

other.⁷⁰

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In conclusion, the spiritual progress of the early Buddhists in the Pāli Canon depends on their understanding and practice of the Dhamma, rather than their status as lay people or monastics. If the latter are more likely to make substantial progress, this is because of their unique situation. The householder who is fully engaged in working and supporting his or her family may have to concentrate on *dāna* and *sīla*, and the teachings offered to lay people by the Buddha and by senior monks usually concentrate on various aspects of these two methods of acquiring *puñña*, 'merit' or 'karmic fruitfulness'. But teachings on the Four Noble Truths, or on various aspects of meditation, may also be included if the hearers are seen as ready to understand more of the Dhamma. While many became Stream-Winners, those lay disciples in particular who have a measure of independence from worldly ties, or those who are coming to the end of their lives, seem to have a genuine opportunity to become Once-Returners, or even Non-Returners, and (in very exceptional cases) Arahants.

So the difference between monastics and lay Buddhists in the Pāli Canon is more quantitative than qualitative. The monastic life provides ample opportunity for spiritual progress, but of course the individual monk or nun has to make the effort for themselves. The household life has many distractions, but for the determined lay disciple these need not be barriers to spiritual progress. In the Pāli Canon – and by implication in historical and contemporary Buddhism – the progressive path of morality, meditation and wisdom is open to monastics and lay-followers alike. The essential distinction, both then and now, is not between the monastic and the lay-follower, but between the 'ordinary disciple' (who may still be a devout Buddhist rather than a merely nominal one), and the 'noble disciple' who has glimpsed Nibbāna and who is genuinely committed to the understanding and practice of the Dhamma.

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⁷⁰ SN V, 411; tr. Bodhi, *op. cit.*, p.1836.

THE BAD KARMA OF THE BUDDHA¹

GUANG XING

The bad karma of the Buddha is more than probable an important historical issue concerning the concept of the Buddha because it is found in all three Buddhist traditions: Theravāda, Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna. In the Pāli Canon, the Buddha's unskillful deeds are recorded in the *Pubbakammaṭṭhi* of the *Apadāna* and also referred to in the *Milindapañha*.² In the Chinese translation of the Tripiṭaka, they are found in ten different texts,³ while in the Tibetan Canon there are at least five texts concerning this matter.⁴

¹ Originally presented at the UKABS conference, SOAS, 3 July 2001.

² In the Theravāda tradition there is another source relevant to this issue, a *Saṃmaṭṭiya* list of sixteen incidents transmitted by Daśabalaśrimitra in his *Samskṛtāsamskṛtaviniścaya*. It is probably a Dhammarucika list in a Sinhalese work of the fourteenth century or earlier called *Deṭis Karmaya*, which allegedly describes thirty-two such incidents. The manuscript of this work is preserved in the British Library; see K.D. Somadasa, *Catalogue of the Hugh Nevill Collection of Sinhalese Manuscripts in the British Library* 2 (Pali Text Society, 1989), pp.122-3. See also Paul Harrison, 'Some Reflections on the Personality of the Buddha', *The Otani Gakuho* LXXIV, 4 (1995), p.11. Since this is a very late work it does not fall into the scope of our discussion of the debate on the physical body of the Buddha in the period of the early Buddhist schools.

³ (1) the *Pañcaśatasthavirāvadāna*, T 199, 190a-202a, (2), the *Xingqixing Jing*, T 197, 163c-174b, (3) the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya, T 1448, 94a-97a, (4) the *Lokānuvartanasūtra*, T 807, 751b-753c, (5) the *Pusha-xingwushiyuansheng Jing*, T 812, 773a-774c, (6), the *Upayakauśālyasūtra*, T 310:38, 594c-607c; T 345, 156a-165c, T 346, 166a-178b, (7) the *Mahāyānadaśa-dharmakasūtra*, T 310:9, 154c-157a, T 314, 767b-769a, (8) the *Tathāgata-pratibimbapratisthānūsamsāsūtra*, T 692, 788a-c, T 693, 788c-790a, T 694, 790a-796b, (9) the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsāstra*, T 1509, 121c, (10) the *Mahāyānā-vatāraśāstra*, T 1634, 37b-c.

⁴ (1) the *Upayakauśālyasūtra*, translated by Gos Chos Grub (Chi. Wu Facheng) based on Dharmarakṣa rendition (T 345), (2) the *Upayakauśālyasūtra*, translated by Dānaśīla, Karmavarman and Ye šes sde from Sanskrit, (3) the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya, (4) the *Lokānuvartanasūtra* and (5)

The Buddha's bad karma refers to ten problematic incidents that happened in the life of the historical Buddha. They fall into three categories: slander from enemies, assaults from enemies and physical illness. It was probably the Sarvāstivādins who attributed different stories to each of the ten incidents and explained them as the remaining effects of bad karma performed in the previous lives of the Buddha. The following is a summary of the ten bad karmas according to four main texts in which the full stories are given: the *Pubbakammapiloti*, the *Pañcaśatasthvirāvadāna*, the *Bhaiṣajya-vastu* and the *Xingqixing Jing*.⁵

- (1) It is the remaining effect of the bad karma of his slandering an innocent Pratyekabuddha in a former life that the Buddha suffered the slanderous accusation of Sundarī.
- (2) It is the remaining effect of the bad karma of his slandering a bhikṣu of six psychic powers in a previous life out of jealousy that the Buddha suffered the slander of Cīncāmānavikā.
- (3) It is the remaining effect of the bad karma of his wrong accusation of the sage Īṣigama of unchastity as a brahman teacher together with his five hundred pupils in a previous life that they all suffered slander when Sundarī was murdered.
- (4) It is the remaining effect of the bad karma of the Buddha murdering his brother for wealth in a former birth that Devadatta threw a boulder at him and a splinter wounded his foot.
- (5) It is the remaining effect of the bad karma of his feeling of joyfulness upon seeing fish being killed in a previous life that the Buddha suffered headache when Viḍūḍabha killed his kinsmen.
- (6) It is the remaining effect of the bad karma of his cursing the disciples of the Buddha Vipāśyin saying, 'These bald headed śrāmaṇas should be offered coarse barley' that the Buddha ate horse barley for three months.
- (7) It is the remaining effect of the bad karma of his killing a visiting wrestler in a match as a wrestler of a king in a former life that the Buddha suffered backache.

the *Tathāgatapratibimbapratīṣṭhānusamsāsūtra*.

⁵ The Tibetan translation of the *Anavataptagāthā* will not be dealt with, as the present writer does not specialise in Tibetan sources. I will refer to the works of other scholars. According to Harrison (*op. cit.*) the Tibetan texts refers to these several times as *las kyi rgyud bcu po*, i.e., Skt. *daśa-karma-ploti/pluti*.

(8) It is the remaining effect of the bad karma of his administering a wrong purge to the son of a respectable man as a physician in a former life that the Buddha suffered diarrhoea or stomach troubles.

(9) It is the remaining effect of the bad karma of his reviling the Buddha Kāśyapa saying, 'Bald headed śrāmaṇa, enlightenment is difficult to obtain' as Jotipāla in a former life that the Buddha performed six years of severe austerities.

(10) It is the remaining effect of the bad karma of his knocking over the bowl of a Pratyekabuddha in a previous life that the Buddha returned with an empty bowl from a Brahman village.

Sometimes the texts also mention another bad karma in addition to the above ten, but this is late in origin since it is not mentioned in the *Nikāyas* and *Āgamas* nor in the *Pubbakammapiloti*. In a previous life the Buddha killed a merchant with a spear during a voyage in order to save 500 others. As a result, he suffered in hell for a long time and as a remaining effect of that bad karma he suffered from the wooden thorn (*khādīra*) that pierced his foot during an alms tour.

Except for the *Pubbakammapiloti*, which divides the incident of Devadatta into four and makes the number of bad karmas twelve, all the other texts mention ten unskilful deeds. The stories attributed to the ten incidents in all these texts are almost exactly the same and even the names of the people concerned are quite similar except for certain negligible details. This suggests that these ten bad karmas originally derived from one tradition, probably the Sarvāstivādins who collected them together in support of their concept of a human Buddha.

The texts related to the bad karma of the Buddha can be divided into two groups: those texts accepting the bad karma of the Buddha and those texts rejecting the whole matter. The first group probably belongs to the Sarvāstivāda because the theme of these texts is in conformity with their concept of the Buddha that, as a human being, the Buddha had performed bad karma in his previous lives. The second group presumably belongs to the Mahāsāṅghikas, since these texts are in accordance with their concept of the Buddha, who is transcendental and above our empirical world and, as such, not affected by any bad karma.

First, let us discuss the group of texts that accept the bad karma of the Buddha. They include the *Pubbakammapiṭṭi* of the Pāli *Apadāna*, the *Mūlindapañha*, the *Pañcaśatasthavirāvadāna*,⁶ the *Xingqixing Jing*,⁷ the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya,⁸ the last of which survives in both Chinese and Tibetan translations.

The earliest record of the Buddha's bad karma is perhaps found in two texts: the Chinese translation of the *Pañcaśatasthavirāvadāna* and the *Pubbakammapiṭṭi*. The former and the Pāli *Apadāna* in which the *Pubbakammapiṭṭi* is found are similar but not identical, as pointed out by Lamotte.⁹ These two texts record only the bad karma of the Buddha and good karma is not mentioned. The only difference is that the bad karma of the Buddha is mentioned at the end of the *Pañcaśatasthavirāvadāna* while the *Pubbakammapiṭṭi* is at the beginning of the Pāli *Apadāna*. Heinz Bechert is of the opinion that the Pāli *Apadāna* is derived from a recension of the *Anavataptagāthā*, which is part of the Mūlasarvāstivādin Vinaya.¹⁰ Walters thinks that the author of the *Pubbakammapiṭṭi* may have drawn his account from a non-Theravāda school of the 'Hīnayāna'.¹¹ If this is the case, the Hīnayāna school must be the Sarvāstivāda, because their *Divyāvadāna* shows that the Sarvāstivādins knew the issue of the bad karma of the Buddha. The text uses the Sanskrit equivalent term *karmaploti*

⁶ T 199, 190a-202a. This sūtra was translated by Dharmarakṣa in 303 CE. The Buddha's bad karma is found in the last part of the sūtra, 201a-202a.

⁷ T 197, 163c-174b. The whole sūtra is devoted to an explanation of the ten bad karmas of the Buddha.

⁸ T 1448, the part on the bad karma is found in pp.95a-97a, the last part of the *Bhaiṣajyavastu*.

⁹ E. Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism, from the Origins to the Śāka Era*. English translation by Sara Webb-Boin [correctly Boin-Webb] (Louvain-la-Neuve 1988), p.692.

¹⁰ Cited from Sally Mellick Cutler, 'The Pāli Apadāna Collection', *Journal of the Pali Text Society* XX (1994), pp.14-15. See Heinz Bechert, 'Über das Apadānabuch', *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens und Archiv für Indische Philosophie* II (1958), pp.1-21.

¹¹ Jonathan Walters, 'The Buddha's Bad Karma: a Problem in the History of Theravāda Buddhism', *Numen* XXXVII, 1 (1990), pp. 77-9.

quite often, usually in a stereotyped phrase by which hungry ghosts (*preta*) inquire of the Buddha the cause of their fate, asking, 'what is this strand of karma?'¹² It is particularly important to note that the *Divyāvadāna*, in one place, specifically states that 'the previous strands of karma have been disclosed at the Great Lake Anavatapta [by the Buddha who was] with the disciples'.¹³ So the Sarvāstivādins knew not only the term *karmaploti*, but also the actual context of the discourse delivered by the Buddha.

This strongly suggests that the Sarvāstivādins were perhaps the first to have collected all the bad karmas of the Buddha and compiled them together in order to support their teaching that the Buddha was basically a human being. This was then transmitted to its sub-sects and also influenced other Hīnayāna schools.

Walters also thinks that there is a second possibility that the tradition concerning the bad karma may have been invented by the Mahāsāṅghikas since the *Mahāvastu-avadāna* mentions a detailed story about the Buddha being slandered by a woman as a karmic effect.¹⁴ This possibility can be ruled out because the *Mahāvastu* probably did not originally belong to the Lokottaravāda, but to another Sthaviravāda school. The reason for this assertion is that the passage describing the transcendental Buddha is found only in the introductory portion of the *Mahāvastu*, not in the text itself. Scholars such as N. Dutt are of the opinion that, over the course of time, the *Mahāvastu* had been revised by the Lokottaravādins by adding the introductory chapters.¹⁵

The *Bhaiṣajyavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya, which survives in both Chinese and Tibetan translations, mentions the 'bad karma of the Buddha at the end, and Lamotte thinks that it is

¹² Walters, *op. cit.*, 78. See E.B. Cowell and R.A. Neil, ed., *The Divyāvadāna, a Collection of Early Buddhist Legends* (Cambridge 1886), p.87, line 8; p.150, line 24; p.241, line 26.

¹³ Walters, *op. cit.*, 78. *Divyāvadāna*, p.150: *Anavatapte mahāsarasi śrāvakaiḥ sārḍham pūrvikā karmaplotiṃ vyākṛitā bhavati*. Dr Tadeusz. Skorupski orally informs the present writer that this *karmaploti* in the *Divyāvadāna* is one of the ten inevitable actions of the Buddha.

¹⁴ Walters, *op. cit.*, p.78.

¹⁵ N. Dutt, *Buddhist Schools in India* (Delhi 1978), pp.75-7.

an incorporation of the *Pañcaśatasthavirāvadāna* with some additions.¹⁶ The section related to the bad karma of the Buddha is named the *Anavataptagāthā* in the Tibetan translation.¹⁷ The Mūlasarvāstivāda is most probably derived from the Sarvāstivāda, because the term Mūlasarvāstivāda is not mentioned in the earliest Chinese translations of Buddhist texts, and found only in the translation by Yijing, who was active towards the end of the seventh to the beginning of the eighth century. On the other hand, the term Sarvāstivāda had already been mentioned in the translations by Paramārtha, who was active in China in the middle of the sixth century.¹⁸ Since the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* belongs to the Mūlasarvāstivāda, it must have been shared with the Sarvāstivāda. If this supposition is true, the *Pañcaśatasthavirāvadāna* must belong to, or is at least connected with, the Sarvāstivāda.

The *Xingqixing Jing* [Sūtra on the Former Practices of the Buddha] probably also belongs to the Sarvāstivāda. This sūtra contains ten stories solely devoted to the ten bad karmas. The versified introduction to this sūtra informs us that it was preached at Lake Anavatapta at the request of Śāriputra who asks the Buddha why he suffers from the ten bad karmas. The ten stories that follow are all independent works, each consisting of two parts: the prose section, followed by the verse section, which in fact reiterates what is said in the prose section.¹⁹ These ten stories are quite similar to those found in the *Pañcaśatasthavirāvadāna* and it seems that the author of the *Xingqixing Jing* had gathered his material from the latter. This is particularly true with regard to the verse section.

Our analysis of the five texts which accept the Buddha's bad karma strongly suggests that they came from one tradition, which most likely originated with the Sarvāstivādins. They collated the

¹⁶ Lamotte, *op. cit.*, p.692.

¹⁷ Cutler, *op. cit.*, pp.14-15.

¹⁸ T 2032, 18a, b, c.

¹⁹ Each story starts with the phrase 'Thus (I) heard, the Buddha once sojourned at Lake Anavatapta with five hundred bhikṣus who were all arhats with the six transcendental powers' and concludes with the phrase 'all were delighted and happy to accept the Buddha's discourse'.

bad karma not so much for the purpose of supporting the doctrine of their concept of the Buddha, but to refute the concept of the transcendental Buddha of the Mahāsāṅghikas.

The second group of seven texts rejects the whole idea of bad karma and considers it as a skilful means (*upāyakaūśalya*) of the Buddha to save sentient beings. This group apparently belongs to, or at least preaches the doctrine of, the Mahāsāṅghikas. They are seven altogether: (1) the *Lokānuvartanasūtra*, which survives in both Chinese and Tibetan translation, (2) the *Pushaxingwushi-yuansheng Jing*, (3) the *Upāyakaūśalyasūtra*, which survives in three Chinese and two Tibetan translations,²⁰ (4) the *Mahāyāna-daśadharmasūtra*, which survives in two Chinese translations, (5) the *Tathāgatapratibimbapratisthitānusamsāsūtra*, which survives in three Chinese and one Tibetan translations, (6) the *Mahā-prajñāpāramitāśāstra* attributed to Nāgārjuna, and (7) the *Mahā-yānāvātārakaśāstra* of Sthiramati.

The *Lokānuvartanasūtra* teaches the idea that the Buddha's appearance in this world is nothing but a deliberate manifestation for the sake of sentient beings.²¹ It seems that the text reacts to

²⁰ Mark Tatz has translated one of the Tibetan texts as *The Skill in Means Sūtra* (Delhi 1994, repr. 2000). This Tibetan text is actually a translation from the Chinese version (T 345) rendered by Dharmarakṣa in 285 CE. For further reference, see Harrison, *op. cit.*, pp.8-9.

²¹ The *Lokānuvartanasūtra* (T 807, 751b-753c), which was translated by the Indo-Scythian śramaṇa Lokakṣema in 189 CE, is the earliest Chinese translation among all the eight texts in which the bad karma of the Buddha is rejected. The Chinese translation is entirely in prose but, as Harrison points out, apart from the introduction and conclusion, ninety verses are clearly distinguishable. However, the Tibetan translation, undertaken by Jinamitra, Dānaśīla and Ye šes de around the beginning of the ninth century, is entirely in verse containing 113 stanzas. The Tibetan translation displays certain differences from the Chinese version since they are separated by six hundred years. This text is very short and falls roughly into two parts, the first describing the person and life of the Buddha, the second primarily dealing with his teaching. See also Paul Harrison, 'Sanskrit Fragments of a Lokottaravādin Tradition', in L.A. Hercus, ed., *Indological and Buddhist Studies: Volume in Honour of Professor J. W. de Jong on his Sixtieth Birthday* (Canberra 1982, Delhi 1982), pp.211, 212.

and also rejects the Sarvāstivādin view that the Buddha genuinely suffered the remaining effects of bad karma.²² Scholars such as Paul Harrison have already pointed out that this text belongs to the Lokottaravāda, a sub-sect of the Mahāsāṅghikas.²³

The *Pushaxingwushiyuansheng Jing* [(Sūtra on (the Marks of) the Buddha's Appearance as (a Result of) Fifty Causes of the Bodhisattva Practice)] is somewhat similar to the *Lokānuvartana*. The text says that the body of the Buddha is free from any bad smell or blemish, and that no bad karma can reach it. This sūtra basically teaches the same doctrine on the concept of the Buddha as the Mahāsāṅghikas.

The *Upāyakaśālyasūtra* belongs to the Mahāyāna or Mahāsāṅghika-Mahāyāna, because at the end it states that the teaching of *upāyakaśālyasūtra* is not to be given to inferior people who have little merit, or to the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas. It emphasises that only the Bodhisattva-Mahāsattvas are able to understand this profound teaching.²⁴ At the end, the sūtra states: 'In summary, the remaining effects of the bad karma manifested by the Tathāgata are ten and they should be known as the Buddha's *upāyakaśālyasūtra*. The Buddha made a display to demonstrate that

there is a consequence to every action. This is for the sake of the common people who have bad thoughts and revere the non-Dharma, it is not because the Buddha had any bad karma'.²⁵ So the compiler(s) of the *Upāyakaśālyasūtra* must have known of the debate on the bad karma of the Buddha between the Sarvāstivāda and the Mahāsāṅghikas.

The *Mahāyānadaśadharmakasūtra* treats the ten bad karmas as a secret teaching of the Buddha and states that only the Bodhisattva-Mahāsattvas are able to understand it.²⁶ The text asserts that it is not correct to say that the Buddha suffered the retributions of bad karma because he demonstrated them only for the sake of and in sympathy for future generations of sentient beings.

The *Tathāgatapratibimbapratīṣṭhānusamsāsūtra* is a Mahāyāna

²² T 807, 753a, lines 11-12.

²³ The similarities between the *Lokānuvartanasūtra* and the relevant part of the *Mahāvastu* of the Lokottaravāda were first discovered and demonstrated by Takahara Shinichi in his article 'Mahāvastu ni mirareru fukutokuron', in *Fukaoka daigaku sanjūgoshūnen kinen ronbunshū, Jinbunhen* (1969), pp.117-41. Shizutani Masao commented upon this in his *Shoki daijobukkyo no seiritsukatei* (Kyoto 1974), pp.282, 315-18. See Harrison, *op. cit.* (n.20), p.213.

²⁴ T 345, 165c, lines 12-15. Nandi's Chinese translation is somewhat different, 'Good man, I have finished explaining and revealing my ingenuity. You should keep this a secret and not speak of it to lowly, inferior people who have few good roots. Why? Because even Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas cannot comprehend this sūtra, much less can lowly and inferior, ordinary persons believe or understand it. Ordinary people cannot learn ingenuity, and so the Sūtra of Ingenuity is of no use to them; not a single ordinary person can accept and practice it. Only Bodhisattvas can learn and teach the doctrine of ingenuity' (Garma C.C. Chang's translation 'On the Pāramitā of Ingenuity' in *A Treasury of Mahāyāna Sūtras*, Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1983; Delhi 1991, p.464).

²⁵ T 345, 165c.

²⁶ The *Ratnakūṭasūtra*, T 310:9, 154c-157a, and the *Mahāyānadaśadharmakasūtra*, T 314, 767b-769a. Lamotte translates the relevant passage into French which is again rendered into English by Sara Boin[-Webb] as follows: 'How do Bodhisattva Mahāsattvas understand the Tathāgata's cryptic words (*saṃdhāya-bhāṣita*)? Bodhisattva Mahāsattvas are skilled in understanding exactly the deep and secret meaning hidden in the Sūtras. O son of good family, when I predicted to the Śrāvakas their obtaining of supreme and perfect enlightenment, this is not correct: when I say to Ānanda that I have back-ache, this is not correct; when I say to bhikṣus: "I am old, you should get me an assistant (*upasthāyaka*)", this is not correct. O son of good family, it is not correct that the Tathāgata, in various places, triumphed over Tīrthikas and their systems one after another; it is not correct that an acacia thorn (*khadirakapṭaka*) injured the Tathāgata in the foot. When the Tathāgata again says: "Devadatta was my hereditary enemy, he ceaselessly followed me and sought to flatter me", this is not correct. It is not correct that the Tathāgata, on entering Śrāvastī, went on his alms-seeking round in Sālā, the brahmins' village, and returned with his bowl empty. Neither is it correct that Cīñcāmānavikā and Sundarī, attaching a wooden dish to their stomachs [so as to simulate pregnancy], slandered the Tathāgata. It is not correct that the Tathāgata, while dwelling earlier in the land of Verañjā, spent the *varṣa* season in eating only barley'. Here one sentence is missing: 'I said to Maudgalyāyana: "You go and ask Jīvaka, the physician, I am ill, what should I take?"', this is not correct'. See E. Lamotte, *The Teaching of Vimalakīrti*, English translation by Sara Boin (London 1976), p.297.

text praising the immense merit of making Buddha images. One such merit referred to in the text is being free from the retributions of bad karma.²⁷ Then a question arises in the text on whether the Buddha himself had made any image in the past for he encountered many unpleasant events in his life, such as the Devadatta incident and his illness. The sūtra answers this question by saying that the Tathāgata has an eternal body, the *dharmakāya*, which is free from all bad karma, and that those incidents were only demonstrations for the sake of saving sentient beings.

The *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsāstra* mentions bad karma when discussing the power and light of the Buddha.²⁸ According to this text, although the Buddha appeared to have backache, stomach troubles and other problems, they were but skilful means (*upāya-kauśalya*) of the Buddha. The real body of the Buddha, in fact, was perfect and without any illness because the Buddha had already eliminated *all* bad karma and completed *kuśaladharmas* when he attained enlightenment. It is explicit that the sūtra refutes the assertion that the Buddha had bad karma, and the author definitely knew about the debate on bad karma. He refuted the Sarvāstivāda position by adopting the Buddhology characteristic of the Mahāsāṅghikas.

The last text on this issue is the *Mahāyānāvataśāstra* of Śhīramatī which mentions some of the problematic incidents in

the life of Gautama Buddha.²⁹ The text, however, states that it is wrong to say that the Buddha suffered the remaining effects of bad karma, because he had eradicated all unskilful deeds and had immeasurable virtues.

The debate on the bad karma of the Buddha between the Mahāsāṅghikas and Sarvāstivādins lasted several centuries and has led to the question concerning the Buddha's lifespan that eventually contributed to the establishment of the concept of the *sambhogakāya*. This debate also provides evidence on the ways the early schools debated the Buddha's identity and how they compiled texts to support their arguments. This suggests that many sūtras were compiled and written by different schools in support of their doctrinal teachings.

Guang Xing

²⁷ The three Chinese translation of the *Tathāgatapratibimbapratīṣṭhānusamsā-sūtra* are: T 692, translated under the Eastern Han dynasty 25-220 CE; T 693, translated under the Jin dynasty 317-420, and T 694, translated by Devaprajñā in 691. However, only the last one mentions bad karma. What is more, in the latter half of Devaprajñā's translation, the dialogue is mainly conducted between the Buddha and the Bodhisattva Maitreya concerning the merit of making Buddha images. However, in the middle of this dialogue, the sūtra mentions that a person doubted whether the Buddha did make images in the past and thus bad karma is introduced. So the subject is most probably inserted in the text later when bad karma became an issue of debate. According to Bunyiu Nanjio (*A Catalogue of the Chinese Translation of the Buddhist Tripitaka*, Delhi 1989, p.76), there is also a Tibetan translation of the sūtra similar to the first two Chinese translations.

²⁸ T 1509, 121c.

²⁹ T 1634, 37b-c.