

Therefore, there [must] be an object for the intellect at the beginning
of life [in the womb].

Development' (*Garbhavikrānti*; *Carakasaṃhitā* vol. I, 428ff.) makes no use of the word *buddhi* as such. The process of rebirth, also covered in this chapter, bears, however, some similarities to the Buddhist model albeit with necessary adaptations to the Hinduist orthodoxy. The chapter contains numerous references to the soul (*ātman*) and psychic elements from the earlier life being coalesced with the foetus as well as the mental functions developed during gestation. The embryo is said to originate from the combination (*samudita*) of six factors: mother (*mātṛ*), father (*pitṛ*), soul (*ātman*), suitability (*sāmya*), nutrition (*rasa*), and mind [/psyche] (*sattva*) (*Śārīrasthāna* 4.4; vol. I, p. 428). The embryo is also described as an aggregation (*yukti*) of the five great elements (*mahābhūta*) (i.e. air, wind, fire, water, and earth) and consciousness (*cetana*) (*Śārīrasthāna* 4.6; vol. I, p. 428). Together with the mind (*sattva*), the element of consciousness (*cetanadhātu*) is the first one to activate (*pravartate*) once the mother's ovum and the father's sperm combine. These two receive all other five great elements and stay at the core of their development into the foetus. The element of consciousness (*cetanadhātu*) is qualified by a long list of epithets, such as cause (*hetu*), doer (*kartṛ*), etc. One of these epithets is 'knower' (*boddhṛ*) (*Śārīrasthāna* 4.7; vol. I, p. 429), a word obviously cognate with *buddhi* but not particularly helpful in determining its exact semantic range. The only occurrence of the word *buddhi* which I could find in the *Carakasaṃhitā* with reference to foetal development-cum-rebirth has the meaning of 'intellect' but used rather differently from our stanzas in the *Jātakamālā*. The *Sūtrasthāna* 11.11 (*Carakasaṃhitā* vol. I, 71) raises the possibility that the agent of rebirth is the parents' *buddhi* which transmigrates to the offspring. The *buddhi* appears to refer here to adult 'intellect', in this case that of the parents. More importantly, the *Carakasaṃhitā* denies such a possibility, which makes *buddhi* a poor candidate as a preferred medical term which denotes mental faculties associated with the foetal development-cum-rebirth process.

(By the way, the foetus does display cognitive functions rather early in its development. I do realise it might be a tad over-the-top but prompted by evidence-maniac proclivities (*anuśaya*!), I would mention the following study in support of my statement: Aida Salihagic Kadic and Asim Kurjak, 'Cognitive Functions of the Fetus'. *Ultraschall in der Medizin* 39 (2):181-189, 2018 (doi: 10.1055/s-0043-123469). The scientific findings show that sensory stimuli at cortical level appear from week 25 of the gestation while foetal action planning is established by week 22, etc.)

This [object, however,] does not pertain to this world because [the foetus] has
no eyes [i.e. visual faculty], etc. Hence, the [cognitive sphere] to which
[the object necessary] for the arising [of the intellect in the foetal state
must] pertain to another world [i.e. previous life].' [Verse 10]

(jñeyāvabodhaṁ ca vadanti buddhiṁ. janmādibuddher viṣayo'sti tasmāt |
na caihiko'sau nayanādyabhāvāt. siddhau yadīyas tu paraḥ sa lokaḥ. ||10||)

Proof III-c, based upon investigation (*parīkṣā*)

'It is [often] seen that children and fathers greatly differ in nature (*svabhāva*),
and therefore their character (*śīla*),[73] etc. is different.
Since there is nothing without a cause, it is hence proved that [these differences]
are based [upon habits] acquired in another life.' [Verse 11]

(pitryaṁ svabhāvaṁ vyatiricya dṛṣṭaḥ śīlādibhedaś ca yataḥ prajānām. |
nākasmikasyāsti ca yat prasiddhir jātyantarābhyāsamayaḥ sa tasmāt. ||11||)

Proof III-d, based upon investigation (*parīkṣā*)

'Although his mental abilities are inferior and the senses are still dull,
A new-born [child] will strive to suckle without requiring any instruction.'
[Verse 12]

(paṭutvahīne'pi matiprabhāve jaḍaprakāreṣv api cendriyeṣu, |
vinopadeśāt pratipadyate yat prasūtamātraḥ stanapānayatnam. ||12||)

'This shows that in his previous life he has exerted himself in the practice
[of gathering] food.
For [it is only] the perfection of repeated training [that] sharpens whatever skill,
whether in this or that activity.' [Verse 13]

(āhārayogyāsu kṛtaśramatvaṁ tad darśayaty asya bhavāntareṣu. |
abhyāsasiddhir hi paṭukaroti śikṣāgaṇaṁ karmasu teṣu teṣu ||13||)

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We have here a solid argumentation clearly and coherently sustained, complete with a
statement of its epistemological criteria. It may be not entirely compelling for our modern
naturalistic paradigms, but to a 5th-century Indian audience, the arguments must have

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[73] Or 'virtue, moral behaviour'. Cf. Meiland trans. 2009, vol. 2, 275: 'In distinction of virtue and other
factors,/ parents and children clearly differ in nature'. Although 'virtue' is a distinct semantic
possibility especially in a Buddhist text, I prefer to stay with the more general meaning of 'habit,
custom, natural or acquired way of living, disposition, character', etc. (see Monier-Williams 1986
[1899], s.v.). Cf. Khoroche trans. 1989, 207: 'behave differently'; Speyer trans. 1971 [1895], 272,
'show discrepancies of conduct and the like'.

weighed more heavily. Compared to the long list of similes in the *Pāyāsisuttanta*, many not exactly to the point, Āryaśūra should also be congratulated for his impressive tour de force succinctly couched in elegant poetical language.

This is not to say that the argumentation is logically and epistemologically water-tight, even by Buddhist standards. The Pramāṇavāda tradition will bring improvements and refinements, but this is another chapter in the Buddhist history. For now, let us take a closer look at each point put forth by the text. Then we shall discuss the epistemological criteria which form the backbone of the argumentation.

- **Proof I, based upon perception (*pratyakṣa*)**

The fact that Heaven, with the Sun, the Moon, and the stars is a proof ascertainable by perception may be rather puzzling for us. It did carry, however, substantial weight for most audiences in ancient India. Traditionally, '[t]he universe was conceived as of three distinct parts—the earth (*pṛthvī*), the firmament (*antarikṣa*), and the heavens (*dyaus*)' (Subbarayappa and Sarma 1985, XX). The Sun is, of course, the most important celestial body, followed by the Moon, and the stars (ibid. XX-XXI). They are not only connected to the performance of Vedic sacrifices in which Agni functioned as a mediator between the celestial and the terrestrial world (Subbarayappa 2008, 69). They themselves are also worshipped as deities, the Sun first and foremost.[74] So was the Moon[75] and the stars (*nakṣatra*s), each being associated with a presiding god.[76]

As long as one abides by this traditional cosmology, which attributes the firmament and the heaven distinct ontological status, divine in nature, he/she is compelled to admit the existence of 'another world' (*paraloka*) different from the terrestrial one. And unlike a world after death, hidden to our eyes, the Sun, the Moon, and the stars can be seen, hence directly ascertained by perception. We have seen the same argumentation in the *Pāyāsisuttanta*, where the sceptic king had to accept it as a valid proof (albeit, he declares, insufficient).

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[74] See *Ṛgveda* IV,13,2; VII 60,1; VI,62,2; etc. For more examples in Vedic literature as well as astronomical texts, see Subbarayappa and Sarma 1985, 28-29. See also Saletore 1984, vol. IV, 1406-1413.

[75] The Moon was mainly worshipped under the designation of Soma, his (yes, Soma is a masculine a deity) divine lineage being spelled out in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (see Saletore 1984, vol. IV, 1365). Together with the Sun, it is also one of the nine 'planets' moving around Mount Meru. For more details, see Saletore 1984, vol. IV, 1364-1367.

[76] As Subbarayappa (2008, 69) remarks, *nakṣatra* has three meanings: (1) star in general, (2) one of the 27 equal parts of the zodiac, and (3) a constellation in the zodiac belt. The Vedic literature and traditional astronomical literature (e.g. *Vedāṅgajyotiṣa*) recognises 27 or 28 *nakṣatra*s, each with its presiding deity. Subbarayappa 2008, 71-73, offers a meticulously prepared list of the 28 *nakṣatra*s, with their different names, presiding deities, etc. in various Vedic and astronomical texts.

The second half of the first verse raises more difficulties. One reading, in line with the first half of the verse, would be to take *tiryagvikalpāś ca bahuprakārāḥ* 'the many kinds of various beasts' as a metaphorical reference to the animal-shaped constellations. Several *nakṣatra*s are indeed linked to animal shapes. For instance, Aśvinī is associated with a horse head, Mṛgaśīra with a deer head, Mūla with a lion tail, Pūrvāṣāḍhā with an elephant tusk, etc. (see Subbarayappa 2008, 74-75). But not all *nakṣatra*s have animal shapes. In the end, only an extensive search through astrological, poetical, etc. sources could prove, or disprove, whether comparisons between constellations and animals were a common occurrence in Indian literature. Unable to embark upon such a project, I only mention this reading as a possible interpretation but not the most likely one.

Another interpretation is to construe 'the many kinds of various beasts' as a straightforward reference to the animal world as a destination of rebirth (*gati*) distinct from the human existence. This would mean that this 'other world' of beasts is also staring us in the face, being a perceptually ascertainable proof. Actually this is also how the **Jātakamālāṭīkā* attributed to Dharmakīrti interprets the second half of the verse. For the great logician,[77] 'beasts' (Tib. *dud 'gro* = Skt. *tiryañc*) refer to any member of a class which shares characteristics similar to elephants, horses, donkeys, camels, birds, insects, worms, etc. They constitute a realm different from humans but directly cognisable by direct perception.[78]

I am rather hesitant to choose this interpretation because the argument seems quite weak, if not invalid. For someone not accepting rebirth and its various destinations, this amounts to a circular argument. But maybe I have too high expectations as to the degree of logical soundness which Āryaśūra was able to secure for his 'proof'. Though not entirely satisfied with this interpretative line either, I have to conclude, also in view of the traditional exegesis, that it is more likely than the reading mentioned above.

- **Proof II, based upon the testimony of the Trustworthy Persons (*āptajana*)**

This is more straightforward. It is evidence given by the most advanced adepts who are believed to have ascertained the Truth by cognitive means unavailable. This confers unquestionable epistemic validity, at least to the followers of the respective tradition.[79]

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[77] Supposing that he is the author. See note 56 above.

[78] Tib. *dud 'gro brtag pa ni | dud 'gro brtag pa ste | glang po che dang rta dang bong bu <dang?> rnga mo || dang bya la sogs pa'i mtshan nyid do || rnam pa mango po zhes bya ni | rigs gcig la rnam pa mang po mtha' yas so || 'di ltar 'bu srin la sogs pa gzhan dag kyang | de bzhin nyid du sbyar te | 'dis ni mi'i 'jig rten las gzhan du dud 'gro mngon sum gyis yod pa nyid du ston to ||* (D *Skyes rabs* Hu 315b6-7 = CD-ROM 9, PDF 23703168, image # 630). I am sincerely grateful to Prof. em. Schmithausen for kindly drawing my attention to this commentarial passage.

[79] Interesting to note that only the memories of the spiritual elite seem to count. Semantically, it would be possible to take *smṛtipāṭava* or 'sharpness of memory' as a reference to regular people who can

We shall return to this criterion later, but for now, suffice it to say that although it appeals to an act of belief rather than perception or inference, which have universal application, i.e. inside as well as outside a particular religious tradition, it should be admitted as a cogent argument insomuch as it satisfies the criterion of testimony from the Trustworthy Persons, which is clearly adopted by the text as one of its epistemic standards.

The second half of the second verse – 'And am I not myself [having come from Brahma's World] giving evidence of this?' (*sākṣyaṁ ca nanv atra kṛtaṁ mayaiva?*) –is weaker. It only holds true as long as we believe in the veracity of the story. For a traditional Buddhist follower, however, this was not a major issue. The *jātaka*s were not fiction but reliable accounts of true events. In a traditional setting its validity would not have been questioned. In a sense, being part of the corpus of sacred lore, the *jātaka* tale itself can be said to be a type of testimony from the Trustworthy Persons.

- **Proof III-a, based upon investigation (*parīkṣā*)**

The argument rests upon the premise of the continuity of the mental stream not only during a lifetime but also from one life to another. This is in tune with the Abhidharma scholastics (as well as most other Buddhist traditions) which understands consciousness as an uninterrupted series of mental events essentially different from their physical support, the body. In a passage arguing in favour of the intermediate state of existence (*antarābhava*), Vasubandhu stresses that only an interrupted mental continuum (*sattvasantāna*)[80] can account for the rebirth process and, for that matter, the appearance of mental faculties in human beings.

Given [its] similarity to the continuity of rice,[81] an interrupted existence [of a

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recall their former life/lives. But the compound occurs in the verse which describes the testimony of the Trustworthy Persons, therefore invalidating this line of interpretation. The tradition may have been aware of regular people recollecting former births, but their testimony cannot constitute a proof based on valid knowledge.

Incidentally, this is quite unlike the empirical approach taken by modern scientists like Stevenson (2001), Tucker (2005), Pasricha (2005), etc. who strive to corroborate (or dismiss) claims of memories of past lives. It is only those claims which are backed by careful investigation (*parīkṣā*!) which count as scientifically relevant, no matter if they are made by spiritually advanced people or not. More often than not they actually come from children too young for any serious spiritual practice.

[80] Occurring at AKBh 120.17 et passim. Interesting to note that Vasubandhu uses here *sattva* for 'mind', 'mental', a term similar to one of the factors in the *Carakasaṃhitā* description of the mechanism of rebirth (for more on the latter, see note 72 above).

[81] Skt. *vrīhisantāna* 'continuity of rice' or 'continuous series of rice' may sound strange, but this is how the traditional exegete Yaśomitra (AKVy 267.21-24) explains the simile: it is like taking rice from on village to another. When the rice reaches its place of destination, you don't assume that this is new

mental stream can]not be generated [as an identical mental stream].
(*vrīhisantānasādharmyād avicchinnabhavodbhavaḥ |*
AKBh 120.15; Chapter III, verse 11ab)

The rationale behind this is the following. If we suppose that consciousness comes to an end entirely at the moment of death, then we cannot account for the rebirth (as well as the fruition of the karma seeds still awaiting to manifest themselves). To Vasubandhu, a consciousness reproducing itself from zero is an untenable thesis. Therefore, the continuity of consciousness becomes a sine qua non requirement for the rebirth process.[82] Furthermore, underlying the argument is the belief that a mental continuum cannot arise from non-mental causes. In other words, sensory and mental functions cannot originate merely from physiological causes in a new embryo or foetus. At its core, this is a non-reductionist model of consciousness.

The same presuppositions run through the argument made in Āryaśūra's verse. The model rules out the possibility of conscious moments without previous similar moments. The rudimentary 'intellect' (*buddhi*) in the embryo/foetus necessarily presupposes similar mental events which can only be found in a previous life. 'Understand from this', says Āryaśūra, 'that there is another world' (*lokaḥ paro'stīti tato'py avehi*).

● **Proof III-b, based upon investigation (*parīkṣā*)**
The point Āryaśūra is making here is that the intellect (*buddhi*), which has been established as a sine-qua-non condition for the embryo and foetus, necessarily needs a cognitive object for it to function. But in the earliest stages of uterus life, there are no properly formed sensory organs which could provide access to cognitive objects. The only possibility to account for the functioning of the intellect (which is assumed never to stop) is to make appeal to objects perceived in the previous life (most likely its final moments).[83]

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rice suddenly emerging there. It is the same rice transported from its place of origin. We are obviously dealing with a continuity of the same series of 'rice-events', so to speak.

One word on the meaning of *vrīhi*: its semantic range covers 'grain of rice', 'field of rice', or 'any grain' (Monier-Williams 1986 [1899], s.v.). It is actually the sense of 'grain' which was chosen by the Chinese translations (Paramārtha: 穀 'grain'; Xuanzang: 穀等 'grain, etc.') as well as the Tibetan rendering (*'bru,* 'grain'). The original Sanskrit most likely referred, however, to 'rice' as *vrīhi* is a well attested food in India also used as an oblation since the *Atharvaveda* (5,28,6; p. 127).

[82] And since Vasubandhu belongs to a Buddhist tradition which does not accept that the moment of the new life can happen immediately contiguous to the moment of death in the previous life (as, for instance, the Theravādins believe), he also proves the existence of an intermediary state in between two lives in which the mental continuum keeps functioning uninterrupted.

[83] As well as in the intermediate state in between two lives?

This argument is derived from the doctrine of the intentionality of the cognitive acts. The doctrine is clearly implied in several passages in the early Canon.[84] It becomes enshrined by the Abhidharma scholastics as a central thesis of the Buddhist epistemology. According to it, consciousness is understood as a series of intentional events, i.e. being 'about something' or 'directed at something'. Let's take a look at a relevant citation from the *Abhidharmavijñānakāyapādaśāstra* 阿毘達磨識身足論, one of the seven canonical treatises of the influential Sarvāstivāda school. Traditionally, its author is said to be *Devaśarman 提婆設摩. Modern scholarship tends to regard the treatise as a late work within the *Abhidharmapiṭaka* since we often find more elaborate theories and methodology compared to what appear to be earlier texts.[85] We shall read the passage from Xuanzang's translation 玄奘, the only surviving witness.

> If you set forth that there are mental acts [/events] (*citta*) without [cognitive] support [/object] (*ālambana*), then it is not possible to say together with the *sūtras* that the World-Honoured One (*Bhagavat*) has well spoken,[86] well said, well expounded [the following:] 'Mendicants (*bhikṣu*), "[it] knows, it knows (*vijānāti*),"[87] therefore it is called consciousness (*vijñāna*).[88] What does it

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[84] A close parallel is found at SN III 87.17-22: *kiñca, bhikkhave, viññāṇaṃ vadetha? Vijānātīti kho, bhikkhave, tasmā viññāṇan ti vuccati. kiñca vijānāti? ambalam pi vijānāti, tittakam pi vijānāti, kaṭukam pi vijānāti, madhuram pi vijānāti, khārikam pi vijānāti, akhārikam pi vijānāti, loṇikam pi vijānāti, aloṇikam pi vijānāti. vijānātīti kho, bhikkhave, tasmā viññāṇan ti vuccati.* Though not exactly a close parallel, the following passage in MN I 292.23-28 bears considerable resemblance and in essence also says that consciousness needs an object: *"viññāṇaṃ viññāṇan ti, āvuso, vuccati. kittāvatā nu kho, āvuso, viññāṇanti vuccatīti?" "vijānāti vijānātīti kho, āvuso, tasmā viññāṇan ti vuccati. kiñca vijānāti? sukhanti pi vijānāti, dukkhanti pi vijānāti, adukkhamasukhanti pi vijānāti. vijānāti vijānātīti kho, āvuso, tasmā viññāṇan ti vuccatīti."*

[85] See Dhammajoti 2015, 102-105; Watanabe 1986, 1-8 ('Introductory Explanation' 解題). The latter dates the work about 300-400 years after the Buddha's demise (ibid. p. 5).

[86] Literally, 不應言謂契經中世尊善語 translates as '[you] should not say that "in the *sūtra*s the World Honoured One has well spoken […]"'.

[87] Xuanzang's translation of *vijānāti* is 了別, a binome literally meaning 'understand/make clear' and 'separate'. The first character thus renders the *jānāti* 'know', while the second stresses (one of the) semantic value(s) of the suffix *vi-*, i.e. 'separation, distinction'. To be more in tune with Chinese eyes and ears, the compound should translate as 'discriminates'. I opted, however, for 'know' to stay closer to the supposed Indic word which 了別 translates here.

[88] Watanabe (1986, 28) translates into classical (*kundoku*) Japanese as: 苾芻は了別す。了別の故に名づけて識と為す。 'The *bhikṣu* knows. Since [he/it] knows, it is called consciousness', taking thus 苾芻 *bhikṣu* (or *bhikṣu*s) as the subject or topical focus of the sentence ('speaking of a/the *bhikṣu*(s), he…'). I read here in view of the following sentence in the MN I 292.23-28 parallel cited above:

know? It knows [= perceives] visible objects (*rūpa*), it knows sounds (*śabda*), odours (*gandha*), tastes (*rasa*), tangible objects (*spraṣṭavya*), and mental objects (*dharma*).' If you make such a statement [i.e. cite this canonical proof], you do not conform to the [principles of proper] reasoning (*yukti*) [i.e. contradict your own thesis that there are mental acts without cognitive support]. Now, if you say together with the *sūtra*s that the World-Honoured One has well spoken, well said, well expounded [the following:] 'Mendicants, "[it] knows, it knows," therefore it is called consciousness. What does it know? It knows visible objects, it knows sounds, odours, tastes, tangible objects, and mental objects', you should not say that there are mental acts without [cognitive] support [/object]. If you [still] say that there are mental acts without [cognitive] support [/object], you do not conform to the [principles of proper] reasoning.
(若汝説有無所縁心, 則不應言謂契經中世尊善語, 善詞, 善説 : "苾芻, 了別, 了別, 故名為識。何所了別？謂 : 了別色, 了別聲、香、味、觸、法。" 作如是言, 不應道理。
汝今若言謂契經中世尊善語, 善詞, 善説 : "苾芻,了別,了別,故名為識。何所了別？謂 : 了別色, 了別聲、香、味、觸、法。", 則不應説有無所縁心。言有無所縁心, 不應道理。T 26.535a11-18)

Proofs III-c and III-d, based upon investigation (*parīkṣā*)
Neither argument seems to presuppose specific Buddhist doctrines. They rely on empirical observations. The first (Proof III-c) focuses on the fact that children's character, behavioural patterns, etc. often diverge from their biological inheritance, or as our text puts it, from their paternal (*pitrya*) nature (*svabhāva*), character (*śīla*), etc. This must be something which has kept people wondering about throughout history. More than in our age, such an observation was probably rather puzzling in a traditional society where external influences upon a child's development were much more limited. It is therefore tempting to look for reasons other than nature or nurture, particularly in those cases where the personality gap is too large. And indeed the argument from rebirth comes in handy.

The second argument (Proof III-d), similar in its presupposition of habits accumulated in an earlier life, adduces such simple skills as suckling displayed by neonates without any previous training as evidence for past life experience. Nowadays, we attribute this to innate behaviour, and although some of its aspects remain unknown or controversial, we link this to a complex interplay of the DNA heritage triggered in specific circumstances. For a traditional Buddhist, however, rebirth functioned as a more

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vijānāti vijānātīti kho, āvuso, tasmā viññāṇan ti vuccati, which is similarly construed by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2005, 388 (cf. also note 431): "'It cognizes, it cognizes', friend; that is why 'consciousness' is said."

natural explanation.[89]

- **Epistemic criteria**

Let us now turn our attention to the epistemic criteria upon these arguments are based. The very fact that Āryaśūra clearly states them before embarking upon his argumentation shows a great improvement from the *Pāyāsisuttanta*. The denizen of the Brahma world does not make mere pronouncements. His divine position notwithstanding, he tells the sceptic king that the truth of rebirth

> can be grasped by reasoning (*yukti*) [based upon] means of valid cognition (*pramāṇa*) [such as] direct perception (*pratyakṣa*), etc., [a plain truth in keeping with] the method taught by the Trustworthy Persons (*āptajana*) and ascertainable by [following the proper] course of investigation (*parīkṣā*). (*pratyakṣādipramāṇayuktigrāhyam, āptajananidarśitakramaṁ parīkṣā-kramagamyaṁ ca*).

Prima facie, this threefold model looks like a parallel rewording of the three criteria of valid cognition advocated in early (pre-Dignāga) Buddhist epistemology, i.e. perception (*pratyakṣa*), testimony given by the Trustworthy Persons (*āptajana*), and inference (*anumāna*).[90] Indeed the *Jātakamālā* employs identical terms for the first two

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[89] A similar argument in favour of rebirth (presupposing, however, a lasting soul as its agent) is also found at *Nyāyasūtra* III.1.19 (Vidyābhūṣaṇa ed. 68). I am grateful to Prof. em. Schmithausen for his kindly pointing out this parallel.

It is also interesting to mention in this context that many cases of substantiated claims of memories of previous lives display behavioural patterns typical of their former existences (see Stevenson 2001, Tucker 2005, Pasricha 2005, etc.). Although simpler behavioural patterns like the new-born's suckling may have nothing to do with former lives (most likely being DNA-based mechanisms), there are some exceptional cases of skills for which a former life origin appears to be plausible. I find this research fascinating, but I hesitate to commit myself unconditionally to the rebirth hypothesis. I do believe, however, that rigorous research into substantiated claims of past lives memories cannot be dismissed off-hand as non-sense. This field deserves the full attention of the academic circles as well as the general public. We need, however, more data and researchers working from various perspectives and methodological frameworks before more certain conclusions can be reached.

[90] As argued by Franco (2010), the earliest attested example in a Buddhist source of a discussion of the epistemological criteria of validity is found in the so-called Spitzer manuscript. The text seems to date back to the early 3rd CE. In Franco 2005, the author dates the manuscript to 200-230 CE on the basis of palaeographical features while in Franco 2010, he argues that the doctrine of comparison, referred to in the text, 'was current at least two centuries before Vātsyāna' (ibid. 137), whom the author dates to the second half of the 5th century (ibid. 136). (We also owe to Franco (2004) an

items, but the last one, *parīkṣā* or 'investigation', raises a few problems.

By and large, *parīkṣā* would appear to correspond to *anumāna* or 'inference'. Equating the two terms is, however, far from straightforward. The first criterion cited above speaks of *pratyakṣādipramāṇa°* 'valid means of cognition [such as] direct perception, <u>etc.</u>'. The word *ādi* 'etcetera' usually implies in such contexts *anumāna*, which would make the use of *parīkṣā* superfluous.

What further complicates the issue is that Verse 8c (*ato'pi lokaḥ parato'numeyaḥ*) employs *anumeya* 'should be inferred/is inferable', a form obviously connected to *anumāna*. Here what 'should be inferred' refers to evidence derived from the memories of advanced contemplatives, i.e. Trustworthy Persons. Āryaśūra was therefore fully aware of the term but chose to use *parīkṣā* in a place where one would expect to see *anumāna*.

As far as I know (which admittedly is not much), *parīkṣā* does not seem to be used as a synonym or explanatory word for *anumāna* either in early Buddhist logic or in later Pramāṇavāda literature. Of course, we do find *parīkṣā* in a variety of Buddhist sources using the term in its broad sense of 'investigation, examination'. The *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* (122.9), for instance, urges the practitioner to employ *parīkṣā* vis-à-vis all phenomena (*sarvadharma*) by means of the famous tetralemma (*cātuṣkoṭika*). The *Madhyāntavibhāgabhāṣya* (50.8) similarly prescribes the application of *parīkṣā* to the noxiousness (*dauṣṭhulya*) of the body, a reflective process which leads to the realisation of the truth of suffering (*duḥkhasatya*). A passage in the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* (207.13) describing Sāṃkhya views employs the compound *pravicayaparīkṣā* 'thorough investigation' in connection to dissolution (*pralaya*) up to the atom (*paramāṇu*) level. The title of Dignāga's brief but influential work defending the theory of mind-only (*cittamātra*) is *Ālambanaparīkṣā* or *Investigation of the Cognitive Object*, *parīkṣā* being used in a general sense of philosophical/reflective examination.[91] All 27 chapters in

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excellent edition, translation, and introductory study of the Spitzer manuscript.) Another early mention of the three criteria is found in the *Śrāvakabhūmi*, now part of the encyclopaedic *Yogācārabhūmi* but originally compiled as an independent work probably between circa 200-270 (on the formation of the text, see Deleanu 2006, 154ff; a reference to three criteria is found at ibid., vol. I, 323: Skt. ed.; vol. II, 365-366; Tib. ed.; vol. II, 417: Ch. ed.; vol. II, 449: English translation (see also note 90 on p. 502 for a brief discussion and bibliographical references). See also Yoshimizu 2010, on logical elements in the *Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra*. The *Kośa* also makes frequent use of *anumāna* (AKBh 76.22, 99.2, 134.17, 193.15, 461.5, 461.10) and *pratyakṣa* (AKBh 76.22, 102.11, 246.2., 461.5).

[91] Apart from a few citations in Sanskrit (see Tola and Dragonetti 2004, 12), the text has survived only in its Tibetan and Chinese translations. We can be sure, however, of the original title thanks to the Tibetan translation which as usual gives the title in Sanskrit as well as Tibetan: *rgya gar skad du | ā laṃ ba na pa rī ksha | bod skad du | dmigs pa brtag pa |* (Duckworth et. al. 2016, 218). (The Tibetan word translating *parīkṣā* is *brtag pa* 'investigation, examination, enquiry', etc.) The Tibetan Canon also preserves Dignāga's autocommentary: *Ālambanaparīkṣāvṛtti* (*dMigs pa brtag pa'i 'grel pa*) (P

Candrakīrti's *Prasannapadā* contain °*parīkṣā* in their titles, e.g. *Pratyayaparīkṣā* 'Examination of Conditions' (chapter 1, pp. 1ff.), *Svabhāvaparīkṣā* 'Examination of the Nature [of the Phenomena]' (chapter 15, pp. 259ff.), *Kālaparīkṣā* 'Examination of Time' (chapter 19, pp. 382), *Nirvāṇaparīkṣā* "Examination of Nirvāṇa' (chapter 25, pp. 519ff.), etc. Here, too, the term *parīkṣā* is used in a general (if Madhyamaka-coloured) sense, i.e. a thorough (as well as à-la-*prasaṅgika*-critical) analysis of a topic.[92]

As far as I can say, the only use of *parīkṣā* with a more technical meaning relevant to logical contexts comes from Nyāya literature. Though the word is also employed in a non-technical sense, *parīkṣā* came to refer in some contexts not to examining in general but rather to a particular type of linguistico-epistemological investigation, i.e. whether a definition applies correctly to the object which it is supposed to define, in other words, whether the signified matches the signifier.[93] For instance, Vātsyāyana, the earliest known exegete of the *Nyāyasūtra*s,[94] tells us,

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No. 5703; D No. 4205). We have an excellent Tibetan edition of both the root-text (consisting of only 8 stanzas) and the *Vṛitti* in Duckworth et. al. 2016, 218-219 and 220-224 respectively (see also Tola and Dragonetti 2004, 29-32). The text was translated three times into Chinese by (1) Paramārtha 眞

諦, *Si chen lun* 思塵論, (2) Xuanzang 玄奘, *Guan suoyuan lun* 觀所緣論, and (3) Yijing 義淨,

Guan suoyuan lun 觀所緣論. Yijing also rendered Dharmapāla's 護法 commentary: *Guan suoyuan lun shi* 觀所緣論釋. All these four texts were translated into Classical Japanese (*kundoku* style) by Ui 1958, 25-69 (with annotations, pp. 71-131). For English translations of the *Ālambanaparīkṣā* and *Ālambanaparīkṣāvṛtti*, see Duckworth et. al. 2016, 38-39 and 40-47 respectively (the latter also collated with the Chinese translations); Tola and Dragonetti 2004, 33-38 (with annotations, pp. 39-51). Duckworth et. al. 2016 also contains editions and translations (as well as introductory studies) of the Vinītadeva's *Ālambanaparīkṣāṭīkā* as well as the most important commentaries by traditional Tibetan authors up until the 20th century. In this exegetical literature, the term *parīkṣā* does not appear to receive special attention. It either has no gloss or is understood in its general sense. Cf. Yeshes Thabkhas: 'In general, in this Treatise, *Investigation of the Percept*, the matters to be investigated include: What is the percept? What is its nature? How is a percept conveyed to cognition through a representation?' (English translation in Duckworth et. al. 2016, 176; cf. Tib. ed., ibid., 290).

[92] Also see *Prasannapāda* 132.12: *parīkṣaka*; 132.15: *parīkṣya*; 200.1, 253.13, 362.2: *parīkṣyamāṇa*; 448.16: *parīkṣita*. Incidentally, Tib. translates °*parīkṣā* = °*brtags pa*, similar to the *Ālambanaparīkṣā* (see note 91 above) as well as numerous other contexts.

[93] Cf. Nakamura 1983, 120.

[94] Vātsyāyana is dated between 425 and 500 A.D. by Potter (1977, 239; cf. also the discussion of other dates). The 5th century is, as far as I know, adopted by many scholars working in the field.

Traditionally, the author of the *Nyāyasūtra*s is known as Gautama or Gotama. According to Potter 1977, 220, 'it was not until around the 2nd century A.D. that the work took the form in which it now appears.' Various other dates have, however, been suggested, including Oberhammer's hypothesis that

And the method (*pravṛtti*) [95] of this treatise is threefold: statement [/enunciation of a topic] (*uddeśa*), [its] definition (*lakṣaṇa*), and [its] investigation (*parīkṣā*) […].[96] Investigation is the ascertainment by means of the methods of valid cognition whether the defined corresponds or not to [its] definition.

(*trividhā cāsya śāstrasya pravṛttiḥ: uddeśo lakṣaṇaṃ parīkṣā ceti.* […] *lakṣitasya yathā lakṣaṇm upapadyate na veti paramāṇair avadhāraṇaṃ parīkṣā. Nyāyabhāṣya* 11.16-17; 18-19)[97]

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different chapters have different formation, all being compiled together sometime after the 4th century (see ibid., 220-221).

[95] Skt. *pravṛtti* also means 'activity, efficacity, function; practice application, use', etc. *Pravṛtti* or 'activity' is actually one of the objects of valid cognition (*prameya*) recognised by the Nyāya philosophers: 'activity is [that which] triggers [the functioning of] speech, mind, and body' (*pravṛttiḥ vāgbuddhiśārīrāmbha iti*; *Nyāyasūtra* III.1.17, Vidyābhūṣaṇa ed. 8). A more literal rendering of the word in the passage above would be 'the activity [of analysing various topics] in this treatise is threefold'. I adopt, however, the freer rendering of 'method' which sounds more natural here (and by and large refers to the way an 'activity' is done). Cf. Iyer 1979, 6, translating as 'procedure'; Preisendanz 1994, vol. II, p. 202, note 23, rendering into German as *Vorgehensweise* or 'way of action'.

[96] Iyer 1979, 6, renders these three terms as 'enumeration', 'definition', and 'analysis' respectively. Preisendanz (1994, vol. II, p. 202, note 23), one of the leading experts in the field, translates them into German as *Anführung* ('naming', 'referring to'), *Kennzeichnung* ('denoting', 'labelling'), and *Überprüfung* ('examining') respectively. (I hope my English renderings in brackets are close enough. German is as subtle and ineffable as Sanskrit.)

[97] Vātsyāyana comments here the famous *Nyāyasūtra* I.1.3: 'Perception, inference, comparison [/analogy], the word [of Trustworthy Persons, i.e. verbal testimony] are the means of valid cognition' (*pratyakṣānumānopamānaśabdāḥ pramāṇāni.* (Ruben ed. 2; Vidyābhūṣaṇa ed. 3; Vidyabhushana and Vidyaratna ed. 12).

A similar definition is found in Keśava Miśra's *Tarkabhāṣā* (Iyer ed. 1979, 5.33-34): *lakṣitasya lakṣaṇm upapadyate na veti vicāraḥ parīkṣā* 'Investigation is the examination whether the defined corresponds or not to [its] definition'. (Keśava Miśra is dated by Potter, 1977, 663, around mid-13th century.) In his annotation to the passage, Iyer 1979, 6-7, mentions three semantic errors which the process of *parīkṣā* should check and avoid: (1) *ativyāpti* 'over-applicability', which is the over-stretching of a feature stated by the definition beyond its referential range (e.g. one of the characteristics of a bull is having horns (*śṛṅgitva*), but if we overly extend its application, we will end up including all animals having horns in the definition of a bull); (2) *avyāpti* 'partial applicability', which refers to including unessential attributes into the definition (like, for instance, choosing the colour brown as an essential semantic feature of the definition of 'bull', which thus becomes applicable only to brown bulls); and (3) *asaṃbhava* 'total inapplicability' is adopting a false, inexistant features

To return to our *Jātakamālā* passage, *parīkṣā* does not appear to have the technical meaning we find in the Nyāya treatises. What type of epistemic process is it then? Roughly speaking, the core of the *parīkṣā*-based proofs come under the category of inferential judgements (*anumāna*), but not so neatly as we may expect. Let us first remind ourselves what *anumāna* is, and then see how it applies to Āryaśūra's proofs. For this, Mokṣākaragupta's brief definition in the *Tarkabhāṣā* comes in handy.[98]

> **The explanation of the word *anumāna***: *māna* [in *anumāna*] refers to [the act of] a cognitive object being judged [/known][99] by this [means of valid knowledge]; [the prefix] *anu* [in *anumāna*] means 'subsequent'. *Anumāna* is [thus] judgement subsequent [to previous cognitive acts]. The knowledge subsequent to grasping the [logical] sign [/probans] (*liṅga*) and calling to mind the connection between the [logical] sign and that possessing the [logical] sign [/probandum] (*liṅgin*), [knowledge] of an object not directly perceived and regarding the locus (*dharmin*), [such as] mountain, etc. – this very [type of cognition] is meant by the word *anumāna*. And this is to be understood according to the conventional usage.
>
> (***anumānaśabdanirvacanam***: *mīyate 'rtho 'neneti mānam. anuḥ paścādarthe. paścān mānam anumānam. liṅgagrahaṇaliṅgaliṅgisambandhasmaraṇayoḥ paścāt yad vijñānaṃ parvatādau dharmiṇi parokṣavastvālambakaṃ tad evānumānaśabdenābhidhīyate. etac ca ruḍhivaśād avagantavyam. Tarkabhāṣā* 17.6-10).[100]

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in the definition (as in saying that bulls have one hoof while in reality they are double-hoofed).

The term *parīkṣā* (as well as verbal forms of *pari-√īkṣ*) is also used by Vācaspati Miśra II in his *Nyāyatattvāloka* (40.7, 80.6, 138.10). Preisendanz 1994, vol. 1, p. 1, dates Vācaspati Miśra II to *circa* 1410-1490.

[98] Mokṣākaragupta is dated by Kajiyama 1966, 6-11, sometime between 1050-1202. The author is quite late (actually one of the very last Buddhist logicians on Indian soil), but his treatment of the subject follows the 'orthodox' lines of Dharmakīrtian system, something he makes clear in the salutary verse (*Tarkṣabhāṣā* 15.3-4). The work is often referred to as a 'Manual of Buddhist Logic', but a more faithful translation of the title would be *Language of Logic* or *Discourse on Reasoning*. For English translations, see Kajiyama trans. 1966, Singh ed. and trans. 1988, etc.

[99] Literally, *mīyate* translates 'is measured'.

[100] For the sake of reference, here is how Mokṣākaragupta defines perception:

'**The two types of valid cognition [and] the explanation of the word *pratyakṣa***:

This [i.e. the valid knowledge] is twofold, to wit, perception (*pratyakṣa*) and inference (*anumāna*). Perception is [a *tatpuruṣa* compound analysed as] 'depending on [/connected to] (*pratigata*) an organ of sense (*akṣa*)'. Organ of sense refers to [any of the following] sensory organs (*indriya*),

Like many technical definitions in logic and epistemology, the paragraph above sounds more difficult than what it actually means. As often in Indian philosophy and clearly hinted at in the passage, the concrete example which Mokṣākaragupta had in mind was the inference of fire on a mountain (*parvata*) from seeing the smoke. To put this in his logical jargon, we know that **there is fire** (*liṅgin* = probandum, the phenomenon possessing/associated with smoke) **by seeing smoke** (*liṅga* = probans, the sign of fire) **and calling to mind** our (empirically warranted) cognition of the **link between fire and smoke**. We may **not perceive directly the fire**, **but** based on the above cognition, we draw the conclusion that **the locus** (*dharmin* = the mountain) **where the smoke occurs is necessarily associated with fire**. (Pretty tortuous, isn't it? I hope firefighters don't spend any time on analysing such syllogisms while on the job.)

How does this syllogistic formula work in the case of Proof III-c? Intuitively, its point is not difficult to grasp: since some behavioural or mental traits cannot be accounted for through parental inheritance or education, they must go back to a former life. Thus, we know that **there is rebirth** (*liṅgin* = probandum) **by seeing unaccounted mental traits** in the present life of an individual <u>as well as by surmising similar traits in a previous life of the same individual</u> (*liṅga* = probans) **and calling to mind** our (<u>non-empirically warranted</u>) cognition of the **link between this life and the previous one**. Although we **cannot ascertain directly the previous life**, based on the above (<u>half-conjectural</u>) cognition, we conclude that the locus (*dharmin* = the same individual) must be reborn (and his/her mental continuum must have preserved the same series of mental events = traits in question).

It does not quite work, does it? I don't mean only as a watertight proof (at least for someone entrenched in a naturalistic paradigm like my hell-bound mental continuum), but also from the viewpoint of a logically tight, economically constructed formula. Maybe the propositions could be rewritten in simpler terms, but I think the result won't be as simple as the smoke/fire-on-the-mountain syllogism. I wouldn't not go as far as denying the proof a logical structure, but it does contain too many presuppositions and premises (which I have underlined), each in need of spelling out.[101]

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i.e. eye (*cakṣu*), ear (*śrotra*), nose (*ghrāṇa*), tongue (*jihvā*), and body (*kāya*).[(1)] Perception is considered [to be] the [non-mediated] cognition (*jñāna*) produced by [any of] these [sense organs].' […] (***pramāṇasya dvaividhyam***; ***pratyakṣaśabdanirvacanam*** *tad dvividhaṃ: pratyakṣam anumānaṃ ceti. pratigatam akṣaṃ pratyakṣam. akṣam indriyaṃ cakṣuḥśrotraghrāṇajihvākāyākhyam. tasmād utpannaṃ jñānaṃ pratyakṣam abhidhīyate.* […] *Tarkabhāṣā* 16.29-32)

[(1)] Literally, 'sensory organs called (°*akhya*) eye, […]'.

[101] This may seem to contradict my (cautiously qualified) openness to take into consideration data provided by the research into substantiated claims of memories of previous lives. It does not. Such

Furthermore, if we turn our attention to the other *parīkṣa*-based proofs, we see that some rest not only on simple observations (= empirically warranted cognition), but also on Buddhist doctrines like the idea of mental events requiring previous mental events or the intentionality of consciousness. The proofs are not purely inferential (although the doctrines themselves may rest on inferential judgement). They combine elements of accepting the tradition, inclining thus towards the testimony of the Trustworthy Persons.

True, most of our inferences are not as simple as the smoke/fire-on-the-mountain syllogism. They may be analytically reduced to nuclear syllogisms, but many, if not most, would end up being something like the *parīkṣa*-based proofs, i.e. involving quite a few tortuous steps and combining non-empirically warranted elements and presuppositions. If Āryaśūra had in mind the neatly structured smoke/fire-on-the-mountain syllogism as the one and only formula of *anumāna*, then he may have preferred another term for more complex (clusters of) inferential judgement, also allowing for hybrid elements. This was *parīkṣa*.

Actually, Āryaśūra may not have been the only one who made such a choice. The semantic range of *parīkṣā* in the *Jātakamālā* passage seems to be closer to the use of the same term in the *Carakasaṃhitā*, the famous classic of Āyurvedic medicine.[102] It comes as no surprise that doctors needed to be thorough in their examination (*parīkṣā*) not only of particular symptoms and conditions but also of the methodological criteria upon which their correct knowledge and diagnosis depended.

As Karin Preisendanz (2010, 29-30) remarks in her excellent contribution on the

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data is relevant to a naturalist paradigm as long as the behavioural patterns attributed to a former existence can be objectively traced and corroborated by evidence (especially if the knowledge of this behaviour is otherwise inaccessible to the subject in question). It is not so much the idea that former-life behaviour can be inherited but rather the way in which we prove and ascertain it.

[102] Like almost any other text in Indian literature, the exact date of the *Carakasaṃhitā* is not known. According to the legend, it was taught by Atreya, codified by his most brilliant disciple Agniveśa, enlarged and refined by Caraka (hence the title *Carakasaṃhitā* or *Caraka's Compendium*), and finally revised and edited in its present form by the Kashimiri scholar Dṛḍhabala (see Sharma 2001-2003, vol. 1, V-VI). According to Meulenbeld (1999, vol. 1-A, 114), one of the leading historians of Indian medicine, 'The philosophical material in the *Carakasaṃhitā* leads inevitably to the conclusion that it consists of a mosaic of elements derived from diverse schools of thought, often modified in the service of medicine, and mixed with concepts not found elsewhere. The same material suggests that the author called Caraka cannot have lived later than about A.D. 150-200 and not much earlier than about 100 B.C.' (Meulenbeld discusses in detail Caraka's identity and date at ibid., 105-115.) As for Dṛḍhabala's revision and redaction, it is surmised to have taken place in the 6th century CE (see Maas 2010). Even if the text of the *Carakasaṃhitā* was not fixed in the form we have today, many, if not most, of its ideas and terms must have existed during Āryaśūra's time (4th century). In one way or another, he may have become familiarised with the *Carakasaṃhitā*, especially its more philosophical parts.

emergence of the term *nyāya*,

> […] the Āyurvedic tradition must have also participated in the epistemological discourse of the early classical period (1st to 3rd centuries) by contributing its own ideas and have integrated concepts developed by other thinkers belonging to the relevant intellectual milieu. The strong Āyurvedic concern with examination (*parīkṣā*) is documented in the *Carakasaṃhitā* by the several different contexts in which examination, its means and its objects are presented and in which the act of examination is referred to and enjoined. […] Indeed, although examination – in the sense of means of examination – as understood in the *Carakasaṃhitā* is of various types, including especially perception, inference, "combination" (*yukti*) and tradition, and although the act of thorough examination has accordingly to be understood as combining various means of examination, a strong emphasis on intellectual examination involving inference, and possibly, "combination" is implied by the term *parīkṣā*, other derivations of *pari-√īkṣ* and related formations, and with it the use of reasons.

Let us 'examine' a few occurrences of *parīkṣā* in the *Carakasaṃhitā*. The doctor should first examine ten types of general factors (*etad daśavidham agre parīkṣyaṃ*; *Vimānasthāna* ch. 8, § 79; vol. I, p. 370, l. 26), to wit, the agent (*kāraṇa*), instrument (*karaṇa*), origin of act (*kāryayoni*), act (*kārya*), result of the act (*kāryaphala*), after-effect (*anubandha*), place (*deśa*), time (*kāla*), action (*pravṛtti*), and method (*upāya*) (*Vimānasthāna* ch. 8, §§ 68-78; vol. I, pp. 369-370). He should then proceed with the particular *parīkṣā*, of which the text says, 'there are indeed numerous types of examination as well as various methods to be examined' (*bahuvidhā hi parīkṣā tathā parīkṣyavidhibhedaḥ. Vimānasthāna* ch. 8, § 81; vol. I, p. 371, l. 9). The semantic range of 'examination' does not stop here. A brief statement of its epistemological framework tells us that *parīkṣā* rests upon and can also refer to the means of valid cognition.

Now, for those knowledgeable, [103] there are, however, two types of examination:

> perception (*pratyakṣa*) and inference (*anumāna*). Indeed, this pair alongside instruction (*upadeśa*)[104] should be [considered as the criteria for] examination. This examination [can be] thus [classified as] of two types or of three types

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[103] Skt. *jñānavatāṃ* 'for those knowledgeable' or as Sharma (2001-2003, vol. I, p. 371) renders, 'those who have already acquired (scriptural) knowledge'.

[104] Sharma (2001-2003, vol. I, p. 371) translates *upadeśa* as 'authoritative instruction' which amounts to the method taught the Trustworthy Persons (*āptajananidarśitakrama*) in the *Brahmajātaka* (as well as the reliable verbal testimony (*śabda*) in Nyāya, etc.)

[depending on the] inclusion of instruction.
(*dvividhā tu khalu parīkṣā jñānavatām: pratyakṣam anumānaṃ ca. etad dhi dvayam upadeśaś ca parīkṣā syāt. evam eṣā dvividhā parīkṣā, trividhā vā sahopadeśena. Vimānasthāna* ch. 8, § 83; vol. I, p. 371, ll. 25-26)

The full set consists, however, of four criteria of validity, and it is this epistemological framework which is often employed by the *Carakasaṃhitā*.

Now, the entire [reality can be divided into] just two kinds, [to wit,] existent [/real] (*sat*) and non-existent [/non-real] (*asat*). Its examination (*parīkṣā*) is of four kinds, i.e. instruction from the Trustworthy Ones (*āptopadeśa*), perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), and combination (*yukti*).
(*dvividham eva khalu sarvaṃ sac cāsac ca. tasya caturvidhā parīkṣā: āptopadeśaḥ, pratyakṣam, anumānaṃ, yuktiś ceti. Sūtrasthāna* ch. 11, § 17; vol. I, p. 72, ll. 1-2)

The similarity does not end here. We actually find *parīkṣā* used in a section which describes and puts forward arguments in favour of rebirth. After the definition of the four-criteria set enumerated above, the text continues,

This and only this[105] is the [proper] examination (*parīkṣā*) by which the entire [reality] is examined (*parīkṣyate*). And upon thus examining by it the existent [/real] and the non-existent [/non-real], [it becomes clear that] rebirth (*punarbhava*) exists [/is real].
(*eṣā parīkṣā nāsty anyā yayā sarvaṃ parīkṣyate. parīkṣyaṃ sad asac caivaṃ tasyā cāsty punarbhavaḥ. Sūtrasthāna* ch. 11, § 26; vol. I, p. 73, l. 1)

The rebirth is then examined by each of the four criteria set forth above. And guess what? A couple of the arguments resemble Āryaśūra's proofs. Not all, to be sure. The philosophical core of the *Carakasaṃhitā* is Brahmanic, and its main working hypotheses, so to speak, reflect the concepts of its orthodoxy. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the Vedas are regarded as the fundamental criteria of 'instruction from the Trustworthy Ones' (*Sūtrasthāna* ch. 11, § 27; vol. I, p. 73). And the real agent of rebirth is the eternal *ātman* (*Sūtrasthāna* ch. 11, § 12; vol. I, p. 71).

Nonetheless, although couched in a Brahmanic terminology and structured in a way different from the *Brahmajātaka*, some arguments are similar. The argument based on perception, for instance, appeals to the direct experience by divine eye (*divyacakṣu*) of

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[105] Literally, 'this is the examination, and there is no other [method]'.

the great sages (*maharṣi*) of yore (*Sūtrasthāna* ch. 11, § 29; vol. I, p. 73). This comes close to Āryaśūra's adducing the case of contemplatives who remember their former lives as evidence for rebirth. (The latter is categorised in the *Brahmajātaka* as testimony from Trustworthy Persons; see Proof II above).

Even closer comes the *Carakasaṃhitā* argument of the discrepancies between children and parents. This is adduced as evidence based on perception which observes (*upalabhyate*) that the offspring differ from their mothers and fathers in complexion (*varṇa*), voice (*svara*), appearance (*ākṛti*), mind (*sattva*), intellect (*buddhi*), and fortune (*bhāgya*) in spite of living in similar conditions (*Sūtrasthāna* ch. 11, § 30; vol. I, p. 73). Though worded differently and qualified as *parīkṣā*-based, the point made in Verse 11 of the *Brahmajātaka* (Proof III-c above) is pretty similar.

Was Āryaśūra directly influenced by the *Carakasaṃhitā*? In the absence of more parallels and similarities, it is difficult to draw to a firm conclusion in favour of this scenario. The possibility, however, cannot be ruled out, especially as far Āryaśūra's choice of *parīkṣā* is concerned (as well as hints for some of his proofs?). The Buddhist poet may have been familiar with the text or may have come to know about its ideas and terminology through other sources.

Whatever the source of *parīkṣā* may have been, Āryaśūra probably felt that the word does a better job than *anumāna*. *Parīkṣā* sounds rigorous enough without having the high degree of technical formality of *anumāna* (especially if the latter was conceived in a very narrow sense). Its semantic range as well as usage in similar contexts (like those in the *Carakasaṃhitā*, which he may have known) was broad enough to accommodate not only purely inferential propositions but also hybrid judgements. Last but not least, we should not forget that Āryaśūra was a poet more than a scholastic (at least in the *Jātakamālā*). His primary aim was reaching out to as many hearts as possible rather than nailing it right for an elite of scholarly minds. I couldn't agree more, and therefore shall end my (pseudo-)scholarly *parīkṣā* here and let poetry speak.

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Acknowledgements

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[106] In citing/referring to primary sources, I follow the next editorial conventions.

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AKVy: *Sphuṭārthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā* (Wogihara ed.)

Ālambanaparīkṣā (Duckworth et al. ed.)

AN: *Aṅguttaranikāya* (PTS ed.)

Atharvaveda (Lubotsky ed.)

BHSD: *Buddhist-Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, vol. II (Edgerton).

Carakasaṃhitā (Sharma ed.)

Ch.: Chinese language/translation

CPD: *A Critical Pāli Dictionary* (Trenckner et al. ed.)

D: Tibetan Canon, sDe dge (Derge) ed. (The Tibetan Buddhist Resources Center)

Dhp: *Dhammapada* (PTS ed.)

DN: *Dīghanikāya* (PTS ed.)

Jā: *Jātaka* (PTS ed.)

Jātakamālā (Meiland ed.)[107]

Jp.: Japanese language/translation

Laṅkāvatārasūtra (Nanjio ed.)

Madhyāntavibhāgabhāṣya (Nagao ed.)

Mahābhārata [Poona ed.]

MN: *Majjhimanikāya* (PTS ed.)

MN-a: *Majjhimanikāyāṭṭhakathā* (= *Papañcasudanī*) (PTS ed.)

Nyāyabhāṣya (Vidyabhushana and Vidyaratna ed.)

*Nyāyasūtra*s (Ruben ed.; Vidyābhūṣaṇa ed.; Vidyabhushana and Vidyaratna ed.)

Nyāyatattvāloka (Preisendanz ed.)

P: Tibetan Canon, Peking edition

Paramārthagāthā (Wayman ed.)

Prasannapadā (la Vallée Poussin ed.)

PTS: Pali Text Society

PTSD: *The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary* (Rhys-Davids and Stede ed.)

Skt.: Sanskrit language/original

SN: *Saṃyuttanikāya* (PTS ed.)

Sn: *Suttanipāta* (PTS ed.)

- Pali texts: PTS edition volume and page number, occasionally followed by line number after a dot.
- Sanskrit texts: edition specified in Bibliography, page number, occasionally followed by line number after a dot.
- Chinese texts: Taishō (T) edition of the Canon, volume, page number, segment (a, b, c), occasionally followed by column number.
- Titles of individual *sutta*s/*sūtra*s in the Pali and Chinese Canons have been omitted from the list below.

[107] See note 58 above for other editions, too.

Sn-a: *Suttanipātāṭṭhakathā* (= *Paramatthajotikā*) (PTS ed.)

ŚrBh: *Śrāvakabhūmi* (Shukla ed.)

T: Chinese Canon, Taishō edition

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Tib.: Tibetan language/translation

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Vin: *Vinayapiṭaka* (PTS ed.)

Vism: *Visuddhimagga* (Warren ed.)

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[113] The title does not use the diacritic *ṣ* for *Bhāṣya*.

[114] This reprint does not give the date of the original publication.

[115] The first edition of the translation was published in 1931.