

Power in Practice: Cosmic Sovereignty Envisioned in Buddhism's Middle Period

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국문요약

2세기에서 4세기 무렵의 불교 산스크리트 문헌인 『정법념처경』(*Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra*)은 대체적으로 연구되지 않았던 초기 불교 유가행파(*yogācāra*)를 엿볼 수 있게 해 준다. 해당 문헌이 지니는 불교 수행도와의 이론적 관계는 도덕적인 통달(*ethical mastery*)을 바탕으로 하고 통찰 지혜(*insight knowledge*)의 강력한 형태 속에 정점에 달한 정신적 능력(*spiritual power*)에 대한 폭넓은 시야를 드러내 준다. 필자는 이 문헌이 “붓다의 일체를 아는 지혜”[一切智 *omniscience*]와 그러한 일체지로 이끄는 길을 분명하고 독특하게 이론화하려는 시도를 보여준다고 생각한다. 특정한 통찰 수행(*Buddhist*

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insight practices)을 그러한 지혜를 기르기 위한 기반으로 채용하면서, 『정법
념처경』에 개술한 수행 체제(regime of practice)는 불교 수행자가 윤리적인
것에서부터 해체적인 것에 이르는 다양한 인식론적인 리스트를 경험적으로 거
치게 하며, 이를 통해 우주적 자재(cosmic sovereignty)로 나아가는 발전단계
속에서 붓다가 가진 힘과 같은 강력한 힘을 낳는 실재에 관한 지혜를 습득하
게 한다. 필자는 이러한 불교 수행, 지혜, 그리고 힘의 이론화가 전통적인 경전
의 근거들을 사용함으로써, 그리고 그러한 경전의 근거를 넘어서 유가행파의
수행자를 일체지에 접근하는 불교 명상으로부터 나온 “지혜에 관한 지혜”
(metaknowledge)에 대한 강력한 매개체로서 나타내는 중층적 서술 속에 넣음
으로써 어떻게 이행되는지 보여주고자 한다.

주제어: 명상수행, 유가행파, 『정법념처경』, 일체지, 힘, 지혜

The Buddha's biography is a narrative of conquest: first, a conquest of the teachers of his time, and second of the entire cosmos, beginning with the internal enemies of his own mental and physical urges and extending to the highest realms of existence. This conquest gets played out first in the context of meditation, when the Buddha conquers the evil demigod Māra, and second in the context of teaching, when he brings his inner state of conqueror to the knowledge of others. An additional mode of conquest involves the coalescence of the power of meditation and teaching in the miraculous, perhaps best exemplified by stories of the Buddha's Twin Miracle, which he is said to have carried out in order to trump the powers of other ascetics or to assuage the doubts of his own relatives and countrymen.

This powerful narrative legacy influenced conceptions of Buddhist practice throughout the history of the Buddhist tradition in India. The Buddha's story—his actions, his wisdom, and his powers—formed the foundation for many practitioners' conceptualization of their own identities. In this paper, I look at how the elements of this legacy get appropriated in a single Buddhist text—the second to fourth-century CE *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra* (hereafter *Saddhsu*)—in a description of the individual spiritual development of an ideal meditation practitioner, as he works towards becoming a master practitioner (*yogācāra*).

The text represents an attempt to theorize the way in which meditation practice allows a Buddhist contemplative to experientially negotiate a variety of epistemological registers—from the ethical to the deconstructive—and thereby acquire knowledge of the world that serves as a powerful force in

the development of cosmic sovereignty, power comparable to that of a Buddha. As it outlines this process, the text allows for the production of a form of knowledge that is altogether distinct from what was conceived of in earlier and contemporaneous layers of Buddhist literature. It presents a panoptic noetic vision of Buddhist reality exemplified in the meditations of a master practitioner (*yogācāra*). Such a way of seeing is also a way of knowing, and the text implicitly associates such knowledge with the Buddha's omniscience. In fact, the *yogācāra* of the *Saddhsu* approaches the Buddha's level of knowledge, as he has comprehensive knowledge of *karma* and its ripening. This knowledge, furthermore, is presented as the result of a progressive conquest of the universe, a power play in the cosmic battle between the forces of the *dharma* and the forces of the *adharmā*. In the text, this way of knowing and seeing — albeit the product of amassed spiritual power — in turn ultimately transcends power relationships. It is a form of knowledge transcendentally above the fray of the power play, while at the same time immanently cognizant of its details. I suggest that this form of knowledge gets produced discursively in the structural framework of the *Saddhsu*, where multiple narrative frames construct a meta-epistemological perspective on the relationship between transcendent knowledge, the knowledge of cultivation, and the cosmic sovereignty of individual practitioners.

I. Introducing the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra*

The *Saddhsu* is historically and textually heterogeneous, like many other authorless Buddhist *sūtras*. It has come down to us today in a form that was more or less fixed by the middle of the sixth century of the Common Era, when it was translated into Chinese (538 CE).¹⁾ However, textual work done by Lin Li-kouang and Kogen Mizuno suggests that it should not be dated to any later than the end of the fourth century, and was possibly produced much earlier.²⁾ It is thus reasonable to think that the text was composed some time between the years 150 and 400 of the Common Era.³⁾ For the present purposes, I would point out that the *Saddhsu* — even in its broadest contours — was most likely compiled at approximately the same time as some of the most famous Mahāyāna Sūtras and is likewise generally contemporaneous with, or predates, some of the most important early śāstric sources on Buddhist practice, such as the *Yogācārabhūmi* of Asaṅga (360-400 CE).

Early research by Lin Li-kouang on the Chinese and Tibetan translations of the *Saddhsu* made it clear that the text contained important material for the study of the history of Buddhist meditative and philosophical traditions.⁴⁾ Unfortunately, Lin died before he could complete his study, and few scholars followed up on his work. The discovery several years ago of a partial Sanskrit manuscript of the *Saddhsu*, held at Norbulingka in Lhasa,

1) 『正法念處經』 (T.17, 1a1-417c19).

2) See Lin and Demiéville 1949, 110-114; Mizuno 1964.

3) For a more detailed discussion of the dating of the text, see Stuart 2015, vol. I, 43-45.

4) Lin and Demiéville 1949.

has aroused new interest in the text.⁵⁾ I recently published an edition and study of the text's second chapter, and several other scholars are working on other sections of it.⁶⁾ However, it will be many years until the text will be available in its entirety. The text is voluminous, a veritable encyclopedia of Middle Period Buddhist thought, and presents challenges to the editor since it survives only in a single manuscript. Despite these difficulties, access to the text in its original Sanskrit opens many new avenues for study, and the present article is one first step in opening up the text to a wider audience of scholars.

Treating the text as a whole, we can read it as a presentation of basic ethical and meditative practices, which is then expanded into a compendium of cosmology, modeled loosely on the structure of the five *gatis*, or realms of rebirth. The text describes an incremental path of Buddhist practice, beginning with the cultivation of the ten paths of wholesome conduct (*daśa kuśalakarmapatha*) and leading into a series of meditative forays in eighteen stages (*bhūmi*).⁷⁾ These practices emerged historically as an organic

5) My work on the text is based on a photocopy of the manuscript kept in the collection of the China Tibetology Research Center (Box 12, No.1) in Beijing.

6) See Stuart 2015, in which I also edit some short sections of the sixth chapter of the text. Vesna Wallace is preparing an edition of the first chapter of the text, and Mitsuyo Demoto-Hahn is preparing an edition of the third chapter. The first three chapters only account for approximately one third of the extant Sanskrit manuscript, which itself covers only the first half of the entire text. So, much work remains to be done. Additionally, Mitsuyo Demoto-Hahn (2009) has published a short article on the system of hells in the *Saddhṣu*, in which she provides a basic overview of the text with a focus on its third chapter.

7) While the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions of the text do not contain a systematic scheme of chapters, the Chinese translators organized the text into seven chapters: 1. The ten paths of wholesome action, 2. Basic meditation and the human realm (*samsāra*), 3. Envisioning the

outgrowth of the traditional canonical Buddhist meditative practice of distinguishing the six basic elements of human experience (*ṣaḍdhātu*). This canonical practice is represented historically in a single Buddhist *sūtra* from the *Madhyamāgama* (with a parallel in the *Majjhimanikāya*), entitled the *Sūtra on Distinguishing the Six Elements* (*Ṣaḍdhātuvibhaṅgasūtra*).⁸⁾ The meditative program of the *Saddhsu* is complex. For a complete analysis of the text's historical, textual, and philosophical engagements, I encourage readers to consult my study (Stuart 2015).⁹⁾ The arguments below about conceptions of power in the *Saddhsu* take as background the analysis of the meditative program that I have already carried out in the book. It suffices to briefly note here that the text expands upon the traditional practice of distinguishing the six elements, bringing the practice into a developed Abhidharmic framework while simultaneously and explicitly reframing it as a process of *smṛtyupasthāna* meditation, the traditional Buddhist practice of “establishing awareness.” The practice of establishing awareness is best known in its canonical formulations in the **Smṛtyupasthānasūtras*, but texts such as the *Saddhsu* and the early tradition in general indicate that *smṛtyupasthāna* was considered more of a meta-practice, a reductive way of conceptualizing the basic crux of all forms of Buddhist practice.¹⁰⁾ In

hell realms, 4. Envisioning the realm of hungry ghosts, 5. Envisioning the realm of animals, 6. Envisioning the realm of deities, and 7. Observation of the body (a self-standing *sūtra*). For an outline and overview of the text, see Stuart 2015, vol. I, 46-107. See also Lin and Demiéville 1949, 1-63.

8) MĀ 162 at T.1, 690a19-692b21; Derge, *mngon pa*, Ju 34b6-43a3; MN 140 at MN III 237-47.

For a synoptic comparison of these parallel *sūtras*, see Stuart 2015, vol. II, 222-301.

9) See particularly Stuart 2015, vol. I, 108-300.

10) MN 10 at MN I 56-63; DN 22 at DN II 290-315; MĀ 98 at T.1, 582b7-584c1; EĀ 12.1 at

this way, the *Saddhsu* draws on the currency of *smṛtyupasthāna* while reworking practices not directly derived from the early **Smṛtyupasthānasūtras*. Suffice it to say that the basic practices of the *Saddhsu* primarily involve discernment — first of body, then of mind, and then of body and mind — in light of the three or four characteristics of existence: suffering, impermanence, not-self, and emptiness. This process of discernment leads to a complete envisioning of the cosmos and the workings of karma in a broad spread of cosmological observations. It is in the full expansion of such practice that one can discern the text’s larger vision of knowledge and power, to which we now turn.

II. Omniscience in Dispute

So, the text draws on early Buddhist canonical Sūtra traditions but expands well beyond them in a broadly figured spread of Sūtric, Abhidharmic, proto-śāstric, and cosmological forays. It does so through a literary structure that brings these diverse aspects of the text into a contained epistemological frame, allowing these historically constructed developments of the Buddhist tradition to sit within a larger system of interconnected phenomena. I will return later to how this system is effectuated. First, however, I would like to touch briefly on what seems to have been the major theoretical issue behind the *Saddhsu*’s textual/

T.1, 567c29-569b12. For a brief discussion of the notion of *smṛtyupasthāna* as a framework of meta-practice, see Stuart 2015, 38-40.

scholastic/practice program, by looking at its frame story (*nidāna*).¹¹⁾ To summarize the story: while on an alms round, a group of monks newly ordained under Śāriputra find themselves in a conversation with mendicants of another practice tradition, who sound suspiciously like Jains:

The wanderers and mendicants of the other school [said]: “Is it true, good Śākya, that your ascetic Gautama teaches that harmful bodily action (*kāyadaṇḍa*)¹²⁾ is bad (*aśubha*) — with unwanted, undesirable, and wretched

11) For a translation of the entire frame story, see Stuart 2015, vol. I, 55-59.

12) The use of the term *daṇḍa* in the *Saddhsu*, to refer to harmful action, reveals the way that religious conceptual frameworks and terminology were appropriated across sectarian lines in the history of South Asia. The term *daṇḍa* literally means “stick” or “rod.” However, it was used in certain religious contexts in the sense of “harmful act.” For instance, we find this definition in an old canonical text, describing an exchange between Dīgha Tapassī, a follower of the leader of the Jains (Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta), and the Buddha. (My translation is adapted from Bodhi and Ñānamoli 1995, 477 [MN 56 at MN I 372 (B^s)]: “Friend Gotama, Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta is not accustomed to using the description ‘action, action.’ He is accustomed to using the description ‘rod, rod (*daṇḍa*).”

“Tapassī, how many rods does he describe for the carrying out of evil action, for the production of evil action?”

“Friend Gotama, Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta describes three rods for the carrying out of evil action, for the production of evil action; namely: the bodily rod, the vocal rod, and the mental rod.”

(“*na kho, āvuso gotama, āciṇṇaṃ nigaṇṭhassa nātaputtassa ‘kammaṃ, kamman’ ti paññāpetuṃ. ‘daṇḍaṃ, daṇḍan’ ti kho, āvuso gotama, āciṇṇaṃ nigaṇṭhassa nātaputtassa paññāpetun’ ti.*

“*kati pana, tapassi, nigaṇṭho nātaputto daṇḍāni paññāpeti pāpassa kammaṃ kiriyāya pāpassa kammaṃ pavattiyā’ ti?*

“*tīṇi kho, āvuso gotama, nigaṇṭho nātaputto daṇḍāni paññāpeti pāpassa kammaṃ kiriyāya pāpassa kammaṃ pavattiyāti, seyyathidaṃ: kāyadaṇḍaṃ, vacīdaṇḍaṃ, manodaṇḍan’ ti.*)

In its employment of the term *daṇḍa* in precisely the way that it was once used by the early Jains, the *Saddhsu* is an example of how interreligious dialogue directly impacts the

results —and does not approve of [such action] for others? We also teach that harmful bodily action is bad —with unwanted, undesirable, and wretched results —and do not approve of [such action] for others. Sirs, your ascetic Gautama teaches that harmful vocal action (*vāgdaṇḍa*) is bad ... We also teach that harmful vocal action is bad ... Sirs, your ascetic Gautama teaches that harmful mental action (*manodaṇḍa*) is bad ... We also teach that harmful mental action is bad ... What is the difference between the Dharma and Discipline of your ascetic Gautama and our own [Dharma and Discipline]? What is the divergence and the distinction by which the Dharma and Discipline of the ascetic Gautama is distinguished from ours, [such that] he proclaims himself to be ‘omniscient (*sarvajña*)’?” When thus questioned ... the newly renounced monks on their alms round, being without [their preceptor] the venerable Śāriputra and the other monks, were dismayed, and did not respond.¹³⁾

Unable to respond to these other ascetics, the newly ordained monks return from their alms round and share the encounter with their preceptor, Śāriputra. He says to them:

“If I, good sirs, had been with you in Rājagṛha at that crossroad ... then I would have used the Dharma to debate (*vigrahaḥ kṛto*) those wanderers and mendicants of another school ... The Blessed One, with all-pervading vision, to

developments of the use of terminology within specific South Asian traditions. This also indicates that the somewhat stock description of the back and forth between the ascetics of other schools and Buddhist monks in the frame story may not be all that far away from historical reality.

13) Ms 1b2-5 (T.17, 1b29-1c17; Derge, *mdo sde*, Ya 82a4-83a2).

whom all is evident (*sarvapratyakṣa*), who knows the ripening of the fruit of action,¹⁴⁾ has conquered the seers of all schools, and teaches the Dharma of the ripening of the fruit of action to disciples, lay followers, gods and humans not far [from here]. You should ask him [about this]. He will teach you the entirety of the ripening of the fruit of action. He will teach you that Dharma which is not seen in this world, with its deities, Māras, and *brahmās*, [not seen] in this generation with its ascetics and *brāhmaṇas*. The Blessed One, the knower of the supremely mysterious¹⁵⁾ ripening of the fruit of action, will teach you that Dharma which is not apparent (*pratyakṣa*) even to us.”¹⁶⁾

14) Here I follow Wallace’s emendation of Ms: *sarvapratyakṣa(h) karmaphalavipākajñāh*. Ms reads: *sarvapratyakṣakarmaphalavipākajñāh*.

It remains a question throughout the text whether to interpret the second compound presented here as a *dvandva* or a *tatpuruṣa* compound. That is, is the Buddha one who “knows action, its fruit, and its ripening” or one who “knows the ripening of the fruit of action”? Ultimately, this distinction is merely semantic, since one who knows ripening must also know action and fruit. In my translations, I play with this interpretation, allowing for both possibilities, depending on the context in which the compound is embedded.

15) I read *atīvaparoṣakarma* after Wallace, who suggests *atīva paroṣakarma*. Ms reads *atīvaparoṣaṃ karma*. One reviewer suggested a reading of *atīvaparoṣaḥ karma*. While this is indeed a possible reading, there is little that lends support to it, and it seems like a puzzling description of the Buddha. The Chinese translation of the text, for instance, reads 唯有世尊, 第一善解業果報法, which suggests the absence or omission of the term *paroṣa* altogether, or an abridgement of the relative correlative phrasing in the previous clause. The Tibetan translation reads *shin tu mngon sum du gyur pa*, which does suggest a nominative, but with a meaning opposite to that of *paroṣa*. It seems evident that the text may simply be corrupt. In the end, the original reading of the manuscript might be the simplest one: The Buddha’s teaching (*dharma*), which pertains to the ripening of the fruit of action, is supremely mysterious or beyond the range of ordinary perception. The grammatical relations work in this instance, but the syntax is problematic.

16) Ms 1b6-2a2 (T.17, 1c22-2a5; Derge, *mdo sde*, Ya 83a5-83b3).

Taking Śāriputra's advice, the monks approach the Buddha and relate to him their encounter with the mendicants of another school. In response to this, the Buddha replies by delivering the discourse, which he first summarizes as follows:

“Monks, I will teach you ... the Dharma discourse called ‘The Presence of Awareness of the True Dharma(s) (*Saddharmasmṛtyupasthāna*)’ ... What, monks, is this Dharma discourse called ‘The Presence of Awareness of the True Dharma(s)’? It is: [One] sees Dharma as Dharma, and what is not Dharma as not Dharma. Awareness is permanently present with respect to that [Dharma], and doubt does not arise for him. He is one who delights in hearing the Dharma, and he respectfully serves his elders. That ascetic is one who knows action, its fruit, and its ripening in birth and death, [as instantiated in all] three types of action: physical, vocal, or mental. His vision is not inverted. He is not led [astray] by another [teacher].”¹⁷⁾

The frame story points to an underlying theoretical question that the *Saddhsu* is dealing with. The combative non-Buddhist mendicants' initial question about what distinguishes their practice of restraint from the Buddha's teachings on action refers to claims that the Buddha is “omniscient” (*sarvajña*). This reference allows us to discern the overarching theoretical crux of the text: Its account of Buddhist practice is an attempt to theorize the Buddha's omniscience, something that various Buddhist traditions were engaging in rather seriously during the first centuries of the

17) Ms 2a6-7 (T.17, 2b4-14; Derge, *mdo sde*, Ya 84a6-84b3).

Common Era.¹⁸⁾ The *Saddhsu* enacts such a theorization in a rather unique way, however, through an extensive description of practices based on the early Sūtra and Abhidharma traditions, with a particular emphasis on the practice of *dharmasmṛtyupasthāna*. I will get into the details of how the text does this momentarily.

The frame story also shows precisely what the authors/compiler/redactors of the *Saddhsu* had in mind when they spoke of the Buddha as omniscient. Śāriputra describes the Buddha first as “one with all-pervading vision, to whom all is evident, who knows the ripening of the fruit of action” (*samantacakṣuḥ sarvapratyakṣaḥ karmaphalavipākajñah*), then as “the knower of the supremely mysterious ripening of the fruit of action” (*atīvaparokṣakarmaphalavipākajñah*). These statements show fairly clearly what sets the Buddha apart: he has not only mastered his physical, vocal, and mental actions, but has a comprehensive knowledge of the functioning of all action and its results.

18) The theoretical question of the nature of the Buddha's omniscience is a key foundational question driving much Mahāyāna Buddhist philosophy. On this issue as it emerged in Buddhist epistemological traditions, see McClintock 2010. McClintock's discussion of early conceptions of the nature of the Buddha's omniscience (McClintock 2010, 23-45) are particularly relevant to an understanding of the historical context in which the *Saddhsu* was produced.

III. The Three-tiered Narrative Structure

It turns out, however, that in the context of the *Saddhsu* the Buddha is not the only one with such powerful knowledge. In the first chapter of the text, the Buddha proclaims that he does not see anyone other than his meditation practitioner disciples (*yogācāro macchrāvakaḥ*) who can observe and understand the intricacies of the way in which actions ripen.¹⁹⁾ In this statement, we see a significant development in the conception of

19) Ms 3b7 (T.17, 3c10-11; Derge, *mdo sde*, Ya 88a4-5): *nāham anyat paśyāmi ya evaṃ karmadharmavipākam anupaśyati yathā māmako yogācāro macchrāvakaḥ* |

Vesna Wallace, in her edition in progress of the first chapter of the *Saddhsu*, emends the text to read *anyaṃ*.

As Lin (Lin and Demiéville 1949, 242, footnote 1) points out, this type of rhetoric is common even in some of the earliest canonical texts. For instance, see MN 13 at MN I 85 (B⁶) (with comparable parallels in MĀ at T.1, 584c27-29 and Taishō no. 53 at T.1, 847a1-3): “Monks, I do not see — in the world with its deities, Māras, and *brahmās*, in this generation with its ascetics and *brāhmaṇas*, deities and humans — anyone other than the Tathāgata, the disciple of the Tathāgata, or one who has learned it from them, who can satisfy the mind [of a questioner] with an explanation to these questions.” (*nāham taṃ, bhikkhave, passāmi sadevake loke samārake sabrahmake sassamaṇabrāhmaṇiṅgā pajāya sadevamaṇussāya yo imesaṃ pañhānaṃ veyyākaraṇena cittaṃ ārādheyya, aññatara tathāgatena vā tathāgatasāvakena vā, ito vā pana sutvā.*)

A passage more closely related to this canonical precedent can be found in the first chapter of the *Saddhsu* (Ms 3a1; T.17, 2c26-29; Derge, *mdo sde*, Ya 86a1-3), preceding the quote above. There we find a more traditional idea: the law of karma is beyond the scope of understanding of non-Buddhist traditions, and only the Buddha’s disciples can access such knowledge, becoming masters of action and result (*karmaphalavipākajña*) having heard about it from the Buddha.

A more complex iteration of the refrain found at Ms 3a1 can be found at Ms 69b5-70a2 (T.17, 73c13-74a14; Derge, *mdo sde*, Ya 245b5-246b2).

what is possible for the disciple of a Buddha. The particular reference to a disciple who is a *yogācāra*, a meditation practitioner, also has broader implications.²⁰ That is, the text tacitly suggests that a *yogācāra* disciple of the Buddha is capable of approaching omniscience, which is typically the purview only of the Buddhas.

This tacit suggestion can be discerned in the text's narrative structure. The *Saddhsu* is composed in a three-tiered narrative framework. First we have an outer narrative frame, which we have already encountered: the Buddha giving a discourse in response to the questions of his disciples. In his response, he brings in the second narrative frame, which I refer to as the middle frame. This narrative portrays a *yogācāra* progressing through an elaborate series of meditative observations that comprehensively detail the law of karma — first as it pertains to the ethical and meditative practices of the human realm, and then as it pertains to the other four realms of existence: the hells, the animal realm, the realm of hungry ghosts, and the realm of deities. This description of the *yogācāra*'s discernment of the law of karma, however, is presented as the observation of a third narrative, which I refer to as the inner frame. To be more specific, the *yogācāra* envisions the path of practice of a lay practitioner, who first develops the ethical practices of the ten paths of wholesome action (*daśakuśalākarmapatha*), goes on to become a monk, masters the discernment (*prajñā*) of the constituents of human experience, and finally attains *dhyāna* and gains the

20) On the term *yogācāra*, see Silk 1997 and 2000. See also the Introduction to White ed. 2011.

It appears that the *Saddhsu* deploys the term *yogācāra* as more than simply a generic trope, which is what Silk's work indicates.

ability to discerningly experience all the realms of existence, the entire cosmos.

It is in this three-tiered structure that the *Saddhsu* most explicitly illustrates its vision of an interrelationship between power and knowledge. The middle frame is a description of a *yogācāra*'s contemplative discernment of the laws of karma, reflecting an all-encompassing noetic vision of reality for a supreme Buddhist adept. The inner frame of the text, on the other hand, contains descriptions of basic insight meditation practices that bring a monastic practitioner to the point of being able to correctly develop such meditative vision, and to understand the world in connection with the fundamental constituents of human experience according to Buddhist tradition. The contemplative process entailed in such developments is portrayed as progress towards becoming a full-fledged *yogācāra*. As a monk progresses in meditation, he comes closer and closer to attaining the state of the master *yogācāra* who is the main agent of the middle frame of the text. In this way, the *Saddhsu* can be read as a text detailing the making of a *yogācāra*. From the standpoint of the middle frame of the text, then, we see a fully developed *yogācāra* noetically reflecting upon or envisioning the contemplative process that an ordinary monk must undertake to attain the status of a *yogācāra*. It is a portrayal of a meditative meta-knowledge, inscribed recursively by the phrase —echoing the canonical description of the practice of *dharmasmṛtyupasthāna* — *punar api yogacāra ādhyātmike dharme dharmānupaśyī viharati*: “And further, the *yoga* practitioner dwells observing *dharmā*-s among internal *dharmā*[-s].”²¹⁾ The *yogācāra*, practicing

21) Cf. DN 22 at DN II 303: *puna ca paraṃ, bhikkhave, bhikkhu dhammesu dhammānupassī*

at the pinnacle of insight knowledge, discerns the process by which meditative knowledge is acquired.

In the discernment of this process, a set of cosmic power relationships emerges, constructed around the way a spiritual practitioner *knows* about the universe, *knows* about himself, *knows* about karma, and *knows* about the process of discerning all of these forms of knowledge as well. These relationships primarily come to light in the inner narrative frame, which serves as the primary substantial content of the text. It is here that we find an additional structuring principle: a scheme of meditative stages (*bhūmi*) through which the main actor of the text progresses. We might therefore term the *Saddhsu* a *yogācārabhūmi* (a text outlining stages of meditative practice), and class it among a whole genre of such texts produced during the first five centuries of the Common Era in India.²²) Uniquely, the *Saddhsu* presents a scheme of eighteen stages. It should be emphasized, however, that the text ends abruptly, leaving its treatment of the stage progression incomplete. This means that the original text must have been

viharati ... Also cf. the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (Takayasu ed. 2006, 56, with my punctuation): *katamāni ca, Subhūte, catvāri smṛtyupasthānāni? ... adhyātmadharme dharmānupaśyī viharati, bahirdhādharme dharmānupaśyī viharati, adhyātmabahirdhādharme dharmānupaśyī viharati, ātāpī samprajānan smṛtimān, vinīya loka 'bhidhyādaurmanasye. samudayānupaśyī ca dharmāṇāṃ viharati, vyayānupaśyī ca dharmāṇāṃ viharati. dharme dharmānupaśyī viharati, anīcītaś ca viharati, na ca kañcil loka upādatte. imāny ucyante catvāri smṛtyupasthānāni.* The singular emphasis on internal (*ādhyātmika*) dharmas in the *Saddhsu* reveals a peculiarly mentalist emphasis, and a new and creative engagement with the traditional practice of *dharmasmṛtyupasthāna*.

22) On the *yogācārabhūmi* as a textual genre, see Demiéville 1954, Yamabe 1999, and Deleanu 2006.

much longer, and that the stage scheme as we have it is incomplete.²³⁾

Whatever the original text may have looked like, the first eighteen stages as we have them provide enough information for readers to discern the power-knowledge ideology envisioned therein.²⁴⁾ At the end of each stage, the text provides a description of how the accomplishments of a monk progressing through the stages come to the notice of various supernatural forces, such as earth spirits (*bhaumayakṣa*), flying spirits (*antarikṣacarayakṣa*) and various types of deities. These supernatural beings become part of the practitioner's retinue of admirers, actively aware of his meditative progress. As the narrative progresses, so also does these observers' rank in the cosmological order become more elevated. For example, a monk first gains the notice of the lowest deities of the realm of sensuality (*kāmadhātu*), the Four Great Kings (*catvāro mahārājānaḥ*) and the deities in the Retinue of the Four Great Kings (*cāturmahārājakāyikadeva*), when he attains right view just prior to engaging in serious meditative practice. He gains the notice of Śakra and the deities of the Heaven of the Thirty-three (*trayastrimśadeva*), as well as the Yāma deities (*yāmadeva*), when he progresses to the third stage of meditative practice, and he gains the notice of the bodhisattva Maitreya and the deities of Tuṣita Heaven (*tuṣitadeva*)

23) There is of course a conclusion at the very end of the text, but it clearly belongs to the seventh chapter, which should be read as a distinct *sūtra* (T.17, 417c17-18 [Derge, *mdo sde*, Sha 227b6-7]): "At that time, the monks heard the teaching of the World-honored One and were all overjoyed. They gave rise to a mind of faithful delight towards the teaching of the World-honored One. They rejoiced, bearing it in mind." 「時諸比丘。聞世尊說。皆大歡喜。於世尊說。生信樂心。歡喜奉行。」

24) For a more detailed discussion of the *Saddhsu*'s second chapter and its role as the practical core of the *Saddhsu*, see Stuart 2014 and Stuart 2015, vol. I, 108-97.

when he accomplishes the fourth stage. The mention of Maitreya in this progression is particularly interesting because it indicates that the authors/redactors/compilers of the *Saddhsu* were one of a number of *yogācāra* Maitreya cults prevalent in the Northwest of India during the first few centuries of the Common Era.²⁵) The progression continues — if somewhat unevenly — into the later stages, with the practitioner ultimately gaining the notice of beings as lofty as the deities of Minor Aura (*parīttasubhadeva*), who abide in the higher realms of the sphere of subtle materiality (*rūpadhātu*), when he progresses to the eighteenth stage.²⁶)

This narrative element of the text's stage scheme can be read as a textual allusion, echoing the canonical *Dharmacakrapravartanadharmaparyāya*, the first sermon of Gautama the Buddha according to tradition. That sermon comes to a close with the following:

[When Ājñātakaunḍinya had realized the Dharma after hearing it from the Buddha,] the earth spirits raised a cry and spread the word: “Good sirs, at Vārāṇasī, in the Deer Park of Ṛṣivādāna, in accordance with Dharma and for the welfare and happiness of many people, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit and happiness of deities and humans, the Blessed One has set in motion the wheel of the Dharma — with its three rounds and twelve permutations — which conforms with the Dharma and cannot be turned back by [any] ascetic, *brāhmaṇa*, deity, Māra, *brahmā*, or anyone in the world. In this way, the divine hosts (*divyāḥ kāyāḥ*) are increasing, the hosts of demons

25) See Demiéville 1954, 376-395.

26) For an overview of the fundamentals of Buddhist cosmology, see Kirfel 1967 [1920], 178-209, Kloetzli 1983 (especially 23-50), and Sadakata 1997, 19-112.

(*āsūrāḥ kāyāḥ*) are perishing.” Having heard [this] cry of the earth spirits, the flying spirits spread it [onward, and it spread respectively to] the deities of the Retinue of the Four Great Kings, the deities of the Heaven of the Thirty-three, the Yāma deities, the deities who delight in creation and the deities who delight in wielding power over the creations of others. In a moment, an instant, a short interval, the cry reached the *brahmā*-world. The deities of Brahmā’s Retinue [likewise] raised a cry and spread the word: “Good sirs, at Vārāṇasī ... In this way, the divine hosts are increasing, the hosts of demons are perishing.” [Because] “the blessed one set in motion (*pravartitaṃ*) the wheel of the Dharma — with its three rounds and twelve permutations — which is in conformity with the Dharma,” therefore the name of this Dharma discourse is the “Setting in Motion of the Wheel of the Dharma (*dharmacakrapravartanam*).”²⁷⁾

27) Sbhv I 136-137 (my punctuation): *bhaumā yakṣāḥ śabdāṃ udīrayanti, ghoṣam anuśrāvayanti: “etan, mārṣā, bhagavatā vārāṇasyāṃ ṛṣivadane mṛgadāve triparivartaṃ dvādaśākāraṃ dharmyaṃ dharmacakraṃ pravartitaṃ apravartyaṃ śramaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā māreṇa vā brahmaṇā vā kenacid vā loke āsahadharmataḥṇī bahujanahitāya bahujanasukhāya lokānukampāyai arthāya sukhāya devamanuṣyāṇām. iti divyāḥ kāyā bhivardhiṣyante, āsūrāḥ kāyāḥ parihāsyante” iti. bhaumānāṃ yakṣāṇāṃ śabdāṃ śrutvā antarikṣāvacarā yakṣās ātam anuśrāvayanti, cāturmahārājakāyikā devāḥ trīyastrimśā yāmās tuṣitā nirmāṇaratayaḥ paranirmitavaśavartino devāḥ. tena kṣaṇena, teṇa lavena, tena muhūrtena, tena kṣaṇalavamuhūrtena yāvad brahmalokaṃ śabdo 'gamat. brahmakāyikā devāḥ śabdāṃ udīrayanti, ghoṣam anuśrāvayanti: “etan, mārṣā, bhagavatā vārāṇasyāṃ ...iti divyāḥ kāyā bhivardhiṣyante, āsūrāḥ kāyāḥ parihāsyanta” iti. “pravartitaṃ bhagavatā vārāṇasyāṃ ṛṣivadane mṛgadāve triparivartaṃ dvādaśākāraṃ dharmyaṃ dharmacakraṃ” iti, tasmāḍ asya dharmaparyāyasya “dharmacakrapravartanam” ity adhivacanāṃ.*

This discourse survives in a number of parallels in different strata of Buddhist literature. Three very close parallels to the above passage can be found in the Sūtra and Vinaya literature, all with (Mūla-)Sārvāstivāda affiliations: SĀ 379 at T.2, 104a13-28, Taishō no. 1450 at T.24, 128a14-b1 and Taishō no. 1435 at T.23, 448c19-449a7. The Pāli parallels of

A comparison of this passage with the refrains that occur at the end of each stage in the *Saddhsu* shows that the *Saddhsu*'s narrative framework is indebted to this classical literary form of the early tradition. This allusion also reveals that the authors/compiler/redactors of the *Saddhsu* were attempting to equate the spiritual power of their gradualist approach to Buddhist meditation with the spiritual power of the Buddha's act of teaching the Dharma. This idea is highlighted in the text's narrative refrains, when the deities proclaim to one another that the meditating monk's progress is an indication that "Māra's faction is waning, the faction of the True Dharma is waxing."²⁸ These statements frame the monk's practice as a power play in a cosmic battle with negative cosmological forces (*Mārapakṣa*), a war for the sake of the Dharma.²⁹ As he progresses in his skillful engagement with the phenomena of the world, his discernment (*prajñā*) of every sphere of experienced reality allows him to gain

this passage (SN V 423-424 and Vin I 11-12) are quite similar, though less embellished, and notably lack explicit reference to the notion that the act of teaching the Dharma is connected to a shift in the cosmological balance of powers. Such reference is also absent in the Mahīśāsaka-vinaya parallel (Taishō no. 1421 at T.22, 104c16-23) and the Dharmaguptaka-vinaya parallel (Taishō no. 1428 at T.22, 788b28-c7). This is an important difference, as the *Saddhsu*, in its cosmological refrains, explicitly draws on this particular motif of the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivādin textual tradition.

28) *Saddhsu* II §1.5.2 (Stuart 2015, vol. I, 324-25): "*hīyate mārapakṣaḥ. abhyuddhriyate saddharmapakṣaḥ.*" Such refrains appear in a number of different permutations throughout the *Saddhsu*.

29) It is clear that Māra here refers to the deity Māra, a representative and figurehead of the forces of the *adharmā*. The text's mentalist orientation does allow for the possibility of interpreting all cosmological figurations as internal forces, but the concrete nature of the cosmological descriptions makes me inclined not to take such an interpretation as primary.

sovereignty over these elements of experience, with grand cosmological implications. Omniscience, then, in the context of the *Saddhsu*, refers not only to a way of knowing but also to a way of being (or not being) and acting, and to the possibility of wielding power in or upon the world(s).

IV. Power-knowledge in the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra*

Finally, we might look briefly at some of the descriptions of knowledge attained in the first two chapters and ten stages of the *Saddhsu*, understanding that it is the development of these forms of meditative practice-knowledge that serves as the substantive force behind a practitioner's amassment of cosmic power, exemplified by his growing flock of supernatural admirers:

I samyagdr̥ṣṭipurodhasa: “He who is guided by right cognition”

II.3.1 śaddhātutattvajña: “Knower of the six elements”

II.5.1.19 udayavyayatattvajña: “Knower of the arising and passing away [phenomena]”

II. 5.1.20 skandhatattvajña: “Knower of the nature of the aggregates”

II.5.1.22 mārgāmārgatattvajña: “Knower of the nature of what is and is not the path of practice”

II.5.2.3.4 cakṣuḥsaṃsparśajavedanāsañjñācetanātattvajña, mārgatattvajña: “Knower of the nature of feelings, perceptions, and intentions connected to eye-contact”, “Knower of the nature of the path”

II.5.2.5.2 āyatanatattvajña: “Knower of the nature of the [twelve] sense-spheres”

II.7.1 karmaphalavipākajña: “Knower of the ripening of the fruit of action”

II.7.2 karmaphalaśubhāśubhajña: “Knower of the fruits of action, both good and bad”

II.7.5 karmadharmavipākajña: “Knower of the ripening of action *dharm*-s”

II.7.8 dharmādharma-parīkṣātattvajña: “Knower of the nature of the investigation of what is and is not Dharma”

II.7.18 karmadharmavipākajña: “Knower of the ripening of action *dharm*-s”

II.7.21.2 taccharīradharmatattvajña (impurity [*śubha*] practice): “Knower of the nature of the body”

II.10.6 dharmādharma-vidhijña: “Knower of the method of what is and is not Dharma” ...

In later chapters of the text, we find the epithet *karmaphalavipākajña* or “knower of the ripening of the fruit of action” to be the primary descriptive term used to refer to the main actor of the text. The ideal practitioner of the *Saddhsu* attains this stage of knowledge, as shown above, already in the seventh stage of meditative practice. This knowledge of the ripening of the fruit of karma is also precisely the form of knowledge described at the opening of the *Saddhsu* as a quality associated with the Buddha’s omniscience. Indeed, by the tenth stage of the *Saddhsu*, our practitioner has accomplished the aim of practice that the Buddha set out in the frame story. Such a practitioner has the capacity to discern all aspects of worldly and transcendent reality. As the text carries forward, the practitioner carries on the process of discernment by envisioning the ripening of karma in the manifold realms of the cosmos beyond the human realm: the hell realms,

the realm of hungry ghosts, the realm of animals, and the realms of deities. Most significantly, what emerges from the *Saddhsu*'s practice framework is the basic notion that these forms of knowledge — emergent from certain modes of physical, vocal, and finally mental discipline — naturally bring about an amassment of spiritual power that draws good or dharmic supernatural forces near, and conquers negative or adharmic supernatural forces.

The inner frame of the *Saddhsu*, therefore, provides readers with a fairly straightforward conception of power-knowledge, one that is in line with traditional Buddhist conceptions:³⁰ Buddhist ascetic sovereign power is attained progressively — first through the mastery of physical, vocal, and mental restraint, and then through the practice of discernment into all the phenomena of existence, from the human ethical, to the psycho-physical, to the cosmological. In the *Saddhsu*, this conception relates the supernormal force of the meditation practice of ideal individual practitioners to the supernormal force of the Buddha's teaching of the Dharma. We see here two key aspects of power-knowledge that emerge in the *Saddhsu*. First, the disciplinary power of Buddhist ethics — which underwrites a rigorous process of self-surveillance while also invoking the prospect of panoptic surveillance by the Buddha, the Buddhist community, or supernormal beings — produces forms of knowledge that provide a practitioner with the

30) I employ Foucauldian language here in an attempt to show how such theoretical frameworks can be fruitfully, though not seamlessly, engaged in the sphere of traditional Buddhist ethical and contemplative thought. See particularly Foucault 1990 [1978] and Foucault 1995 [1977] for a full account of Foucault's conceptions of sovereign power, disciplinary power, and power/knowledge more broadly speaking.

possibility of attaining mastery of worldly (*laukika*) sovereign power.³¹ Second, the proper mode of cognizing worldly phenomena — a regime of mental discipline that emerges from the context of more basic forms of physical and vocal discipline — produces transcendent ascetic knowledge leading to the possibility of liberation.³²

But the presence of the middle frame of the text, in which the *yogācāra* is described observing all of this with his noetic *dharma*-discerning vision, complicates the epistemological implications of the text's program, pointing to a more exalted conception of power-knowledge than that exhibited within the inner frame. The meta-knowledge of the *yogācāra* of the middle frame is ultimately the final result of the spiritual conquest outlined in the inner frame; it is power perfected. However, this knowledge about

31) The relationship between ethical mastery and worldly sovereign power is developed in particular in the first chapter of the *Saddhsu*. See, for example, Ms 7a2 (T.17, 6c24-26; Derge, *mdo sde*, Ya 96a3-4): “If one transforms [good conduct] towards the defiling pleasure of sense objects rooted in craving, he becomes a *brahmā*, a *Māra*, or a *Śakra*. If he transforms it into human greatness, he becomes a wheel-turning monarch, wealthy with the seven treasures and ruling the four continents. ...” (*yadi vā sāmkleśike trṣṇāhetubhūte viṣayasaukhye pariṇāmayati, sa brahmā vā bhavati, māro vā śakro vā* ¶ *yadi manuṣyamāhātmyaṃ pariṇāmayati, sa rājā cakravartī bhavati* { } *saptaratnasamṛddhaś caturdvīpabhojī* ¶ ...). See also Ms 7a2 (T.17, 6c16-20; Derge, *mdo sde*, Ya 95b5-96a1); Ms 7a8-7b1 (T.17, 7a27-29; Derge, *mdo sde*, Ya 97a3-4); Ms 8b6-10b6 (T.17, 8b29-10b24; Derge, *mdo sde*, Ya 100b5-105b2). Additionally, see Stuart 2015, vol. I, 478-81. There, transcendent sovereignty is invoked along with forms of worldly sovereignty.

32) Ms 10b7 (T.17, 10c1-2; Derge, *mdo sde*, Ya 105b4-5): “Now, because of the absence of wrong view, all bad things disappear for one of right view. The fetters and latent defilements are relinquished. Nirvāṇa is close to him, and the flow of existence at a remove.” (*iha mithyādrṣṭivirahād asya samyagdarśinaḥ sarvānarthāḥ prahīyante* ¶ *samyojanānuśayā vā##ntībhavanti* ¶ *nirvāṇam antike cāsya bhavanti, dūrībhavati saṃsāraḥ* ¶)

knowledge, like the omniscience of the Buddha, becomes transcendent in the vision of the *yogācāra*, beyond relations of power. The *yogācāra* thus functions in the text like a godhead, representing supreme knowledge and perhaps standing in for the Buddha in the world.³³⁾ In setting up the *yogācāra* in this way, the *Saddhsu* provides a vision of spiritual sovereignty that begins with basic ethical practices, must be fought out in the arena of the body, mind, and cosmos, but ultimately stands apart, transcendentally above the power play yet intimately and immanently cognizant of its details.

33) One question that looms here is the extent of the power of such practitioners, and whether a Buddha's omniscience, as envisioned by the *Saddhsu*, should be conceived of simply in terms of knowing about, as opposed to acting upon, the world. It is difficult to answer this question since the text does not provide a clear outline of the Buddhology it is working with. However, the basic ethical framework that the text outlines suggests that contemplative knowledge emerges from action in the world and likewise has the capacity to transform the world and its actions. If we take this relationship seriously, we have to allow for the possibility that the authors/compilers/redactors of the *Saddhsu* may have been working with a framework of thought in which omnipotence might emerge as a property of omniscience.

약호 및 참고문헌

Abbreviations and Sigla

B ^c	Burmese edition of the Pali canon (<i>Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana CD-ROM from Dhammagiri, Version 3</i>)
DN	<i>Dīghanikāya</i>
EĀ	<i>Ekottarikāgāma</i> (Taishō no. 125)
<i>em.</i>	emended
MĀ	<i>Madhymāgāma</i> (Taishō no. 26)
MN	<i>Majjhimanikāya</i>
Ms	A photocopy of the single known Sanskrit manuscript of the <i>Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra</i> kept in the collection of the China Tibetology Research Center (Box 12, No.1), the original of which is held at Norbulingka in Lhasa.
<i>Saddhsu</i>	<i>Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra</i>
SĀ	<i>Samyuktāgama</i> (Taishō no. 99)
SN	<i>Samyuttanikāya</i>
Sbhv	<i>Sanḅhabhedavastu</i> (Gnoli and Venkatacharya 1977-8)
T	Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō
<...>	suggested addition by editor
{...}	suggested deletion by editor
#	stands for a symbol in Ms that indicates a space upon which the scribe found it impossible to write

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Abstract

Power in Practice: Cosmic Sovereignty Envisioned in Buddhism's Middle Period

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The second to fourth-century CE Buddhist Sanskrit text, the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra*, allows scholars a glimpse into a largely unstudied early cult of Buddhist meditation practitioners (*yogācāra*). The text's theoretical engagement with the path of Buddhist practice reveals an expansive vision of spiritual power founded on ethical mastery and culminating in powerful forms of insight knowledge. I argue that the text represents an explicit and unique attempt to theorize a Buddha's omniscience and the path leading to such omniscience. Employing specific Buddhist insight practices as foundational for cultivating such knowledge, the regime of practice outlined in the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra* allows a Buddhist practitioner to experientially negotiate a variety of

epistemological registers, from the ethical to the deconstructive, and to thereby acquire knowledge of the reality that serves as a powerful force in the development of cosmic sovereignty, Buddha-like power. I show how this theorization about Buddhist practice, knowledge, and power is carried out by drawing on traditional canonical textual sources and pushing beyond them in a layered narrative that figures the *yogācāra* practitioner as a powerful conduit of a Buddhist contemplative metaknowledge approaching omniscience.

Key Words: meditation practice, *yogācāra*, *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra*, omniscience, power, knowledge

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