

READING THE *ONE HUNDRED PARABLES SŪTRA*:  
THE DIALOGUE PREFACE AND THE *GĀTHĀ* POSTFACE

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If all the world is a stage, then the ancient Indian Buddhists would say that what is being played out in this *theatrum mundi* is one great tragedy. To the compilers of the *One Hundred Parables Sūtra*, as well as the *Sūtra of the Talented and the Stupid*, what is played out is very much a tragicomedy: As with Shakespeare, the tragic and the comical are often inextricably intertwined. To them, this world is not a fool's paradise. But it certainly is a *Ship of Fools*. Chán texts, as well as Chán practice, are thoroughly Indian-inspired. They combine flamboyantly vulgar Chinese colloquialisms with lexical, as well as syntactic, loans from non-Chinese languages, not necessarily Sanskrit and Pali. It is in China, Korea and Japan that the Buddha tends to smile, not in India.

The text known as the *One Hundred Parables Sūtra*,<sup>1</sup> the Chinese version of which dates to 16 October 492, an example of the *Pìyù jīng* 譬喻經 (*avadāna sūtras*),<sup>2</sup> is an important precursor to this Chán literary tradition. It is a text which uses humorous tales as a vehicle to *nirvāṇa*. The *One Hundred Parables Sūtra* is a jestbook and, like the *Xiányù jīng* 賢愚經 (*Sūtra of the Talented and the Stupid*, XYJ), it is all about *entering nirvāṇa with a smile*, like the smiling Chinese Buddha who is so exasperatingly absent in Indian iconography. These parables are very much like those medieval *exempla* or *bispele* used to support Christian messages.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A complete and profusely annotated, as well as rhetorically analyzed, bilingual edition by the present writer of the *One Hundred Parables Sūtra* will be found in *Thesaurus Linguae Sericae* (TLS) under the text label BAIYU (see <http://tls.uni-hd.de/>).

<sup>2</sup> Five further examples of *avadāna sūtras*, presenting 12, 32, 61, 39 and 44 parables respectively, will be found in T. 4, nos. 204–208:499–542.

<sup>3</sup> For the *exemplum*, see Bremont / LeGoff / Schmitt 1982 and particularly the eminently useful Tubach 1969. Moser-Rath 1984 remains the unsurpassed masterpiece on traditional European jocularography. For a partial bilingual edition of the *Sūtra of the Talented and the Stupid* and a complete translation of the earliest extant Chinese jestbook, see the complete translation of *Xiàolín* 笑林 (*The Forest of*

I have found that the *One Hundred Parables Sūtra* (BYJ) richly rewards close reading not only from a buddhological point of view, and not only from the point of view of comparative narratology, but also in the context of Chinese literary and linguistic history.

About the provenance of the text generally known today as the BYJ we do know a surprising amount.<sup>4</sup> The author of the original was an Indian monk named Saṅgasena 僧伽斯那, about whom little is known, and the translator/compiler of the work as we have it today was a monk from childhood, whose family is said to be from central India (Zhōng Tiānzhú 中天竺), Guṇavṛddhi 求那毗, who chose for himself the Chinese name Déjìn 德進 (according to the GSZ, it was Ānjìn 安進) when he settled under the Southern Qí 南齊 (480–502). Guṇavṛddhi came to Jiànyè 建鄴 (present-day Nánjīng) in 479, and is said to have finished the compilation of the book on 16 October 492, translating it into a language which was then known as *Qí yǔ* 齊語, ‘the language of (the Southern, or Xiāo 蕭) Qí (Dynasty).’<sup>5</sup> Guṇavṛddhi’s biography in the GSZ tells us that he was an expert in *dàoshù* 道術 ‘the arts of the Way.’ He is said to have died in Jiànyè in 502 (according to L. N. Menshikov possibly in 503). As we shall see, the introductory dialogue between the Buddha and the brahmans show fairly clear evidence that Guṇavṛddhi was familiar both with the book *Lǎozǐ* 老子, and with the *Zhuāngzǐ* 莊子. I would venture to suggest that this introduction may be the work of Guṇavṛddhi rather than his master Saṅgasena. However, I hasten to add that I have no proof.

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*Laughter*) in my *Thesaurus Linguae Sericae*. Detailed comparison between Chinese and ancient Greek jocolography (the famous *Philogelōs* ‘Laughter-Lover’) contemporary with the *One Hundred Parables Sūtra* is made possible by my lengthy unpublished manuscript *The Varieties of Chinese Laughing Experience: Towards a Conceptual History of Linguistic and Literary Impudence, Insolence, and Frivolity* (1993) which includes an extensive bibliography on Chinese jocolography through the ages. The motif-registers in the *One Hundred Parables Sūtra* can be explored in relation to non-religious Chinese popular narratives in Nai-tung Ting 1976, and in much greater detail in Ding Naitong 丁乃通 1986. However, one needs to keep in mind the Buddhist impact on that ‘non-religious’ folklore.

<sup>4</sup> See *Chū sānzàng jìjí* 出三藏記集 by Sēng Yòu 僧祐 (445–518) and *Gāosēng zhuàn* 高僧傳 (GSZ) by Huijiǎo 慧皎 (467–554), and for details, see Gurevich/Menshikov 1986:7–49.

<sup>5</sup> For over 40 ways of referring to the Chinese language, see my 2008 lecture *On the Very Notion of the Chinese Language*.

Here, in any case, is a complete translation of Guṇavṛddhi's entry in the GSZ, where his is, in fact, the last full entry:

T. 50, no. 2059:345a24

求那毘地，此言安進。	Guṇavṛddhi, called Ānjin <sup>6</sup> in this country,
本中天竺人。	was a man of Central Indian origins. <sup>7</sup>
弱年從道。	From childhood he followed the path (of Buddhism). <sup>8</sup>
師事天竺大乘法師僧伽斯。	As his teacher, he served <sup>9</sup> the Mahāyāna Indian Buddhist master Saṅgaseṇa.
聰慧強記	He was intelligent, had a formidable memory
懃於諷誦。	and was devoted to recitation (of Buddhist texts). <sup>10</sup>
諳究大小乘將二十萬言。	He had perused up towards 200,000 characters of Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna scriptures,
兼學外典	at the same time he studied scriptures from other traditions,
明解陰陽。	and he had a clear understanding of Yīn and Yáng. <sup>11</sup>
占時驗事	When he predicted times and events
徵兆非一。	he proved many times right. <sup>12</sup>
齊建元初	At the beginning of the Jiànyuán period of the (Southern) Qí (dynasty)
來至京師	he arrived in the capital [Jiànyè]
止毘耶離寺。	and he put up at the Piyé lí Monastery.
執錫從徒威儀端肅。	Holding the ritual bell hanging from a staff in his hand, accompanied by his disciples,

<sup>6</sup> Elsewhere he is said to be called Déjìn 德進. See *Dà-Táng nèidiǎn lù* 大唐內典錄 (T. 55, no. 2157:834b8 and *Lìdài sānbǎo jì* 歷代三寶紀 T. 49, no. 2034:96a8: 天竺三藏法師求那毘地。齊言德進).

<sup>7</sup> Two readings are possible: either his family was 'originally' from Central India, or he himself was 'originally' born in India but moved to China.

<sup>8</sup> In pre-Buddhist Chinese, *cóng dào* 從道 would mean 'follow the Way,' not, as here 'become a monk; take the vows.'

<sup>9</sup> There are, in fact, a few pre-Buddhist examples of *shīshì* 師事 used for the usual pre-Buddhist verbal *shī* 師 'treat as one's teacher.'

<sup>10</sup> Since there has been this emphasis on memory one suspects that the recitation was by heart.

<sup>11</sup> Probably *fāngshù* 方術 or *dào shù* 道術.

<sup>12</sup> Lit. 'not once'—the rhetorical figure is LITOTES.

	authoritative and deeply serious, he wandered about.
王公貴勝迭相供請。	Kings, dukes, and the nobility all venerated him and begged for instruction from him.
初僧伽斯於天竺國抄修多羅藏中要切譬喻。	Earlier, in Central India, <sup>13</sup> Sangasena had copied and edited from the Sūtrapittāka the most important parables, and had compiled them into one work.
撰為一部。	All in all there were one hundred stories, for the teaching of the newly converted.
凡有百事。	Gunavṛddhi knew all these and understood the meaning of all of them,
教授新學。	so in the 10 <sup>th</sup> year of the Yǒngmíng era (492 AD), in the Autumn, he translated these into the Qí language. <sup>14</sup>
毘地悉皆通兼明義旨。	In all there were ten scrolls, and they were called the <i>One Hundred Parables Sūtra</i> .
以永明十年秋譯為齊文。	He also brought out the <i>Sūtra of the Twelve Predestined Coincidences</i> and <i>Sūtra of the Abbot Xūdá</i> , <sup>15</sup> each in one scroll.
凡有十卷。	After the Dàmíng era (457–464), the translating of scriptures was abruptly cut short. <sup>16</sup>
謂百喻經。	When he devoted himself to preaching everyone in his generation was full of praise for him.
復出十二因緣及須達長者經各一卷。	Gunavṛddhi was a man of high caliber, so from miles around people flocked to him.
自大明已後譯經殆絕。	The merchants of the Nánhǎi region all offered their support.
及其宣流	All the gifts he accepted
世咸稱美。	and used all of them for the promotion of the true dharma.
毘地為人弘厚。	
故萬里歸集。	
南海商人咸宗事之。	
供獻皆受。	
悉為營法。	
於建鄴淮側造正觀寺居之。	On the banks of the River Qín Huái in Jiànyè

<sup>13</sup> The point is crucial: These parables were collected in India by that Indian monk, and certainly not in China. Note that the parables were collected. The introductory dialogue is not mentioned.

<sup>14</sup> Note that there were only few translators at this time!

<sup>15</sup> This text is preserved in the T. canon.

<sup>16</sup> After that period, there was little translating and Gunavṛddhi marked a new departure.

重閣層門殿堂整飾。 he built the Zhèngguān monastery and settled down there.  
 He also refurbished the Halls in the Zhèngguānsì with multi-storey buildings, and several levels of gates.  
 以中興二年冬終於所住。 In the second year of the Zhōngxīng era (A.D. 502), in the Winter, he died where he had made his home.

### The Title

In fact, the *One Hundred Parables Sūtra* is referred to by at least the following distinct Chinese titles:

*Bǎiyù jīng* 百喻經 ‘*One Hundred Parables Sūtra*’

*Pìyù jīng* 譬喻經 ‘*The Parables Sūtra*’ (the introduction is mentioned as *Pìyù jīng xù* 譬喻經序)

*Bǎijù pìyù jīng* 百句譬喻經 ‘*The Parables Sūtra in One Hundred Sections*’

*Bǎijù pìyù jíjīng* 百句譬喻集經 ‘*The Collected Sūtra of Parables in One Hundred Sections*’

*Chī huámán* 癡華鬘 ‘*The Garland of Follies*’

The colophon line quoted in ZZ. (CBETA R129\_p0918a11) seems to suggest that the earliest title is the last one in the series, *Chī huámán* 癡華鬘 ‘*The Garland of Follies*.’ I agree with Menshikov that this is likely to have been the original title of Saṅgasena’s work.

It appears from this last line, which we shall analyze below, that Saṅgasena did not imagine that he was writing an (apocryphal) *sūtra*. He *may* conceivably have deliberately written in the style of a *sūtra*, if, that is, *if* he did compose the introductory part of the composition as a whole, and *if* having decided to write in the style of a *sūtra* he then changed his mind in the last line of his final *gāthā* and did not call his book a *sūtra* after all.

However, the Taoist references in that introductory dialogue would seem to me to strongly suggest that its author was familiar with early Chinese Taoist literature, something we know about Guṇavṛddhi, but which is unlikely to have been the case for Saṅgasena who wrote in an Indian language and may not have known Chinese at all.

Menshikov suggests a most instructive comparison between the following:

1. Parable 2 and the alternative version of the same story translated literally by Kumārajīva in T. 4:532–533
2. Parable 54 and the alternative version translated in T. 4:528
3. Parable 57 and the version of the same story translated in T. 4:525

Assuming for a moment, with Menshikov, that what Guṇavṛddhi was working on was something like those versions preserved for us in these alternative *avadāna* collections, it would appear that Guṇavṛddhi introduced several fundamental changes to the Indian tales in order to adapt them to the Chinese context:

1. Guṇavṛddhi shortens the texts by leaving out descriptive narrative detail that contributes nothing to the essential story line (in Parable 4); he produced a lean Chinese narrative product.
2. Guṇavṛddhi often added concrete details that increase comprehension of the dynamics of the story line.
3. Guṇavṛddhi reduces highly abstract complexities didactically in the final buddhological comments to sentential simplicity, and (in Parable 57) slightly expands and in any case concretizes a brief abstract didactic final comment, reducing its message to the common sense notion that everything has its proper time and season.

In what follows, I present some reading notes on this introductory dialogue of the BYJ and on the final *jī* 偈 ‘*gāthā*’ of that influential text which is, in fact, mentioned or quoted 100 times in the CBETA version of the *Tripitāka*. My notes are intended to place the BYJ in the context of the history of Chinese literature and of the Chinese language. For the place of the BYJ in the context of Indian narrative literature, see Hertel 1912 (*Ein altindisches Narrenbuch*), as well as his annotation of *The Thirty-Two Bharataka Stories* (Hertel 1921).

Our understanding of Chinese Buddhist literature will never be much more advanced than our detailed grasp of the semantic and rhetorical nuances of our primary Chinese Buddhist sources. The present tentative paper tries to work towards a deepening of our philological understanding of these primary sources in an effort to determine the nature of the discourse in the *One Hundred Parables Sūtra*. It is meant as a starting-point for discussion. It invites critical examination and learned criticism everywhere.

*Linguistic and Rhetorical Annotations**Part 1*<sup>17</sup>

## TEXT

聞[1]如是[2]：  
 一[3]時[4]佛住[5]王舍[6]城[7]。  
 在鵲封竹園與[8]諸[9]大比丘  
 菩薩摩訶薩及[10]諸[11]八部三萬六千[12]人[13]俱[14]。  
 是[15]時會[16]中有異學[17]梵[18]志五百人[19]俱。

## TRANSLATION

[I] have heard/learnt the following:  
 Once upon a time, the Buddha lived in the city of the dwelling of  
 the King,  
 In the Bamboo Part of Quèfēng, he met with all the great monks,  
 bodhisattvas-mahāsattvas and 36,000 of the eight categories of  
 the spirits.  
 At that time within the saṅgha there were gathered 500 heterodox  
 brahmans.

## ANNOTATIONS

[1]

- A. The passive is significant in Sanskrit *mayā śrutam*. How do you say ‘It was heard by me’ in classical Chinese? The constraints on passivization in both pre-Buddhist and Buddhist Chinese need careful exploration. There is a distinctly increased liberty to form passives, but that increase does not reach verbs like *wén* 聞.
- B. The meaning is *not*: ‘I’ve heard it said (by no matter whom) that,’ but ‘I have heard (from an authoritative source) that.’
- C. This is Ānanda speaking, literally, according to the traditionalist, conventionalist way of presenting things (or is it only perceived as an empty *façon de parler*?). In any case, the BYJ poses explicitly as a *sūtra* 經, and not as a *śāstra* 論, a Chinese word which also translates the technical terms *abidharma* and *upadeśa*. The point that our book poses as a *sūtra* I emphasize because it will become exquisitely problematic when one gets to the highly interesting pentasyllabic *jī* 偈 *gāthā*-postface of the book, as we shall see.

Ānanda is traditionally supposed to have heard these *sūtras*: He

<sup>17</sup> Parts one to ten are the preface to the BYJ, the remaining parts are the postface.

was *not* an arhat, became one upon the Buddha's death, we are told. And because he was not an arhat, he had not the qualifications to paraphrase what he heard as he wrote it down: He had to be painfully literal, according to ancient Indian hermeneutic traditions. He wrote down *exactly* what he heard, *evam eva* 'exactly as is,' to quote the Indians in their own language. What he wrote down was the *Master's Voice*, or the *ipsissima vox*. He did not write down 'something like what he heard.' Such, in any case is the conventional pose. And the interesting question is how seriously we should take this pose in the case of an almost demonstrative *yījīng* 疑經 'doubtful *sūtra*' like the present one: Whoever composed this introduction, I cannot help thinking, must have known that its anachronistic and almost surreal allusions to Zhuāngzǐ and to Lǎozǐ would not escape the readership. It is not only unlikely but manifestly implausible to an intended Chinese audience that Ānanda heard such allusions to Taoist classics from the Buddha.

[2]

A. *Rú* 如 not 'like,' but 'as follows,' as in modern *rú xià* 如下 which does not mean 'along the following lines.'

B. *Shì* 是 'the following' is not anaphoric 'the aforesaid' but cataphoric 'as follows.' *Rú shì* 如是 does not work like pre-Buddhist *rú shì* 如是 'like this.'

[3] *Yī* 一 does not mean 'one (as opposed to two or three),' but rather 'a certain': The history of the indefinite article influenced by Buddhist Chinese needs to be written.

[4] *Shí* 時 'period; season' does not normally mean 'at some point of time' in pre-Buddhist texts. Compare the ubiquitous opening phrase of a new paragraph in Buddhist Chinese texts 時... 'at this point of time ....' This usage is absent in pre-Buddhist literature.

[5] *Zhù* 住 does not mean to 'have one's abode in, dwell in' in pre-Buddhist texts, but is attested in this meaning in *Shìshuō xīnyǔ*. Karlgren glosses the word once in the *Shūjīng* as 'emplacement.' Why did Buddhist texts introduce this as a high-frequency word? Probably, it is a matter of picking up current colloquialisms.

[6] *Shè* 舍 '(often humble) dwelling' is very curious in a proper name for a royal abode. Compare *hánshè* 寒舍 'my humble home' in modern literary Chinese, which is in fact already attested in Féng Mènglóng's 馮孟龍 *Xǐngshì héngyán—Chén duō shòu shēngsǐ*

*fūqī* 醒世恒言· 陳多壽生死夫妻 of the late Míng dynasty, if not before.

- [7] *Chéng* 城 ‘walled city’ is not normally a noun that is modified in pre-Buddhist Chinese, i.e., it is not normally NPOST-N.<sup>18</sup> Thus, *Wángshèchéng* 王舍城 (translation of ‘Rājagṛa’) is a post-Buddhist construction, probably inspired by translation needs.
- [8] *Yǔ* 與 ‘together with’ is a scope-bearing word, and its scope goes right until *liù-qīān rén* 六千人 ‘6,000 people.’ Technically, 與 is VTON.ADV, i.e., a transitive verb with its object, that phrase preceding and modifying a main verbal expression. And, it turns out that this N can be highly complex, especially in Buddhist Chinese, and much less so in pre-Buddhist Chinese. Again, this change is surely induced by current needs of providing fairly literary translations of Buddhist texts.
- [9] *Zhū* 諸 raises many problems in addition to the question of scope which goes until 摩訶薩. An important semantic question is to what extent 諸 ‘all the (various)’ which in pre-Buddhist Chinese always must refer to delimited set, is also definite in this way in Buddhist Chinese contexts like these. There certainly are many other Buddhist Chinese contexts where it is not. An entirely unrelated syntactic point is that apparently the scope of 與 cannot go across the conjunction, as evidenced by the addition of another 諸 in the present context.
- [10] *Jí* 及 and *yǔ* 與 are *not* interchangeable or synonymous. For example, the classical Chinese for ‘with X and Y’ can only be translated as 與X及Y, never as 及X與Y. They are not just dialect variants. We do, of course, often have 及 as VT+N.ADV in pre-Buddhist Chinese. However, in pre-Buddhist Chinese there is no 及...俱. Apart from everything else, the construction is rhythmically outlandish with its abnormally long subject and the minimally short predicate: This is a matter of rhetoric and style.
- [11] *Zhū* 諸 ‘all the’ should probably be indefinite ‘a host of (supernatural and dragon-like creatures of the eight categories).’
- [12] What exactly is counted as being 36,000? The supernatural and dragon-like creatures? Or the great monks, bodhisattvas, mahā-satvas?

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<sup>18</sup> For a definition of these syntactic constructions, see TLS.

- [13] *Rén* 人 is not here a noun meaning ‘humans,’ but a post-posed classifier as in 堯有子十人 ‘Yáo had ten sons’ and not ‘Yáo had sons. They were ten persons.’
- [14] *Jù* 俱 ‘get together; be together’ is a disproportionately short predicate after such a long subject. Rhythmic imbalance of this sort is exceedingly rare in pre-Buddhist Chinese, if indeed it occurs at all.
- [15] *Shì* 是 provides definite ANAPHORA for an indefinite antecedent. Such definite ANAPHORA of an indefinite antecedent is already current in pre-Buddhist Chinese.
- [16] *Huì zhōng* 會中, ubiquitous in Buddhist prose, is very rare in pre-Buddhist Chinese, if it occurs at all: A *huì* 會 is a meeting for the purpose of negotiation in pre-Buddhist Chinese, and never a gathering for the propagation of religious or philosophical truth.
- [17] *Yìxué* 異學 ‘heterodox,’ just like *wàidào* 外道 ‘heterodox,’ is defiantly non-Chinese, perhaps even un-Chinese, and outlandish in its diction. Moreover, since the *fànzhì* 梵志 ‘brahmans’ are always heterodox in Buddhist texts, the addition of 異學 is a case of redundant or tautological non-restrictive modification, as in *yúmín* 愚民 ‘the ignorant common people’ in pre-Buddhist Chinese, which does *not* normally mean ‘of the people those who are ignorant.’
- [18] According to the *Guǎngyùn* 廣韻 dictionary, *fàn* 梵 ‘brahman’ has two readings, one of which has a final -m according to most Middle Chinese reconstructions.
- [19] *Wǔ-bǎi rén* 五百人 is again not a parenthetical insertion; *fànzhì* *wǔ-bǎi rén* 梵志五百人 ‘500 brahmans’ is a plain classifier construction structurally similar to *mǎ sān pǐ* 馬三匹 ‘of horses three items > three horses.’ Note that the construction 三匹馬 ‘three horses’ is not acceptable classical Chinese.

The book begins with a defiantly arhythmic and outlandish ‘Sanskritic’ introduction which asserts the non-Chinese superior authority of the text.

## Part 2

## TEXT

從座[1]而起  
 白[2]佛言[3]：  
 「吾[4]聞：  
 佛道洪深[6]，  
 無能及者[7]。  
 故來歸問[8]；  
 唯願[9]說之。」  
 佛言[10]：「甚善[11]。」

## TRANSLATION

They got up from their seats  
 and politely addressed the Buddha as follows:  
 ‘We have heard that the way of the Buddha is vast and profound  
 and such that nobody can reach it.  
 That is why we come here to ask about it.  
 We just hope that you will expound this way.’  
 The Buddha said: ‘Very good!’

## ANNOTATIONS

- [1] Note the redundancy of *ér* 而, alternatively the addition of another semantically superfluous word in XYJ: 念是事已 從坐處起 往至佛所 and in *Fāhuá jīng* 法華經: 即從座起. Contrast the defiantly unrhythmicized ZTJ 1.8.12: 阿闍世王為結集主時, 諸比丘則從座起 as opposed to ZTJ 2.2.4: 師付法已, 即從座起 and 3.16.11 從座而起, 禮拜問曰 (Incidentally, pre-Buddhist received texts usually write the word *zuò* 座 as *zuò* 坐. The notion of a seat became current in Buddhist Chinese, as in the binomes like *shīzi-zuò* 獅子座 / 師子坐 ‘Lion Seat.’)
- [2] *Bái* 白 as a term of polite address is regular Buddhist Chinese. Probably a demonstrative colloquialism in origin; surely the translators knew better.
- [3] *Yán* 言 ‘declare’ as the second in a series of verbs of saying becomes standard Buddhist Chinese, and is not the standard in pre-Buddhist usage, where *yuē* 曰 clearly predominates.

- [4] 36,000 persons are said to speak *unisono*: An indifference to realism which is typical of Buddhist narrative but rare in pre-Buddhist narrative texts.
- [5] *Wú* 吾 [4] *wén* 聞, rhythmically supernumerary, introduces a quadrisyllabic sequence of two lines. Note the unsassertive, never contrastive 吾 which significantly differs from the assertive and often contrastive 我.
- [6] *Hóng-shēn* 洪深 ‘vast and profound’ is not pre-Buddhist usage. Maybe it should be regarded as loan-formation? It should be appreciated as something of an outlandish neologism, perhaps, as is, of course the phrase *néng jí zhě* 能及者 immediately below.
- [7] Note the sustained asymmetry of CAESURA:  
 佛道/洪深，  
 無//能及/者。  
 故//來/歸問；  
 唯願/說之。
- [8] *Lái guī wèn* 來歸問 ‘came to turn-to-and-ask’ already seems to treat *guī wèn* 歸問 as one complex transitive verb with a contextually determinate omitted object, i.e., the Way of the Buddha, (technically, it is VP(ON), but the word is also used as VPTON, and even VPT+PREP+N).
- [9] *Wéi yuàn* 唯願 ‘it is our great hope that the contextually determinate but omitted subject would’ and *not* ‘we only wish’ is current elegant pre-Buddhist Chinese. Technically, this is VPTT(ON.)+V and not VPTT(ON[PIVOT].)+V.
- [10] Such use of *yán* 言 for *yuē* 曰 does occasionally occur in pre-Buddhist Chinese, but in Buddhist Chinese it becomes standard. One notes that 言 here does not introduce a substantial statement put forward, thus the word does not here mean anything like ‘propose, maintain.’
- [11] The passage ends with a combination of ALLITERATION: Initial consonants of the two words are the same in Middle Chinese, and both words end in nasal finals. Pulleyblank’s Middle Chinese reconstruction for this would be \*dzim \*dzien.  
 The passage also ends with the rhetorical device called STACCATO, a major caesura in the form of a sentence break within a four-character phrase.

## Part 3

## TEXT

問曰[1]：“天下[2]為[3]有，為[4]無。[5]”

答曰[6]：“亦有，亦無。[7]”

梵志[8]曰：“如今[9]有者[10] 云何[11]言[12]無。

如今無者 云何言有。”[13]

## TRANSLATION

They asked: ‘Does the world count as existing or as non-existing?’

The Buddha replied as follows: ‘It both exists and does not exist.’

The brahmins said: ‘Supposing now that it exists, then how can one say that it does not exist?’

And supposing that it does not exist, how can one say that it does exist?’

## ANNOTATIONS

[1] In the narrative part the text turns to standard classical Chinese 問曰 in which 問 is the rather complex VT(+N.)+VT[0]+S, i.e., a transitive verb with an omitted contextually determinate object, that whole phrase followed by a transitive verb with a lexically determinate omitted subject and a sentential object.

[2]

A. The principle that all lines have the length of multiples of four is maintained, here with STACCATO together with the rhetorical device of SYNCOPE, i.e., the main syntactic caesura in a line occurring not at the border of four-character phrases, but elsewhere. This is conveniently brought out in displaying the text in quadrisyllabic groups:

問曰[1]：“天下[2]

為有，為無。”

B. *Tiānxià* 天下 ‘all under heaven, the *oikoumenē*,’ is here used to mean something like ‘this world of visible things,’ ‘this world of ours,’ ‘the visible world,’ ‘the universe as we know it,’ as opposed to ‘the Beyond,’ ‘the transcendental other world.’ Classical Chinese *wànwù* 萬物 could not express this. *Yǔzhòu* 宇宙 would refer to the framework rather than its content, and it might well be taken to refer to the whole universe including the transcendental ‘Beyond.’

- A clear terminological distinction ‘*Diessaits/Jenseits*’ is not available in pre-Buddhist classical Chinese.
- [3] *Wéi* 為 does not mean ‘to be’ but ‘must be held to be; count as’ and is used in a highly specialized ‘philosophical’ sense that is current in pre-Buddhist Chinese.
- [4] *Wéi yǒu wéi wú* 為有, 為無 is a STACCATO phrase which involves ANAPHORA of 為 (i.e., two successive clauses begin with the same character), as well as EPHIPHORA-ANTITHESIS (of *yǒu* 有/*wú* 無; i.e., two successive clauses end in antithetic words or antonyms or ‘ANTITHETIC EPIPHORA’).
- [5] Unmarked alternative questions are standard in pre-Buddhist Chinese. Marking the alternative with *yì* 抑 ‘in questions: or’ would be inelegant almost to the point of ungrammaticality. The marker is omitted although it probably was present in whatever the language was that this was translated from.
- [6] *Dá yuē* 答曰 represents a kind of grammatical or structural REPETITIO: *dá* 答, parallel to *wèn* 問 above, is used as a VT(+N.)+VT[0]+S. Note that it is not part of a subtle HYPOZEUGMA (omission of a word which is specified later in context), because in fact the *fànzhì* 梵志 mentioned below are not already the only speakers addressed here, if I understand the context properly (see note [8] below).
- [7] In this STACCATO figure of speech, we have again ANAPHORA (of *yì* 亦) within a quadrisyllabic phrase together with EPHIPHORA-ANTITHESIS (of 有 / 無 as above).
- [8] *Fànzhì* 梵志 ‘the (heterodox 異學) brahmins’ are identified as the subject of the assertive hostile logic-chopping. They were only part of the questioning crowd before, and in view of the Buddha’s answer they now take their own independent initiative.
- [9] The brahmins use technical logical terminology which specifies purely hypothetical logical PROTASIS (*rú jīn* 如今) as later in the *Línjì lù* 臨濟錄 (LJL) 13.5: 祇如今有一箇佛魔。同體不分。如水乳合。‘Suppose there were a substance made of buddhas and devils blended without distinction into a singly body, like water and milk mixed together.’ In pre-Buddhist Chinese *jīn* 今 alone functions as an abstract marker of the PROTASIS in purely hypothetical sentences: 今有人於此 ‘Suppose we have a man here

[...].’ The Buddhists deliberately use a colloquial variant in this technical function.

- [10] *Zhe* 者 (technically NPRO.POST-S1:ADS2, i.e., a pronoun following after and being modified by one sentence and that phrase in turn preceding and modifying another sentence) is a general marker of the PROTASIS in conditionals is a highly literate and sophisticated pre-Buddhist usage. The translators must have been fairly literate to be able to use this kind of construction.
- [11] *Yúnhé* 云何 ‘(you) say how’ as a rhetorical question particle is an archaism (it is found in the ancient *Book of Odes*) which gained extraordinary currency in Buddhist translations. One may speculate, probably idly, whether 云何 is not one of those cases of archaisms that disappear from ordinary discourse and become colloquialisms. The use of 云何 in so many Buddhist texts might possibly represent a deliberate use of the rhetorical device of COLLOQUIALISM. The matter deserves detailed investigation.
- [12] *Yán* 言 is specifically not ‘to talk, to engage in dialogue,’ although it may sometimes be loosely used that way. Its characteristic meaning tends to be ‘to speak up, to maintain, to propose’ in pre-Buddhist Chinese.
- [13] The patterns of—often antithetic—PARALLELISM need no detailed comment:
- A. 為有 / 為無
  - B. 亦有 / 亦無
  - C. 如今有者 云何言無 / 如今無者 云何言有

The repeated bisyllabic ANAPHORA of 如今 and the trisyllabic ANAPHORA in 云何 almost parodies pre-Buddhist propensities towards parallelism while at the same time imposing a rigid regime of logical comparability.

#### Part 4

##### TEXT

答曰：“生者[1]言：‘有。’

死者言：‘無。’[2]

故說[3]：‘或有，或[4]無。’”

## TRANSLATION

The Buddha replied as follows: ‘When something lives one says:  
 “It exists.”  
 and when something is dead one says: “It does not exist.”  
 That is why one says: “It may exist or it may not exist.”’

## ANNOTATIONS

- [1] The use of the particle *zhe* 者 here is part of highly abstract discourse: ‘As for what is alive, (one maintains that it “exists”; as for what is dead one maintains that it “does not exist.”).’
- [2] This parallelism with a combination of antithetic ANAPHORA (生 / 死) and antithetic EPHIPHORA (有 / 無) belongs to the pithy high rhetoric of the Lǎozǐ 老子.
- [3] There are cases where *shuō* 說 is colloquial and means ‘say’ in BYJ. But the use here is the classical Chinese: ‘Therefore one explains: [...]’ The status of verbs of saying outside the quadrisyllabic pattern, is frequent, but as we have seen, not universal. It remains worth explaining why *shuō yuē* 說曰 has always been excluded.
- [4] The STACCATO with ANAPHORA (或) with the resumptive antithetic EPHIPHORA (有 / 無) repeated from lines two and three is again standard pre-Buddhist high style.

*Part 5*

## TEXT

問曰：“人從何[1]生。”  
 答曰：“人從穀而[2]生。”  
 問曰：“五穀[3]從何而生。”  
 答曰：“五穀從四大[4]火風而生。”

## TRANSLATION

The [brahmans] asked: ‘What does man originate from?’  
 The Buddha replied: ‘Man originates from grain.’  
 They asked: ‘What do the five kinds of grain originate from?’  
 The Buddha replied: ‘The five kinds of grain arise from the Four Elements, for Fire and Air.’

## ANNOTATIONS

- [1] *Cóng hé* 從何 is a colloquialism attested in *Lùnhéng* 論衡 which became current in Buddhist Chinese. Pre-Buddhist idiom is as in *Zhuāngzǐ* 22: 何從何道則得道? In the present context, this colloquialism enables obvious parallelism of construction between *cóng hé* 從何 and *cóng gǔ* 從穀.
- [2] *Ér* 而 is inserted in order to create the extraordinarily neat pattern according to the length CRESCENDO, according to the famous ‘*Gesetz der wachsenden Glieder.*’ 五穀從何而生 below shows that there is nothing to prevent *ér* 而 directly after the pronoun *hé* 何 in the language of the BYJ.
- [3] The addition of the superfluous *wǔ* 五 serves two purposes: it links up with classical pre-Buddhist idiom, and at the same time it confirms the pattern of the length CRESCENDO.
- [4] *Sì dà* 四大 refers to the elements *dì* 地 ‘earth,’ *shuǐ* 水 ‘water,’ *huǒ* 火 ‘fire’ and *fēng* 風 ‘wind’; 火 alone, or 火風 would have sufficed. The text defies the obligatory pentadic system of the *wǔ xíng* 五行 ‘Five Agents’ of late pre-Buddhist cosmology. Retaining the reference to ‘the Four Great Ones’ asserts the outlandishness of the text, and at the same time it serves to maintain the sustained length CRESCENDO. This text is an example of deliberate artistic prose, or to use Eduard Norden’s felicitous terminology, it is *Kunstprosa*.<sup>19</sup>

## Part 5

## TEXT

問曰：“四大火風 從何而生。”

答曰：“四大火風 從空而生。”[1]

問曰：“空從何生。”

答曰：“從無所有[2]生。”

問曰：“無所有 從何而生。”[3]

答曰：“從自然[4]生。”

<sup>19</sup> A basic handbook on the history of classical Chinese prose style, like Eduard von Norden’s *Die antike Kunstprosa vom VI. Jahrhundert v. Chr. bis in die Zeit der Renaissance. I.* (von Norden 1958), still remains to be written. I know of no such thing, even in Chinese.

## TRANSLATION

The brahmins asked: ‘What do the elements, Fire and Air originate from?’

The Buddha replied: ‘The elements Fire and Air arise from Emptiness.’

The brahmins asked: ‘What does Emptiness originate from?’

The Buddha replied: ‘It arises from where there is nothing.’

The brahmins asked: ‘Where does “where there is nothing” originate from?’

The Buddha replied: ‘It originates from what is naturally so.’

## ANNOTATIONS

[1] After the length crescendo, the dialogue reverts to strict quadrisyllabic parallelism.

[2] 無所有 is not current pre-Buddhist Chinese and exceedingly common, probably as a colloquialism, in Buddhist Chinese.

[3] After the quadrisyllabic parallelism, the penultimate sequence, irregular as so often in classical Chinese artistic prose, reverts to the length CRESCENDO mode.

[4] *Lǎozǐ* 25 has a standard pre-Buddhist CRESCENDO with REPETITIO, ending in *zìrán* 自然:

人法地，

地法天，

天法道，

道法自然。

The Buddha ends this sequence in the dialogue with what to a Chinese reader must look like a clear ALLUSION to an ancient Chinese text, in a standard quadrisyllabic mode.

*Part 6*

## TEXT

問曰：“自然從何而生。”

答曰：“從泥洹而生。”[1]

問曰。“泥洹從何而生。”[2]

佛[3]言[4]：“汝[5]今問事何以[6]爾[7]深[8]。泥洹者是[9]不生不死[10]法。”

## TRANSLATION

The brahmins asked: ‘Where does what is naturally so originate from?’

The Buddha answered: ‘It originates from nirvāṇa.’

The brahmins asked: ‘What does nirvāṇa originate from?’

The Buddha spoke: ‘As you now ask about matters, why do you go so deep into it? Nirvāṇa is a dharma that is beyond life and death.’

## ANNOTATIONS

- [1] But the Buddha goes beyond the Taoist Ultimate, relating it to something transcendental: *níhuán* 泥洹 ‘Nirvana.’ What is beyond Taoist comprehension is the realm of Buddhist conceptual transcendentalism. One notes that *níhuán* 泥洹, as opposed to the completely abstract theorizing *fā* 法 ‘dharma’ which is introduced further down, is abstract and esoteric, but does invite emotional attachment: It is an ultimate spiritual aim.
- [2] The brahmins are not satisfied with this ultimate origin and continue to dispute and problematize.
- [3] Technically, what we have here is an extensive series of MESOZEUGMA, i.e., the omission of a subject which has been made explicit in the beginning and is made explicit again at the end.
- [4] *Yán* 言 ‘declare’ is not necessarily an interchangeable variation of *yuē* 曰 ‘say,’ as we noted before. A contrast between the two common verbs of saying may be intended here.
- [5] The Buddha permits himself a very familiar and colloquial form of address to the hostile brahmins. However, *rǔ* 汝 is, of course, current colloquial pre-Buddhist Chinese.
- [6] Rhetorical question in *héyǐ* 何以 ‘why (on earth)’ does not appear interchangeable here with the otherwise ubiquitous *yúnhé* 云何 ‘how (on earth)’ in Buddhist Chinese texts which we have seen above.
- [7] *Ēr* 爾 ‘like this’ is colloquial for *rúcǐ* 如此, and absent in what I know of pre-Buddhist literature.
- [8] The figurative use of *shēn* 深 is current in pre-Buddhist Chinese, but the Buddha’s focus on the intellectual style of one’s dialogue partner is unusual.
- [9] Pre-Buddhist antecedents of the current Buddhist Chinese copula *shì* 是 do exist. But the Buddha’s colloquialism when expounding

the deepest truth in this context is striking: The translator deliberately avoids the standard pattern SUBJECT 者 PREDICATE 也.

- [10] *Bù shēng bù sǐ* 不生不死 ‘neither prone to be born, nor to die; subject to neither birth, nor death; beyond the realm of life and death’ as a modifier of a nominal expression (technically, as VPADN) is not attested in what I know of pre-Buddhist Chinese.
- [11] *Fǎ* 法 ‘dharma’ is abstract esoteric Buddhist terminology which the Buddha ends with.

### Part 7

#### TEXT

問曰：“佛[1]泥洹[2]未[3]？”

答曰：“我未泥洹。”

“若[4]未泥洹[5] 云何[6]得知 泥洹常樂。[7]”

#### TRANSLATION

The brahmins asked: ‘Have you, the Buddha, reached nirvāṇa or not yet?’

The Buddha replied: ‘I have not yet reached nirvāṇa.’

‘But if you have not yet reached nirvāṇa, how can you know that nirvāṇa is eternal bliss?’

#### ANNOTATIONS

- [1] The question is AD HOMINEM. *Fó* 佛 may be taken as a so-called ‘pseudo second person pronoun’ (technically, N-PRO) serving as the subject: ‘you, the Buddha.’ Alternatively, this sentence can be taken to have an understood subject ‘you,’ and 佛 must then be taken adverbially ‘as the Buddha’ (technically: NADV, i.e., a noun preceding and modifying a verbal expression, or a ‘denominal adverb’).
- [2] The verbal use of *níhuán* 泥洹 ‘nirvāṇa’ is important because it is one of those cases where the subtle principles of pre-Buddhist Chinese grammar are applied even to phonetic loans from the Sanskrit.
- [3] *Wèi* 未 is not like sentence-final *bù* 不 or *fǒu* 否 ‘*n’est ce pas*,’ and means something like ‘or not yet,’ ‘or not quite.’ I would like to see pre-Buddhist Chinese examples of this but have not yet found one. XYJ 40 has 頗有人來 求索汝未 which shows that the

nuance of *wèi* 未 meaning ‘not yet’ can be weakened. Victor Mair 1993 translates: ‘Have there been quite a few people come to seek you?’ The polite subtle suggestion does seem to be, however, that if they have not, then they will in the future. Technically, one might well have to classify *wèi* 未 as a post-sentential question- particle along the lines of modern Chinese *shì bù shì* 是不是. Technically, *wèi* 未 would then be a PPOSTADS, i.e., a particle following after a sentence and modifying that sentence.<sup>20</sup>

- [4] *Ruò* 若 ‘if’ can certainly also be taken to mean ‘you’ in this context, but for some reason one hesitates to think that the word-play in the form of suspended ambiguity is involved here. Technically, this might even be a case of ADIANOETA, i.e., a sentence which has one obvious surface meaning but an alternative underlying different meaning.
- [5] To the reader steeped in pre-Buddhist Chinese, this introduces a passage that echoes the famous story about Zhuāngzǐ and Huì Shī crossing the bridge, where Huì Shī plays the role of the logic-chopping brahmins: ‘Not being a fish, how do you know the pleasures of the fish?’ The Buddha is cast here in Zhuāngzǐ’s *rôle* of the romantic empathies. *Yúnhé* 云何 introduces what is intended as a rhetorical question: ‘How on earth ...?’, which may be paraphrased as ‘it is impossible that ....’
- [6] The main caesura in this line being after *yúnhé* 云何, we have a clear case of ENJAMBEMENT, the quadrisyllabic group ending between a verb and its sentential object. We do find even cases where the group ends between a verb and its ordinary nominal object.

### Part 8

#### TEXT

佛言[1]：“我今問汝[2]：  
‘天下[3]眾生[4] 為[5]苦為樂[6]？’  
答曰：“眾生甚[7]苦。”

<sup>20</sup> One could perhaps regard *wèi* 未 as a ‘tensed’ (or here rather aspect) sentence final corresponding to the positive *yǐ* 矣 ‘have not yet until now...’; *bù* and *fǒu* do not have this tense aspect, it seems. This connotation of aspect was probably weakened in the course of time and *wèi* 未 became quite synonymous to sentence finals *bù*, etc.

## TRANSLATION

The Buddha said: ‘Now I will ask you:

“The various creatures of this world, do they live in bitterness or in delight?”

The brahmans replied as follows: ‘The various creatures suffer intense bitterness.’

## ANNOTATIONS

- [1] The Buddha declares: ‘I’m now going to put a question to you.’
- [2] The Buddha persists in the familiar address *rǔ* 汝 he has used before.
- [3] *Tiānxià* 天下 is redundant; *zhòngshēng* 眾生 alone would refer to all *tiānxià zhòngshēng* 天下眾生 in this context. We have demonstrative REDUNDANTIA-QUADRISYLLABISM which is ubiquitous throughout all Buddhist literature. The phenomenon is fairly common in pre-Buddhist Chinese, but not so typically blatant or demonstrative.
- [4] *Zhòngshēng* 眾生 ‘living creatures; sentient beings,’ like the pre-Buddhist *zhūhóu* 諸侯, is not in fact always plural: ZZ. 39:334b4 故有情即是眾生也 ‘Thus what has feelings is a sentient being’; ZZ. 42:41a04 則菩薩即是眾生也 ‘A bodhisattva is a sentient being.’
- [5] Repeated *wéi* 為 ‘does the subject count as X or does it count as Y’ as a formative of alternative questions of judgment has been used before in this brief introduction: We have a case of structural or idiomatic REPETITIO. (Technically, the syntactic function is vt+N1.+vt+N2, i.e., a transitive verb with its non-pronominalizable predicate nominal object, followed by the same transitive verb followed by a different non-pronominalizable predicate nominal.)
- [6] The antonym pair *kǔ* 苦 ‘be characterized by bitterness’ versus *lè* 樂 ‘be characterized by joyfulness’ has high currency in Buddhist Chinese, but it is already found in *Lùnhéng*.<sup>21</sup>
- [7] The degree of bitterness is, of course, irrelevant and is mentioned only for rhythmic euphony. Moreover, in pre-Buddhist Chinese, *shèn kǔ* 甚苦 always refers to a current highly precarious state, whereas here, the reference is not at all to any current situation which is precarious.

<sup>21</sup> See Yang Baozhong 2002 as an important source for this kind of information.

## Part 9

## TEXT

佛言[1]：“云何[2]名[3]苦。”

答曰：“我[4]見 眾生死時 苦痛難忍。[5] 故知死苦。”

佛言：“汝今不[6]死。亦[7]知死苦。

我見 十方[8]諸佛 不生不死[9]，

故知 泥洹常[10]樂。”

## TRANSLATION

The Buddha said: ‘Why do you call this bitterness?’

The brahmans answered as follows: ‘We see that when the various creatures die they suffer bitter pain and find it hard to bear, thus we know that dying is bitter.’

The Buddha said: ‘You are not dead at this point, but still you know that dying is bitter.

I have seen that the various Buddhas of the ten regions are neither born, nor die,

therefore I know that nirvāṇa is eternal bliss.’

## ANNOTATIONS

[1] The Buddha intervenes with an assertive question in the style of the logic choppers, which one might exaggeratingly translate thus: ‘How on earth can you apply the predicate *bitterness*?’

[2] *Yúnhé* 云何 introduces a provocative or rhetorical question here, and is probably significantly distinct from *héyǐ zhī zhī* 何以知之? ‘How do you know this?’

[3] *Míng* 名 ‘apply the name’ is technical logical usage.

[4] *Wǒ* 我 was predominantly plural in the Oracle Bones before it came to refer to the singular speaker himself. Here, the word must be taken in the plural, strictly speaking. However, the wording allows one to forget this pedantic detail.

[5] Cornered, and fully aware that needless to say, not having died they know nothing of what it is like to die, just as the Buddha, not having entered Nirvana cannot apparently speak of the delights of that state, the brahmans become guilty of a mild form of ARHYTHMIA, in that they produce a ten-character line, in self-defense.

- [6] The avoidance of the expected repetitive and perhaps insulting *wèi sǐ* 未死 ‘You are not yet dead; you have never yet died’ is not fortuitous—it is part of the Buddha’s URBANITAS, Zhuāngzǐ style.
- [7] *Yì* 亦 is not, or at least not only ‘also, like me.’ As so often in pre-Buddhist Chinese, the word means ‘nonetheless, all the same likewise.’
- [8] Pre-Buddhist China tends to speak of *sì-fāng* 四方 ‘the four directions,’ the *Yìzhōushū* 逸周書 occasionally of *bā-fāng* 八方, and the *liù-hé* 六合, but the Buddha, here, opens new transcendental vistas by the outlandish Buddhist technical term *shí-fāng* 十方 ‘the ten directions’ which refers to east, west, south, north, *dōngnán* 東南 ‘south-east,’ *xīnán* 西南 ‘south-west,’ *dōngběi* 東北 ‘north-east’ and *xīběi* 西北 ‘north-west,’ *shàng* 上 ‘upper world’ and *xià* 下 ‘lower world.’
- [9] The Buddha mimics the rhythm of his brahman opponents by way of playful and triumphant URBANITAS. (As mentioned above, *bù shēng bù sǐ* 不生不死 ‘be beyond the cycle of (re)birth and death,’ seems unattested in pre-Buddhist Chinese literature. It is referred to again, here, as a Buddhist keyword by way of REPETITIO. It will be very interesting to see an example in the excavated literature.)
- [10] A reader imbued with the pre-Buddhist Chinese tradition will smell in this *cháng* 常 an allusion to the prominent use of this term in the *Lǎozǐ*, as in 道可道非常道.

### Part 10

#### TEXT

五百梵志[1] 心開[2]意[3]解[4]，求[5]受五戒[6]。  
 悟須陀洹果[7]，復坐如故[8]。  
 佛言[9]：“汝等[10]善[11]聽[12]。  
 今為汝 廣說[13]眾[14]喻[15]。”

#### TRANSLATION

The 500 brahmins were delighted and relieved, and they sought to receive the Five Prohibitions.  
 They grasped the fruits of the *srota-āpanna* (first step towards enlightenment), and they sat down again, as before.  
 The Buddha said: ‘You people listen carefully to me.  
 Now I will at length expound for you the various parables.’

## ANNOTATIONS

- [1] This does not mean ‘500 brahmans,’ but ‘the 500 (above-mentioned) brahmans,’ i.e., the reference is definite.
- [2] The figurative use of *kāi* 開 is unattested in pre-Buddhist Chinese. In T. *xīn kāi* 心開 is ubiquitous. Even *Dàoàng* 道藏 426, line 1638 has *shǐ rén xīn kāi shén jiě* 使人心開神解.
- [3] *Xīnyì* 心意 is a current compound which recurs, for example, in BYJ 38 and 45, but is also well attested in pre-Buddhist literature, such as *Chúcí* 楚辭.
- [4] *Kāijiě* 開解 is a current compound attested, for example, in XYJ 27.5: 心情開解. The rhetorical device here, common in pre-Buddhist Chinese already, is that of interlocking split compounds: 心意開解 is artistically or artificially split into 心開意解. This rhetorical device is a natural part of the FORMULAIC ENCOMIUM at the end of a tale about the Buddha.
- [5] *Qiú* 求 is not the standard ‘seek’ but ‘beg to,’ as often in Buddhist Chinese.
- [6] *Shòu wǔjiè* 受五戒 does not mean ‘receive the Five Prohibitions,’ but ‘to accept the Five Prohibitions’ is formulaic and comes almost 1,000 times in T. Why and how *jiè* 戒 came to mean ‘prohibition,’ and apparently never ‘to prohibit’ in Buddhist Chinese is a story well worth telling in detail. It requires thorough research into the earliest translations of Buddhist texts.
- [7] At this point the text reverts to the esoteric technicalities of the opening, the *srota-āpanna* fruits, i.e., first step to enlightenment.
- [8] The formulaic *cóng zuò ér qǐ* 從座而起 of the opening is echoed by the equally formulaic *fù zuò rú gù* 復坐如故.
- [9] The Buddha is not just saying something: *yán* 言 indicates that he is making an announcement, he declares something.
- [10] The proliferation of pre-Buddhist plurals like *rǔ-děng* 汝等 in Buddhist Chinese is partly motivated by a desire to represent plural suffixes in the languages translated from, but in the present preface, *rǔ* 汝 has been used regularly to refer to a multiplicity of addressees, as it is again in the next line. The explicit plural here serves only RHYTHMIC EUPHONY.
- [11] *Shàn* 善 is a regular marker of the imperative mode in Buddhist Chinese, as in XYJ: 善來，比丘！‘Come, come, monks!’ and often elsewhere.

- [12] *Shàn tīng* 善聽 ‘listen!’ is formulaic in Buddhist Chinese (832 examples in T.). In pre-Buddhist Chinese, of course, 善聽 is current as well, but it means ‘be good at listening to others.’
- [13] The Buddha announces that he will *shuō* 說 ‘expound’ the parables, and he uses *shuō* 說 as in *shuōfǎ* 說法 ‘preach the dharma.’
- [14] *Zhòng* 眾 is probably not ‘all the many,’ as it would be in pre-Buddhist Chinese, but ‘a whole set of, many, a whole lot of,’ as it often is in Buddhist Chinese, and as we find already in *Zhànguó cè* 戰國策: 故眾庶成強 ‘many ordinary people make up strength’ and as predicative in the memorable Fǎyí 法儀 chapter of Mòzǐ 墨子: 天下之為學者眾而仁者寡 ‘The learned men in this world are many, the good persons are few.’
- [15] The nominal use of *yù* 喻 or *pìyù* 譬喻 to refer to a literary genre is unattested in pre-Buddhist Chinese as far as I know and should probably count as a loan translation. Consider in this connection the attack on Buddhist predilections for parables in the *Lǐhuò lùn* 理惑論 (T. 52, no. 2102:4b14):

夫事莫過於誠，	As for action, nothing is superior to earnestness;
說莫過於實。	as for discourse, nothing is superior to truthfulness.
老子除華飾之辭，	Lǎozǐ eschewed embellished diction, (he didn’t!)
崇質朴之語。	and he held basic substantial talk in high esteem.
佛經說不指其事，	The Buddhist discourse do not point out facts,
徒廣取譬喻。	they only make a broad choice of comparisons/ parables.
譬喻非道之要，	But comparisons/parables are not the main point of the Way:
合異為同，	they combine different things so as to identify them,
非事之妙。	and they are not crucial in things.
雖辭多語博，	Even if formulations are many and the talk is wide-ranging,
猶玉屑一車，	like one carriage load of broken-jade-writing,
不以為寶矣。	we still do not regard it as precious.
牟子曰：	Móuzǐ said:
事嘗共見者，	When a matter has been witnessed together
可說以實。	it can be discussed according to the facts.

一人見一人不見者， But if one person has seen a thing and the other  
 難與誠言也。 person has not  
 then it is difficult to speak with him truthfully.

[16] The ARHYTHMIA in the last line comprising seven characters may be surprising at first sight. It dissolves the formulaic high tone of the peroration and leads over to the light-hearted jokes that are the subject of this BYJ. These parables themselves, as we shall see, are very largely dominated by the quadrisyllabic rhythm which is typically broken at predictable points.

### Part 11 (Postface)

#### TEXT

此論[1]我[2]所造[3]  
 和合[4]喜笑[5]語[6]，  
 多[7]損正實[8]說[9]；  
 觀[10]義應不應[11]，  
 如似[12]苦毒藥[13]，  
 和合[14]於石蜜[15]。  
 藥為[16]破壞[17]病，  
 此論[18]亦如是[19]。  
 正法[20]中戲笑[21]，  
 譬如[22]彼狂藥[23]。  
 佛正法[24]寂定[25]，  
 明照[26]於世間[27]。

#### TRANSLATION

This *sūtra* has been produced by me.  
 It mixes in jokes  
 and in many places it contravenes the correct preaching of  
 Buddhism.  
 If you meditate on the meaning corresponding or corresponding  
 to the truth  
 you find the case is like that of a bitter powerful medicine  
 which is mixed in among sugar cane honey.  
 The medicine is for putting a violent end to disease.  
 This *sūtra* is also like that.  
 Within the true teaching of the dharma there is joking  
 and it is like alcoholic drinks.

The true dharma is full of Buddhist tranquility,  
and it shines bright over the human world.

ANNOTATIONS

- [1] *Cǐ lùn* 此論 ‘this *śāstra*’ would seem to refer to the present ‘*sūtra*.’
- [2] The ‘authorial’ self-reference with the assertive *wǒ* 我 invites the question who is referring to himself here. The Buddha does refer to himself by this assertive pronoun when he says: *Wǒ wèi níhuán* 我未泥洹. Must we take the Buddha referring to his own act of *zào* 造 ‘creation’ of his own *sūtra* as a *śāstra*? The matter is confusing.
- [3] Editors *zào* 造 ‘create’ or *zuò* 作 ‘make, produce’ *śāstras*, editors merely *jí* 集 ‘collect > compile’ *sūtras*, also *avadāna sūtras*, as pointed out in Menshikov 1986:9.
- [4] *Héhé* 和合 is ditransitive, and the understood second object is the *lùn* 論 ‘*śāstra*.’
- [5] *Xǐxiào* 喜笑 ‘laugh joyfully’ may seem pleonastic, until one reflects that 笑 in pre-Buddhist Chinese is predominantly derisive and contemptuous rather than dominated by pleasure. Technically, the term is here VPADN, i.e., a complex verbal expression which precedes and modifies a nominal expression.
- [6] *Xǐxiào-yǔ* 喜笑語 looks like a very early technical term for the simple literary genre of a ‘joke.’
- [7] *Duō* 多 ‘in many places’ does not strike one as current pre-Buddhist Chinese.
- [8] *Zhèngshí* 正實 renders a notion of truth which goes beyond that of mere correctness.
- [9] *Shuō* 說 in contexts like these comes close to a meaning ‘dogma’ which is alien to pre-Buddhist Chinese.
- [10] The imperative use of *guān* 觀 to mean ‘observe!’ is not current in pre-Buddhist Chinese. It is indeed an important task to see how the range of verbs that can be used in the imperative mode in Chinese changes through contact with other languages. No Delphic *gnōthi sauton!* ‘Know thyself’ in pre-Buddhist Chinese!
- [11] Deontic *yīng* 應 ‘should’ becomes very current in Buddhist Chinese only, but does have antecedents in the *Book of Odes*. The *Hànyǔ dàzìdiǎn* anachronistically presents *Ēryǎ* 爾雅 as reading *yīng* 應 as *dāng* 當 ‘should.’ The present unusual use of 應

‘approve, accept’ has an antecedent in *Zhuāngzǐ*, *Yùyán* 寓言: ‘與己同則應, 不與己同則反。’, commented upon by Chéng Xuányīng 成玄英: ‘與己同見則應而為是。’

- [12] *Rúsì* 如似 is first attested in Buddhist Chinese and recurs in ZTJ.
- [13] *Kǔ dúyào* 苦毒藥 is another case of EURHYTHMIC PLEONASM, i.e., superfluous verbiage which serves the purpose of rhythmic euphony.
- [14] Note that this REPETITIO is not merely rhetorical, but is strictly part of the argument. This shows how rhetorical forms must not be viewed in isolation from argument structure.
- [15] This may be the earliest mention of sugar coating in medicine.
- [16] *Wèi* 為 ‘serve the purpose of V-ing’ is syntactically interesting in that the syntactic category of its object is indeterminate between verbality and nominality. Thus technically, this 為 IS VTOV/N.
- [17] Resultative compounds like *pòhuài* 破壞 ‘smash so as to cause to be ruined’ are much more common in pre-Buddhist Chinese than current grammars suggest. However, the ‘bleached’ idiomatic use of *huài* 壞, only to reinforce a figuratively used *pò* 破, is unheard of in pre-Buddhist Chinese. It recurs, though in a related Buddhist text, the XYJ 27.5.
- [18] *Cǐ lùn* 此論 is again an argumentative REPETITIO, which does confirm that what is being discussed is emphatically *not* a *jīng* 經 ‘sūtra’.
- [19] *Rúshì* 如是 is used, here, in the current pre-Buddhist manner; contrast the opening line of this text.
- [20] *Zhèngfǎ* 正法 is esoteric technical Buddhist terminology, where *zhèngshí shuō* 正實說 was an attempt to render things in comprehensible Chinese.
- [21] *Zhèngfǎ-zhōng xìxiào* 正法中戲笑 deliberately brings out the incongruousness of the combination, as in the case of the medical pill.
- [22] *Pìrú* 譬如 is idiomatic even in pre-Buddhist Chinese (including the *Analects*), but the combination became overwhelmingly common in Buddhist Chinese.
- [23] *Bǐ* 彼 is pejorative in its deictic force (‘that appalling alcohol!’), and not, here, a case of EURHYTHMIC PLEONASM.
- [24] The conventional reference of the periphrastic *kuángyào* 狂藥 to

alcohol is clear enough, but the periphrasis is clearly pejorative, an effect reinforced by the preceding *bī* 彼. It is important to ask the question whether 狂藥 is a Buddhist way of talking disparagingly of alcohol. I think it is not, compare the Pí Kǎi 裴楷傳 biography in the *Jinshū* 晉書: ‘足下飲人狂藥，責人正禮，不亦乖乎？’ But one might, evidently, argue that the dynastic history is written under Buddhist lexical influence.

- [25] *Jiding* 寂定 ‘ultimate peace’ is a Buddhist keyword, and our Postface comes back to this crucial notion again. Indeed, it is the word on which the ZTJ postface ends: The word is unattested in pre-Buddhist literature.
- [26] *Mingzhào* 明照 may be overtranslated as ‘throw the light of spiritual enlightenment on,’ but this figurative usage has sound resonances in pre-Buddhist Chinese.
- [27] *Shijian* 世間 translates best into Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s French ‘*le monde*’: This mundane world. The radially-transcendental opposition is new in Buddhist Chinese, but the notion is one of those idioms which are already very common in *Lunheng* 論衡 and would appear to be a Chinese colloquialism that became a core concept in Buddhist Chinese. Contrast the current pre-Buddhist *renjian* 人間.

## Part 12

### TEXT

如服吐下[1]藥  
 以酥潤[2]體中[3]。  
 我[4]今以此義[5]，  
 顯發於[6]寂定[7]。  
 如阿伽陀藥：  
 樹葉而[8]裹之。  
 取藥塗毒[9]竟[10]，  
 樹葉還棄之。[11]  
 戲笑[12]如葉裹[13]，  
 實義[14]在其中。  
 智者[15]取正義[16]，  
 戲笑便應[17]棄。[18]  
 尊者僧伽斯那造作“癡花鬘”竟。

## TRANSLATION

This is like taking a medicine designed to make one vomit  
in order to cleanse the inside of one's body.

And when I now, using this meaning,  
broadcast forth the message of keeping one's Buddhist  
tranquility.

It is like the *āqiétuó* (Skr. *agada*) medicine:  
one wraps it up in leaves.

Once you have taken the medicine and you have applied the  
strong substance,

then as for the leaves, one goes on to throw them away.

The humour is like the leaf-wrapping,  
and the true significance is inside it.

The wise will pick the correct meaning  
and the humour then corresponds to the leaves.

## ANNOTATIONS

- [1] *Tǔxià* 吐下 is another one of those common resultative verbal compounds. The special feature here is that that this resultative compound is adnominal. Technically, we have VPADN.
- [2] *Sūrùn* 酥潤 'cleanses' looks like a surprisingly poetic word in this mundane context, at first sight. But one must remember that what is at issue here is a cleansing of the spiritual inner self: It is because of this ultimate inner reference that the poetic diction is felt to be appropriate.
- [3] *Tǐ-zhōng* 體中 is not just a case of EURHYTHMIC PLEONASM: The notion of the 'inner' is important in the context.
- [4] The persistent authorial self-reference in this *gāthā* shows an author who feels that his is a new or original kind of composition which needs insistent justification.
- [5] *Yì* 義 'main meaning; message' is a specifically Buddhist technical usage. The word cannot be used in this way in pre-Buddhist Chinese, but in Buddhist Chinese this has become perfectly current.
- [6] *Yú* 於 is a case of semantically extremely bleached EURHYTHMIC PLEONASM. The text would be clearer without it, but it would not follow the obligatory rhythmic pattern of this pentasyllabic *gāthā*.
- [7] The text reverts to its buddhological buzzword, *jìdìng* 寂定 'Buddhist settled tranquility' the elucidation of which is the purpose of this literary exercise.

- [8] This postnominal *ér* 而 marks off an instrumental adverb: ‘by the use of tree-leaves one wraps them up.’
- [9] At last we find a trace of a traditional classical Chinese PARALLELISM with ISOCOLON (same length of the parallel phrases): *qǔ yào* 取藥 ‘take the medicine’ is supported by the structurally superficially similar *tú dú* 塗毒 ‘smear on the drug.’ I say ‘superficially’ because *tú* 塗 ‘smear on’ is in fact semantically complex in that it contains an ellipsis of a contextually determinate object, i.e., the surface that something is smeared on. Technically, 塗 is VTON1(+PREP+N2), i.e., a ditransitive verb with its explicit direct object, and with an omitted prepositional object which is retrievable from the pragmatic context.
- [10] *Jìng* 竟 ‘to finish,’ ‘S1 having finished, S2 happened,’ ‘after S1, S2’ is here used in a grammatical way that is unattested in pre-Buddhist Chinese. Technically, it is VPOSTADS1.ADS2, i.e., a verb following after and modifying a sentence S1, this whole construction preceding and modifying another sentence S2.
- [11] In this line, again, the author indulges in standard pre-Buddhist Chinese classical artistic prose style:  
 ...樹葉而裹之。  
 ...樹葉還棄之。
- [12] *Xìxiào* 戲笑 is nominalized here, and such nominalization of this current binome is not common in pre-Buddhist literature, although it does in fact occur in the Bān Zhāo’s 班昭 *Nǚjiè* 女戒 where it is advised: 無好戲笑 ‘One should not develop a liking for joking and laughing.’
- [13]  
 A. *Yè* 葉 is adnominal, technically: NMADN, i.e., a mass noun preceding and modifying a main nominal expression. I am not aware of an example of this in pre-Buddhist Chinese, but this absence would not seem to be significant: We might just as well have had such an example.  
 B. Again, this line cultivates a classical parallelism between *xìxiào* 戲笑 and *yèlǐ* 葉裹.
- [14] The compiler is aware that his jests were not worthy of Buddhist truth, but they were needed as sweetener for the outlandish dogmatic pill of the Buddhist truth, the *shíyì* 實義 of which he has

spoken before, and for which esoteric Buddhist term there is no pre-Buddhist example.

- [15] In true classical rhetorical style, the author opts for VARIATIO between the synonymous *shíyì* 實義 and *zhèngyì* 正義, both of which terms refer to the true Buddhist message.
- [16] The *zhìzhe* 智者 is not ‘the man of true wisdom,’ but in fact ‘the man of good sense, the sensible reader.’
- [17] *Yīng* 應 is ‘should, must’. Here comes the rub: It stands to argue that there came to be those who insisted that getting the true essence of the Buddhist message was not so much in rejecting the ‘inappropriate’ and non-Buddhist tale, but in *getting the joke*. One thing is to recognize that life is a joke. Another thing—true enlightenment, as it happens—is to actually *get that joke*.
- [18] One might be tempted to diagnose a rhyme in the last two lines here, between *yì* 義 and *qì* 棄, but the facts do not oblige: The words are pronounced something like /ŋjɛ/ and /khi/ in Middle Chinese, if we are to believe Pān Wùyún 潘悟雲, and their rhyme groups are universally recognized as being not the same: 支 versus 脂.
- [19] What *jìng* 竟 ‘ends’ here, compiled by the venerable Saṅgasena is, after all, openly declared to be *The Garland of Folly*, and *not* some *Sūtra of One Hundred Parables*. In the first place, there are only 98 tales. In the second place the translator-compiler of the Chinese text acknowledges that what he translated did not originally present itself as a *sūtra*. There is, of course, the genre of the *jīng-lùn* 經論, the ‘*śāstra* on a *sūtra*,’ like Aśvagoṣa’s (Mǎmíng 馬鳴) famous *Dàshèng zhuāngyán jīng-lùn* 大乘莊嚴經論, as Sūn Chàngwǔ 孫昌武 from Nánkāi University in Tiānjīn kindly points out to me. And the wide open question remains whether indeed we need to read our book as a *śāstra* on a *sūtra*. More specifically, whether we need to construe the Buddha, in the introductory dialogue to the book, really learning from Lǎozǐ after all, as the Chinese tradition has long claimed he did. There still remains very much to learn about *The Garland of Folly*.

*Conclusion*

What is clear already at this point is that *The Hundred Parables Sūtra*, which is supposed to have been translated from the Sanskrit, does not, in fact, contain 100 parables, is not, in fact, a *sūtra* in the first place, and was by all appearances not, in fact, directly translated from the Sanskrit, but adapted to the Chinese audience.

Significantly, *The Hundred Parables Sūtra* opens with a joke which comes dangerously close to poking fun at replacing real life with Buddhist monasticism, while the Buddhist truth ought to be no more than ‘the salt of life.’ More seriously still, the book plays around with the formulaic conventions of *sūtras* in a text which openly declares itself not be a *sūtra* at all. It is thus neither a fake *sūtra*, nor a so-called ‘doubtful *sūtra*.’ It is a delightful new thing: A ‘playful *sūtra*.’ No wonder that this playful effect of the whole thing needed to be mitigated by narrowly sectarian moralizing commentaries which turned out so uncongenial that Eduard Chavannes, for his part, like many later translators, thought he served the book best by omitting these fundamentally apologetic ‘morals of the tales.’

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Appendix 1: Comparison between BYJ 57 and *Zá pǐyù jīng* 雜譬喻經, T.4, no.207: 525b29-c9

踴長者口喻  
昔有大富長者。  
左右之人欲取其意  
皆盡恭敬。  
長者唾時  
左右侍人以腳躡卻。  
有一愚者  
不及得躡  
而作是言。  
“若唾地者  
諸人躡卻。  
欲唾之時  
我當先躡。”

Parable 57 of *Bānyù jīng*  
Formerly there was a very rich and distinguished person.  
The people around him were keen to gain his attentions,  
and all of them showed him great respect.  
When that distinguished man was spitting away, the people in attendance trod it away with their feet. But then there was one fool who had not been in good time to tread on the spittle and he made this speech (addressed to himself):  
“If he spits on the floor all these people tread it away. (Already) when he is about to spit I shall (before he has actually spat), anticipate this and tread on it (already then).”

雜譬喻經 14  
外國小人  
事貴人  
欲得其意。  
見貴人唾地  
競來  
以足躡去之。  
有一人  
不大健勑。  
雖欲躡之  
初不能得。  
後見貴人欲唾。  
始聚口時  
便以足躡其口。

*Zá pǐyù jīng* fascicle 14  
In a foreign land, men of no significance were in the service of a nobleman and wanted to please their master. When they saw the nobleman spat on the floor they all sallied forth competing to wipe the spittle away with their feet. There was one man who was not greatly gifted for this task: although he wanted to step on the spittle from the start he never got to do it. Later, when he saw the nobleman was about to spit, when the nobleman was gathering his lips to spit, he then kicked him in the mouth with his foot.

*Comment:*

*The three parables translated in the appendices are preserved in The Hundred Parables Sūtra as well as in more direct translations probably from Sanskrit. In these three cases, the reader may thus investigate for himself, how the composition of The Hundred Parables Sūtra differs from these more direct translations.*

於是長者正欲咳嗽。  
 時此愚人即便擧腳  
 踢長者口。  
 破脣折齒。  
 長者語愚人言：  
 “汝何以故踢我脣口。”  
 愚人答言：  
 “若長者唾  
 出口落地  
 左右諸者  
 已得踢去。  
 我雖欲踢  
 每常不及。  
 以是之故  
 唾欲出口  
 擧腳先踢  
 望得汝意。”

Then, the senior person was just about to cough and spit.  
 At that time this fool then raised his foot and stepped on the senior person's mouth. He ruined the lips and broke his teeth. The senior person told the fool:  
 “Why are you kicking me in my mouth?”  
 The fool replied:  
 “If your spittle emerges from the mouth and falls on the ground then all these flatterers in your entourage have already got to step on it so as to remove it.  
 Even if I want to tread on it, every time I fail.  
 For this reason, when the spittle comes out of your mouth I raise my foot and tread on it before it is too late,  
 and I hope in this way to gain your favour.”  
 Every thing needs its proper time.  
 When the proper moment has not yet arrived and one insists to make one's effort, then, on the contrary, one will harvest troubles.  
 For this reason people in this world must understand opportunity of moments.

貴人問言：  
 “汝欲反耶。  
 何故踰吾口？”  
 小人答言：  
 “我是好意  
 不欲反也！”  
 貴人問言：  
 “汝若不反  
 何以至是？”  
 小人答言：  
 “貴人唾時  
 我常欲踰唾。  
 唾纔出口  
 眾人恒奪。  
 我前初不能得。  
 是故就口中踰之也。”

The nobleman asked him:  
 “Are you trying to offend me?  
 Why are you kicking me in my teeth?”  
 The petty servant said:  
 “I had the best intentions, and I was not intending to offend you!”  
 The nobleman asked:  
 “If you weren't going to offend me, why did you ever come here, may I ask?”  
 The petty servant said:  
 “Whenever your noble highness was about to spit  
 I always wished to wipe away the spittle.  
 As soon as the spittle left your mouth, all these people invariably took it away.  
 So to begin with I was unable to get my way.  
 So that is why I kicked you right in the mouth.”  
 This illustrates that when one discusses things when the meaning has left the mouth, only then is there difficulty.  
 As long as the meaning remains in the mouth the principle is not yet expounded clearly, then to raise objections,  
 that is compared to kicking him in the mouth.

凡物須時。  
 時未及到  
 強投功力  
 返得苦惱。  
 以是之故  
 世人當知  
 時與非時。

Every thing needs its proper time.  
 When the proper moment has not yet arrived and one insists to make one's effort, then, on the contrary, one will harvest troubles.  
 For this reason people in this world must understand opportunity of moments.

此喻論議時  
 要須義出口  
 然後難也。  
 若義在口  
 理未宣明  
 便興難者。  
 喻若就口中踰之也。

This illustrates that when one discusses things when the meaning has left the mouth, only then is there difficulty.  
 As long as the meaning remains in the mouth the principle is not yet expounded clearly, then to raise objections,  
 that is compared to kicking him in the mouth.

Appendix 2: Comparison between BYJ, T.4:551a and *Záyù jīng* 雜喻經, T.54, no. 2123:143c7

譬如有蛇  
尾語頭言  
我應在前  
頭語尾言  
我恆在前  
何以卒爾  
頭果在前  
其尾纏樹  
不能得去  
放尾在前  
即墮火坑  
燒爛而死

For example there was a snake,  
and its tail told its head:  
“I ought to be up front!”  
The head told the tail:  
“I’m always up front,  
why this sudden suggestion?”  
The head turned out to be in front,  
and the tail tied itself up round a tree  
so the head could not get away.  
The head allowed the tail to be up front  
and (they both) fell into a fiery pit,  
burnt themselves up and died.

昔有一蛇  
頭尾自相輿爭。  
頭語尾曰：  
“我應為大！”  
尾語頭曰：  
“我亦應為大！”  
頭曰：  
“我有耳能聽，  
有目能視，  
有口能食。  
是故可為大。  
汝無此術，  
不應為大。  
行時最在前，  
是故可為大。  
汝無此術，  
不應為大。”  
尾曰：  
“我今汝去，  
故得去耳。  
若我以身纏木三匝？”

In ancient times there was a snake  
of which the head and the tail were quarreling.  
The head told the tail:  
“I should by rights be the leader!”  
The tail told the head:  
“I should also be the leader!”  
The head said:  
“I have ears that can listen,  
and I have eyes that can look,  
and I have a mouth that can eat.  
Therefore I should count as the leader.  
You do not have these skills  
and should not count as the leader.  
When we are on the march I take the lead  
therefore I should be the leader.  
You do not have these arts,  
and you should not count as a leader.”  
The tail said:  
“It is I who order you to go,  
that is why you get to go, that is all.  
And what if I wind myself round a tree three times?”

師徒弟子  
 亦復如是。  
 言師耆老  
 每恆在前。  
 我諸年少  
 應為導首。  
 如是年少  
 不閑戒律，  
 多有所犯。  
 因即相牽  
 入地獄。

三日而不已。  
 頭遂不得去  
 求食飢餓垂死。  
 頭語尾曰：  
 “汝可放之  
 聽汝為大！”  
 尾聞其言  
 即時放之。  
 復語尾曰：  
 “汝既為大，  
 聽汝在前行。”  
 尾在前行，  
 未經數步，  
 墮火坑而死。

The disciples of Buddhist masters  
 are also like this.  
 They claim their masters are old  
 and that they keep staying at the head.  
 We young people  
 ought to become the leaders.  
 Young men like this  
 do not understand the Buddhist prohibitions  
 and they will often break some of these.  
 And thus they pull each other  
 so as to enter into hell.

For three days the tail did not let go.  
 The head was thus not able to leave  
 in order to seek for food, and they were on the verge of  
 dying of hunger and thirst.  
 The head told the tail:  
 “Let me off!  
 I shall obey you as the leader!”  
 When the tail heard these words  
 it immediately let him off, and the head went on to tell the  
 tail:  
 “Since you are the leader  
 I shall obey you, you take the lead.”  
 The tail took the lead,  
 and after a few steps,  
 the snake fell into a fiery pit and died.

此喻  
 僧中或有聰明大德  
 上座能斷法律。  
 下有小者不肯順從。  
 上座力不能制。  
 便語之言欲爾隨意。  
 事不成濟俱違非法。  
 喻若彼蛇墜火坑也。

This illustrates the following:  
 Among the monks there was an intelligent man of great  
 virtue, who took the high seat and defined the law.  
 Under him there are petty men who will not follow him.  
 The one in the high seat lacks the power to control these  
 and he told them to follow their intentions as they wished.  
 His task is not performed, and they all fall into lawlessness.  
 Compare this to that snake that fell into the fiery pit!

Appendix 3: Comparison between BYJ 2 and Zhòng jīng Zhuàn zá pì yù 譬喻, T.4, no.208:532c15

昔有愚人，將會賓客；欲集牛乳，以擬供設；而作是念：「我今若預於日日中，□ (=擠) 取牛乳，牛乳漸多，卒無安處，或復酢敗。不如即就牛腹盛之，待臨會時當頓□ (=擠) 取。」

作是念已，便捉犍牛母子，各繫異處。卻後一月，爾乃設會，迎置賓客。方牽牛來，欲□ (=擠) 取乳。而此牛乳即乾無有。時為眾賓或瞋或笑。

Once upon a time there was a fool who was about to assemble a group of guests: in preparation for this he wanted to collect buffalo milk, and thus he was planning to provide this for his guests. On the occasion he had the following thought: "If I now in preparation for this day every mid-day I milk the buffalo the buffalo milk will become more and more. Then suddenly at some point there will be no place to put the milk, or again the milk will go sour. It will be best to just leave it filling up the buffalo's belly: I shall wait until the time for our reunion comes and will then take out the milk at one go."

(六) 昔有一婆羅門。居家貧窮。正有一犍牛。[殺一]牛乳日得一斗，以自供活。聞說十五日獻諸眾僧沙門，得大福德。便止不復[殺一]牛，停至一月并取。望得三斛持用供養諸沙門。

至滿月，便大請諸沙門至舍皆坐。時婆羅門即入[殺一]牛乳，正得一斗。雖久不[殺一]牛乳而不多。諸人呵罵言：「汝癡人。云何日日不[殺一]牛乳，乃至一月也，而望得多？」

Once upon a time there was a brahman. He lived at home in poverty and just had one cow. Milking the cow he daily got one dipper of milk, and in that way he supplied his needs. He heard it said that if he held a feat for all the monks he would gain great good fortune, so he stopped his practice and no more milked his cow, and after he had stopped for one month he would then take all of the milk at one go. He hoped he would get 300 'bushels' of milk with which to serve all the monks.

When the month had gone by he then asked all the monks to his home for a feast and they all came and sat down. At that time, when the brahman had all arrived he milked his cow and got no more than just one dipper full of milk. Although he had not milked them for long, the milk was not a great deal. All the people swore at him and said: "You are a fool! why did you fail to milk the cow day after day for as long as a whole month, and hope to get more milk?"

愚人亦爾：  
欲修布施，  
方言：  
「待我大有之時，  
然後聚頃。」  
未及聚頃，  
或為縣官  
水火盜賊之所侵奪，  
或卒命終，  
不及時施。  
彼亦如是。

The fools are also like this:  
they wish to cultivate the making of donations,  
and then they say:  
“Let’s wait until I have a lot of the stuff,  
and only then will I make the donations at one go.”  
Before they have accumulated the stuff  
it may be either taken away by district officials,  
or by floods or fires, or by thieves or robbers,  
or indeed they may suddenly meet death,  
and do not at the proper time make their donations.  
That person (in the above story) is the same as  
these.

今世人亦是：  
有財物時。  
不能應多少布施。  
停擱久後  
須多  
乃作。  
無常水火  
及以身命  
須臾難保。  
若當不遇一朝蕩盡  
虛無所獲。  
財物危身  
猶如毒蛇  
無得貪著。

People today are also like this:  
While they have goods they are  
unable to dispense them according to what they have.  
Having stopped and after having amassed things  
they need to have much,  
and only then take action to dispense what they have.  
But in this world of impermanence, floods and fire,  
even one’s very life  
is hard to preserve for as much as a moment.  
If one does not dispense things in one morning,  
then there will be emptiness and there will be nothing  
to get.  
Property is dangerous to the person  
just like a poisonous snake.  
One should never crave or get attached to property.