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## BUDDHIST HYBRID SANSKRIT: THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGE

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Languages in which the sacred texts of religious traditions have been composed and preserved tend to be looked upon as more than ordinary languages. This is not only true of India. Hebrew has been considered the original language by Christians and Jews alike.<sup>1</sup> This view, which in the case of the Jews is already attested before the beginning of our era, for the Christians of course somewhat later, survived right into the 19th century.<sup>2</sup> A similar view was held by at least some Moslems with respect to Arabic, the language of the Koran and therefore of Allah himself, this in spite of the fact that the composition of the Koran can be dated very precisely in historical and relatively recent times.<sup>3</sup>

In India the followers of the Vedic tradition have always kept Sanskrit, the language of the Veda, in high regard. Sanskrit is the only correct language, other languages being incorrect. Patañjali's *Vyākaraṇa-Mahābhāṣya* (ca. 150 B.C.E.), in its first chapter called *Paspaśāhnika*, distinguishes clearly between correct and incorrect words, pointing out that many incorrect words correspond to each correct word; besides correct *gauḥ* there are many incorrect synonyms: *gāvī*, *goṇī*, *gotā*, *gopotalikā*, etc. There are various [397] reasons for using correct words only, the most important being that this produces virtue (*dharma*) and benefit (*abhyudaya*). Correct words are in fact used in many texts and regions; Patañjali mentions the earth with its seven continents and the three worlds, which shows that for him Sanskrit is *the* language of the universe. Sanskrit is also eternal. The reasons adduced to prove this may seem primitive to us, but they leave no doubt as to Patañjali's convictions. Someone who needs a pot, he points out, goes to a potter and has one made; someone who needs words, on the other hand, does not go to a grammarian to have them made.<sup>4</sup> Some later authors refer to Sanskrit as the language of the gods (*daivī vāk*). Among them is Bhartrhari (*Vākyapadīya* 1.182),

<sup>1</sup> Borst, 1957-63: 147 f. etc. (for an enumeration of the pages dealing with the subject see p. 1946 n. 204); Scholem, 1957: 19, 146; Katz, 1982: 43-88.

<sup>2</sup> Borst, 1957-63: 1696; see also Olender, 1989.

<sup>3</sup> Mounin, 1985: 117; Borst, 1957-63: 337 f., 352 f.; Kopf, 1956: 55 f.; Loucel, 1963-64.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Ibn Fāris' remark: "Il ne nous est point parvenu que quelque tribu arabe, dans une époque proche de la nôtre, se soit mise d'accord pour désigner quelque objet que ce soit, en formant une convention à son sujet." (tr. Loucel, 1963-64: II: 257).

who adds that this divine language has been corrupted by incompetent speakers.<sup>5</sup> The Mīmāṃsakas and others, too, claim without hesitation that the Vedic texts, and therefore also their language, are eternal. I limit myself here to a quotation from Kumāriḷa Bhaṭṭa's Ślokaṵārttika, which states:<sup>6</sup> "For us the word *go* ('cow') is eternal; and people have an idea of the cow from such vulgar deformations of it as *gāṵī*, etc., only when it follows the original [correct] word (*go*); and such comprehension is due to the incapability [of the speaker to utter ... the original correct form of the word]." The example is the same as the one given by Patañjali, but Kumāriḷa adds a dimension which we do not find in the Mahābhāṣya: the original word is *go*, and *gāṵī* is nothing more [398] than a corruption of it.<sup>7</sup> Helārāja, commenting on Vākyapadīya 3.3.30, is even more explicit when he states that in an earlier era (*purākalpe*) language was free from corruptions.<sup>8</sup> He follows here the ancient Vṛtti on Vākyapadīya 1.182 (146).<sup>9</sup> [The much later author Annambhaṭṭa, interestingly, holds the view that not only Sanskrit, but also other languages — like that of the Yavanas — were created by God in the beginning.]<sup>10</sup>

Brahmanism continued to use the language of its sacred texts. The same is true of Theravāda Buddhism, whose sacred language, at present known by the name Pāli, is called Māgadhī by the Buddhists themselves.<sup>11</sup> Māgadhī, we read in Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga, is the original language (*mūlabhāṣā*) of all living beings, the natural form of expression (*sabhāvaniruttī*).<sup>12</sup> The Sammohavinodinī, commentary to the Vibhaṅga of the Abhidhammapiṭaka, ascribes the following opinion to a monk called Tissadatta:<sup>13</sup> "[Suppose] the mother is a Damiḷī, the father an [399] Andhaka. Their [newly] born child, if it hears first the speech of the mother, it will speak the language

<sup>5</sup> A closely similar observation occurs in Bhartṛhari's commentary on the Mahābhāṣya ('Dīpikā'), Āhnika I p. 16 l. 29 - p. 17 l. 1: *anye manyante/ iyaṃ daivī vāk/ sā tu puruṣāśakter ālasyād vā prakīrṇā/*. See also Tripathi, 1986: 88.

<sup>6</sup> ŚIV, Śabdānityatādīhikaraṇa, 276: *gośabde 'vasthite 'smākaṃ tadaśaktijakāritā/ gāṵyāder api gobuddhir mūlaśabdānusāriṇī//* Tr. Jha.

<sup>7</sup> Kumāriḷa does not exclude the possibility that certain words, which are not (no longer?) in use among the Āryas because the objects designated are not familiar to them, survive among the Mlecchas; see Tantravārttika on 1.3.10.

<sup>8</sup> Ed. Iyer p. 143 l. 14: *purākalpe 'nṛtādibhir ivāpabhraṃśair api rahitā vāg āsīd ...*

<sup>9</sup> Ed. Iyer p. 233-34: *purākalpe svaśarīrajyotiṣaṃ manuṣyānāṃ yathāivānṛtādibhir asaṅkīrṇā vāg āsīt tathā sarvair apabhraṃśaiḥ*. See also p. 229 l. 1: *śabdaprakṛtir apabhraṃśaḥ*, and Iyer, 1964.

<sup>10</sup> See Uddyotana I p. 90-91: *vastuta īṣvareṇa sṛṣṭādāv arthaviśeṣavat śabdaviśeṣā api sṛṣṭā eva .../ na hi tadānīm saṃskṛtam eva sṛṣṭam na bhāṣāntaram ity atra mānam asti, tattadyavanādīsṛṣṭau tadīyabhāṣāyā api tadānīm eva sṛṣṭavāt/ na hi teṣāṃ api prathamam saṃskṛtenaiva vyavahāraḥ paścād apabhraṃśarūpabhāṣāpravṛttir iti kalpanāyāṃ mānam asti/*

<sup>11</sup> Hinüber, 1977; 1986: 20.

<sup>12</sup> Vism p. 373 l. 30-31; see also Saddanīti p. 632 l. 4.

<sup>13</sup> Vibh-a p. 387 l. 29 - p. 388 l. 7: *mātā damiḷī pitā andhako/ tesam jāto dārako sace mātu katham pathamam suṇāti damiḷabhāṣam bhāṣissati/ sace pitu katham pathamam suṇāti andhakabhāṣam bhāṣissati/ ubhinnaṃ pi pana katham asuṇanto māgadhābhāṣam bhāṣissati/ yo pi agāmake mahāraṇṇīce nibbatto tatha añño kathento nāma natthi so pi attano dhammatāya vacanaṃ samuṭṭhāpento māgadhābhāṣam eva bhāṣissati/ niraye tiracchānāyoniyam pēttivisaye manussaloke devaloke ti sabbattha māgadhābhāṣā va ussanna/ tattha sesā oṭṭakīrātaandhakayonakadamīlabhāṣādīkā atthārasa bhāṣā parivattanti/ ayam ev' ekā yathābhuccabrahmavohāraariyavohārasamkhatā māgadhābhāṣā va na parivattati/* Cf. Hinüber, 1977: 239 f. Similarly Patis-a I, p. 5, l. 27 ff. My wife, Joy Manné, drew my attention to this passage.

of the Damiḷas. If it hears first the speech of the father, it will speak the language of the Andhakas. But if it doesn't hear the speech of either of them, it will speak the language of the Māgadhas. Also someone who is born in a big jungle, devoid of villages, where no one else speaks, he too will by his own nature start to produce words and speak this same language of the Māgadhas.<sup>14</sup> In hell, among the animals, in the realm of ghosts, in the world of men and in the world of gods, everywhere this same language of the Māgadhas is preponderant. The remaining eighteen languages — Oṭṭa, Kirāta, Andhaka, Yonaka, Damiḷa, etc. — undergo change in these [realms]. Only this language of the Māgadhas, rightly called language of Brahma and aryan language, does not change." The Mohavicchedanī, which dates from the 12th - 13th century, goes to the extent of stating that all other languages are derived from Māgadhi:<sup>15</sup> "It (i.e., Māgadhi) was first predominant in the hells and in the world of men and that of the gods. And afterwards the regional languages such as Andhaka, Yonaka, Damiḷa, etc., as well as the eighteen great languages, Sanskrit, etc., arose out of it."

The Theravāda Buddhists considered Māgadhi, i.e. Pāli, the original language of all living beings. Not surprisingly, the Jains reserved this privilege for the language of *their* sacred texts, viz. Ardha-Māgadhi. This position finds already expression in the Ardha-Māgadhi canon. The Aupapātika Sūtra (56) states:<sup>16</sup> [400] "With a voice that extends over a yojana, Lord Mahāvīra speaks in the Ardha-Māgadhi language, a speech which is in accordance with all languages. That Ardha-Māgadhi language changes into the own language of all those, both āryas and non-āryas." The Viyāhapaṇṇati adds that "the gods speak Ardha-Māgadhi".<sup>17</sup> We find the same position repeated in a work by a Jain author of the 11th century, Namisādhu. Interestingly, Namisādhu writes in Sanskrit, no longer in Prakrit. His commentary on Rudraṭa's Kāvyaḷamkāra 2.12 contains the following explanation of the word *prākṛta*:<sup>18</sup> "'Prākṛta': The natural function of language, common to all men of this world and not beautified by [the rules of] grammar etc., this is the

<sup>14</sup> The idea that children who grow up without others will speak the original language is not unknown to the West; see Borst, 1957-63: 800, 870, 1050, etc. Experiments were carried out in order to identify the original language; Borst, 1957-63: 39 (Psammetichus, cf. Katz, 1982: 54), 756 (Frederick II), 1010-11 (Jacob IV, 1473-1513), etc. (See p. 1942 n. 191 for further cases.)

<sup>15</sup> Mohavicchedanī p. 186 l. 14 f., cited in Hinüber, 1977: 241: *sā* (sc. Māgadhi) *va apāyesu manusse devaloke c'eva paṭhamam ussannā/pacchā ca tato andhakayonakadamilādi-desabhāsā c'eva sakkaṭādiatthārasamahābhāsā ca nibattā/*

<sup>16</sup> *bhagavaṃ mahāvīre ... savvabhāsānugāmiṇiṇe sarassāie joyaṇanīhāriṇā sareṇaṃ addhamāgahāc bhāsāc bhāsai ... sā vi ya naṃ addhamāgahā bhāsā tesim savvesim āriyamaṇāriyaṇaṃ appaṇo sabhāsāc pariṇāmeṇaṃ pariṇamaī.* Leumann, 1883: 61; cited in Norman, 1976: 17; 1980: 66. Similar remarks at Samavāya 34; Viy (ed. Nathamal) 9.33.149.

<sup>17</sup> Viy 5.4.24: *devā naṃ addhamāgahāc bhāsāc bhāsanti.* Cf. Deleu, 1970: 108.

<sup>18</sup> Namisādhu p. 31; cited in Nitti-Dolci, 1938: 159: *prākṛteti/ sakalajagajantūnāṃ vyākaraṇādibhir anāhitasamskāraḥ saha jo vacanavyāpāraḥ prakṛtiḥ/ tatra bhavaṃ saiva vā prākṛtam/ 'ārisavayane siddham devānaṃ addhamāgahā bāni' ityādivacanād vā prak pūrvaṃ kṛtam prākṛtam bālamahilādisubodham sakalabhāṣābandhanabhūtaṃ vacanam ucyate/ meghanirmuktajalam īvaikasvarūpaṃ tad eva ca deśaviśeṣāt samskārakaraṇāc ca samāsāditaviśeṣaṃ sat samskṛtādyuttaravibhedān āpnoti/ ata eva sāstrakṛtā prākṛtam ādau nirḍiṣtam/ tadanu samskṛtādīni/*

basis (*prakṛti*). That which is in this [basis], or that [basis] itself is [called] *Prākṛta*.<sup>19</sup> Alternatively, *Prākṛta* is *prāk kṛta* ‘what has been made before’ on the basis of the statement ‘it has been established in the Jain canon (*āṛṣavacana*, lit. words of the *ṛṣis*) that Ardha-Māgadhī is the speech of the gods’ and other statements. [Prakrit] is said to be a language easy to understand for children and women, the origin of all languages. Like the water released by a cloud, it has but one form, yet, once differences have entered because of the difference between regions and because of beautification, it acquires the later distinctions between Sanskrit and the other languages. This is why the author of our treatise (i.e. Rudraṭa) has mentioned Prakrit at the beginning, and after that Sanskrit etc." [401] We see that Namisādhu goes to the extent of considering Ardha-Māgadhī the predecessor of Sanskrit, from which the latter has been derived. It is also clear from this passage that Namisādhu, who wrote in Sanskrit, took this idea from his sacred texts, which themselves were still composed in Ardha-Māgadhī.

We have seen that both the Theravāda Buddhists and the Jains believed that the language of their sacred texts was the original language of all living beings. Both went to the extent of claiming that also Sanskrit had descended from their respective original languages. This is not particularly surprising in the case of the Theravādins, who went on using their original language. The Jains, on the other hand, shifted to Sanskrit. Potentially this was very embarrassing for them. For by doing so they abandoned their original language, in order to turn to the very language which the rival Brahmins claimed to be original and eternal.

The example of Namisādhu shows that the later Jains based their conviction on statements dating from the time when Ardha-Māgadhī was still in use. This is of interest because the Jains who used Sanskrit were in a position closely similar to that of those Buddhists who used Sanskrit but whose sacred texts were, at least partly, in Hybrid Sanskrit. A crucial difference, however, is that, to my knowledge, no Hybrid Sanskrit text claims to be composed in the original language of all living beings.

Before we consider the question how the Buddhists explained the use of Hybrid Sanskrit in their sacred texts, we must return once more to the language of the Veda. I stated earlier that the Brahmins continued to use the language of the Veda, but this is of course not completely true. Vedic differs in various respects from the classical language, and indeed much of Vedic literature did not fail to become unintelligible even to speakers of Sanskrit. This problem was already acute in the time of Yāska, one of the aims of whose Nirukta is precisely to find the meaning of unknown Vedic words. We also know that already Pāṇini, who may antedate Yāska, gives an incomplete analysis of the Vedic verb. Both the Vedic Brahmins and the Buddhists whose sacred texts were

<sup>19</sup> A similar argument is found in the *Vṛtti* on Bhartrhari's *Vākyapadīya*, and in the latter's *Mahābhāṣyadīpikā*; see below.

in Hybrid Sanskrit found themselves therefore in closely similar situations. Both of them used classical Sanskrit, whereas their sacred texts had been preserved in languages that, though related to classical Sanskrit, were in many respects clearly different from it. [402]

The Vedic Brahmins solved this problem by denying its existence. This is particularly clear from the well-known refutation of Kautsa in the Nirukta (1.15-16). Kautsa claimed that the Vedic mantras have no meaning. Among the reasons he adduces the most important one for our purposes is that they are unintelligible.<sup>20</sup> To illustrate this Kautsa cites a number of obscure Vedic forms. Yāska's reply is categorical:<sup>21</sup> "It is no deficiency of the post that a blind man does not see it; the deficiency lies with the man." Vedic is therefore a form of Sanskrit that uses words and verbal forms that are not in common use in classical Sanskrit; that is not however the fault of the Vedic language, but rather of the person who is content not to employ those forms. For essentially, the words of Vedic and of classical Sanskrit are identical.<sup>22</sup>

A similar discussion occurs in the Mīmāṃsā Sūtra and Śābara Bhāṣya.<sup>23</sup> Here too we are reassured that the sentence-meaning in Vedic is no different from classical Sanskrit,<sup>24</sup> and that "the meaning is there; only there is ignorance of it".<sup>25</sup> The repetition of this discussion in the basic work of Mīmāṃsā shows how important it was for Brahmanism to emphasize the continuity — or rather: essential identity — between [403] Vedic and classical Sanskrit. Because the two are identical, there is no need to state that one of them is the original, eternal language, and the other a development of the former. In fact, both are original and eternal, because they together constitute one and the same language. (This explains how Yāska's Nirukta (2.2) can derive Vedic primary nouns from classical verbal roots, *and* classical nouns from Vedic roots.)

The situation of the Vedic Brahmins was in many respects parallel to that of those Buddhists who used Sanskrit but preserved sacred texts in Hybrid Sanskrit. And the solution accepted by the Brahmins would do equally well in the case of the Buddhists. They could simply deny that Hybrid Sanskrit is a different language, and maintain that it is essentially identical with classical Sanskrit, just like Vedic. There are some

<sup>20</sup> Nir 1.15: *athāpy avispāṣṭārthā bhavanti.*

<sup>21</sup> Nir 1.16: *yatho etad avispāṣṭārthā bhavantīti naiṣa sthāṇor aparādho yad enam andho na paśyati puruṣāparādhaḥ sa bhavati.*

<sup>22</sup> Nir 1.16: *arthavantaḥ śabdāsāmānyāt.*

<sup>23</sup> MiS 1.2.31-45 (31-53); pp. 48-69 in the Ānandāśrama edition, pp. 74-86 in Jha's translation.

<sup>24</sup> MiS 1.2.32 (*siddhānta*)/40: *aviśiṣṭas tu vākyārthah.* Cp. also MiS 1.3.30 *prayogacodanābhāvād arthaikatvam avibhāgāt*, which Clooney (1990: 133) translates: "(A word used in ordinary and Vedic contexts) has the same meaning in both, because they are not differentiated; for there are no (special) injunctions in regard to the usage (prayoga) of words." Biardeau (1964: 84) translates the first compound of this sūtra: "(Sinon), il n'y aurait pas d'injonction de quelque chose à faire."

<sup>25</sup> MiS 1.2.41/49: *sataḥ param avijñānam.* Tr. Jha.

indications that this is indeed the solution that was chosen by at least some Buddhists. We consider first one of the surviving Buddhist Sanskrit grammars.

A number of such grammars have come down to us.<sup>26</sup> Generally they make no mention of Hybrid Sanskrit, and confine themselves to describing the classical language. The only exception appears to be the Kumāralāta, called after its author Kumāralāta. This grammar is the first Buddhist Sanskrit grammar we know of, and only some fragments of it, found in Turkestan, have survived. Fortunately these fragments allow us to observe, with Scharfe (1977: 162): "Just as Pāṇini has special rules for Vedic forms, Kumāralāta makes allowances for peculiar forms of the Buddhist scriptures that resulted from their transposition into Sanskrit from Middle Indo-Aryan dialects (e.g. *bhāveti* for *bhāvayati*, *bheṣyati* for *bhaviṣyati* and elisions of final *-am/-im*). The name used for these forms [is] *ārṣa* 'belonging to the *ṛṣi*-s,' ..."27

Pāṇini's grammar uses once (1.1.16) the word *anārṣa*, in the sense *avaidika* 'non-Vedic' according to the interpretation of the [404] *Kāśikā*.<sup>28</sup> Kumāralāta's use of *ārṣa* suggests therefore that he looked upon Hybrid Sanskrit as on a par with Vedic. And just as Vedic is not considered another language than classical Sanskrit by the Brahmins, one might think that Kumāralāta looked upon Hybrid Sanskrit as essentially the same language as classical Sanskrit.

Here, however, we have to be circumspect. The Jains, too, use the term *ārṣa* to refer to their sacred language, which is Ardha-Māgadhī. But the Jains do not think that Ardha-Māgadhī is a form of Sanskrit, in their opinion it is the source of Sanskrit.<sup>29</sup> All this we have seen. For the position of the Buddhists with regard to Hybrid Sanskrit we need, therefore, further evidence.

Unfortunately none of the other surviving Buddhist Sanskrit grammars deal with Hybrid Sanskrit, nor indeed with Vedic. It is possible that the Cāndra Vyākaraṇa once had an Adhyāya dealing with Vedic forms.<sup>30</sup> None of it has however been preserved, so that it is not possible to see whether these rules were used to explain Hybrid Sanskrit forms.

There is however a passage in Candrakīrti's commentary on Āryadeva's *Catuṣṣataka* which can throw further light upon our question. The commentary survives

<sup>26</sup> See Scharfe, 1977: 162 ff.

<sup>27</sup> For details, see Lüders, 1930: 686, 693-95. See also Ruegg, 1986: 597.

<sup>28</sup> P. 1.1.16: *sambuddhau śākalyasyetāv anārṣe. The Kāśikā explains: ot iti vartate/sambuddhinimitto ya okārah sa śākalyasya ācāryasya matena pragṛhyasañjño bhavati itiśabde anārṣe avaidike paratah/ vāyo iti vāyav iti/bhāno iti bhānav iti/etc.*

<sup>29</sup> This is not necessarily true of all Jains. Hemacandra, who uses the term *ārṣa* and describes the language concerned, does not appear to give evidence that he looked upon this language as the source of Sanskrit (unless his use of *porāna* 'old' in connection with this language (IV.287; see Hoernle, 1880: xviii f.) shows the opposite). Cf. Ghosal, 1969.

<sup>30</sup> See Oberlies, 1989: 2-3.

only in Tibetan translation, which has recently been edited, studied and translated into English by Tom J. F. Tillemans.

Candrakīrti cites, under kārikā 278 of the Catuḥśataka, a verse which has been preserved in its original form in the Samādhirājasūtra (9.26) as well as in Candrakīrti's own [405] Prasannapadā (on Mūlamadhyamakakārikā 25.3) where it is cited, too. The verse reads:<sup>31</sup>

*nivṛtti<sup>32</sup> dharmāṇa na asti dharmā  
ye neha<sup>33</sup> astī nā te jātu astī/  
astīti nāstīti ca kalpanāvatām  
evaṃ carantāna na duḥkha śāmyati//*

This means:

"In extinction dharmas are without dharmas. Whatever is inexistent in this [state] does not exist at all. For those who imagine 'existence' and 'inexistence' and practise accordingly, suffering will not cease."<sup>34</sup>

Note that this verse is not written in classical Sanskrit. In the Prasannapadā this fact is not so much as hinted at. In his commentary on the Catuḥśataka, on the other hand, Candrakīrti makes two grammatical remarks in this connection. The first one reads, in translation:<sup>35</sup> "Here (i.e., in the words *nivṛtti dharmāṇa na asti dharmā*) the seventh case-ending (i.e., of the locative) does not appear [in *nivṛtti*], in accordance with the sūtra: 'for *sup*, [substitute] *su*, *luk*, etc.'"

The sūtra to which Candrakīrti refers is, of course, P 7.1.39: *supāṃ sulukpūrvasavarṇāccheyādādyāyājālah*. This, however, is a Vedic sūtra! The preceding rule contains the term *chandasi*, and the phenomena described by 39 itself leave no room for doubt as to their Vedic nature. Candrakīrti apparently feels no [406] hesitation to explain a Hybrid Sanskrit form with a Vedic rule of the Aṣṭādhyāyī.

Candrakīrti's second grammatical remark on the same quoted verse confirms this impression. It concerns the singular *na asti*, where we would expect *na santi*. Here Candrakīrti notes:<sup>36</sup> "Correctly speaking one would say *na santi* (Tib. *rnams yod min*). But in accordance with the rule to the effect that 'it should be stated that verbal endings

<sup>31</sup> In Tibetan (Tillemans, 1990: II: 8): *mya ngan 'das la chos rnams chos yod min/ 'di na gang med de dag gzhar yang med// yod dang med ces rtog pa dang ldan zhing/ de ltar spyod rnams sdugs bnga/ zhi mi 'gyur//*

<sup>32</sup> The Prasannapadā has *nivṛtti*.

<sup>33</sup> This reading agrees with the Prasannapadā and with the Tibetan. The Samādhirājasūtra has *yeneti nāstī*. See further Tillemans, 1990: II: 9 n. 1.

<sup>34</sup> Tr. Tillemans, 1990: I: 117.

<sup>35</sup> Tillemans, 1990: II: 8: '*dir "sup rnams kyi su mi mngon par byas so" zhes bya ba la sogs ba'i m dor byas pa bdun pa mi mngon par byas pa'o*. For the translation, cf. Tillemans, 1990: I: 118, 235-36 n. 154.

<sup>36</sup> Tillemans, 1990: II: 10: '*legs par bshad pa las ni rnams yod min zhes bya bar 'gyur mod kyi "tingām ni ting ngor gyur ro zhes bya ba brjod par bya'o" zhes bya ba'i mtshan nyid las na chos yod min zhes gsungs so*. Cf. Tillemans, 1990: I: 118, 236 n. 158.

(*tiñ*) are [substituted] for [other] verbal endings', [the verse] says *na asti dharmā* (Tib. *chos yod min*)." The rule here invoked can be identified as a line from the Mahābhāṣya on the same Pāṇinian sūtra 7.1.39. This line reads: *tiñām ca tiño bhavantīti vaktavayam*,<sup>37</sup> and concerns, again, Vedic forms.

The above passages support the view that at least some Buddhists held the opinion that Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit was not really a different language from classical Sanskrit. We must now consider a passage in Bhartṛhari's Vākyapadīya which may indicate the opposite for certain other Buddhists. We have already had an occasion to refer to verse 1.182 of this text, according to the first half of which the divine language — i.e., Sanskrit — has been corrupted by incompetent speakers. The second half of the verse contrasts this view with another one:<sup>38</sup> "The upholders of impermanence, on the other hand, hold the opposite view with regard to this doctrine." The precise meaning of 'upholders of impermanence' (*anityadarśin*) is not specified, but it is at least conceivable that Buddhists are meant; the Buddhists, after all, considered impermanence one of their key doctrines, and used this very term *anitya* to refer to it. The point of view adopted by these upholders of impermanence is less problematic: they apparently believed that the so-called 'corrupt language', rather than deriving from Sanskrit, was [407] the source of the latter. This is indeed how the ancient Vṛtti understands the line, for it explains:<sup>39</sup> "The upholders of impermanence, on the other hand, ... say that Prakrit constitutes the collection of correct words, [because *Prākṛta* means] 'that which is in the basis' (*prakṛtau bhava*). But later on a modification has been established which is fixed by men of impaired understanding, by means of accents and other refinements (*saṃskāra*)." The 'modification' here mentioned, which is characterized by accents and other refinements, is, of course, Sanskrit.

This passage from the Vṛtti contains points of similarity with Namisādhu's defence of Prakrit studied above. This suggests that the Vṛtti refers here to Jains rather than to Buddhists. Does this indicate that also the Vākyapadīya refers here to Jains, and not to Buddhists?

Here several points have to be considered. First of all, it is more than likely that the author of the Vṛtti is different from the author of the verses explained in it.<sup>40</sup> Equally important is the fact that the Vākyapadīya never uses the word *Prākṛta* to refer to a language different from Sanskrit. Bhartṛhari does mention the term in this sense in his commentary on the Mahābhāṣya, but there in the context of 'some' who hold that

<sup>37</sup> Mbh III p. 256 l. 14.

<sup>38</sup> VP 1.182cd: *anityadarśinām tv asmin vāde buddhiviparyayaḥ*.

<sup>39</sup> Vṛtti on VP 1.182 [146], ed. Iyer p. 234: *anityavādinā tu ... prakṛtau bhavaṃ prākṛtaṃ sādḥūnām śabdānām samūham ācaksate/ vikāras tu paścād vyavasthāpitaḥ, yaḥ saṃbhinnabuddhibhiḥ puruṣaiḥ svarasaṃskārādibhir nirṇīyate iti//*

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Bronkhorst, 1988; and the introduction to the doctoral thesis by Jan E. M. Houben (1995).

Prakrit words are eternal.<sup>41</sup> The ‘some’ here referred to can hardly be the ‘upholders of impermanence’.<sup>42</sup> Add to this that all the three passages considered from the Mahābhāṣyadīpikā, from the Vṛtti and from Namisādhu's commentary mention the same grammatical explanation (*prākṛta = prakṛtau bhava*) and it is tempting to conclude that these three [408] passages, unlike Vākyapadīya 1.182cd, refer to the same current of thought, probably Jainism.

It seems, then, at least possible to maintain that Vākyapadīya 1.182cd refers to Buddhists who held that their sacred texts were composed in a language which, though appearing corrupt to orthodox Brahmins, represents in reality the origin of Sanskrit. Since we have no reason to believe that Bhartṛhari was acquainted with the Pāli tradition and with its belief that this language was identical with Māgadhī, the original language, we are led to the conclusion that he may here refer to Buddhists who believed that some kind of Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit was the original language, which formed the basis of other languages, including Sanskrit.<sup>43</sup>

The preceding considerations have made clear that the different religious currents of classical India which we have considered all shared the belief that their sacred texts were composed in the earliest language, the source of all other languages. In the case of Theravāda Buddhism and Jainism, this position was fairly straightforward. Their sacred languages, Māgadhī (i.e. Pāli) and Ardha-Māgadhī respectively, were the source of all other languages, including Sanskrit. The position of the Vedic Brahmins was slightly more complicated, for the differences between Vedic and classical Sanskrit are considerable. But neither of these two was claimed to be the source of the other. Rather, Vedic and classical Sanskrit were maintained to constitute together one single language which, of course, was the language of the gods, the eternal language. It appears that at least some of those Buddhists who preserved sacred texts in Hybrid Sanskrit took essentially the same position as the Brahmins. They looked upon the language of their sacred texts as fundamentally identical with classical Sanskrit. They even used Vedic rules of Pāṇini to account for some of the special features of Hybrid Sanskrit. One line in Bhartṛhari's Vākyapadīya, on the other hand, suggests that perhaps some of these Buddhists, too, [409] entertained the claim that their sacred language was the source of Sanskrit.

<sup>41</sup> Mahābhāṣyadīpikā, Āhnika I p. 16 l. 28-29: *kecid evaṃ manyante/ ya evaite prākṛtāḥ śabdāḥ ta evaite nityāḥ/ prakṛtau bhavāḥ prākṛtāḥ/*

<sup>42</sup> Note however that elsewhere in the same commentary (p. 23 l. 24) Bhartṛhari ascribes a concept of eternity to the ‘upholders of momentariness’: ... *ksanikavādinām avicchēdēna pravṛttir yā sā nityatā.*

<sup>43</sup> Hinüber (1988: 17-18; 1989) draws attention to the fact that some kinds of Buddhist Sanskrit remain faithful to Middle-Indic, whereas others manifest the desire to adjust to correct Sanskrit. It is of course not impossible that these two tendencies were accompanied, or even inspired, by different views regarding the original language. See Hinüber's (1989: 349) remarks about Aśvaghoṣa's ideas concerning the language of the Buddha.

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