The Buddhist Text Known in Pāli as *Milindapañha* and in Chinese as *Nàxiān bǐqiū jīng* 那先比丘經 Some Philological Remarks and the Problem of the Archetype

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Abstract   This article is conceived as an introduction to questions concerning the relationship between various versions of a Buddhist text known in its Pāli variant as *Milindapañha*, and in its Chinese versions as *Nàxiān bǐqiū jīng* (那先比丘經; T 1670 versions A and B). After a brief account of the conjectures about its redactor(s) and its public of the original Indian environment, the Chinese versions of the text will be dealt with in more detail, with particular attention to the Western reception and the problem related to the reconstruction of a possible archetype. The guidelines provided by Gérard Fussman will be taken into consideration, with some additional comments regarding the suggestion, in the case of the Chinese versions, of taking the Chinese audience into account. To confirm this point, a passage with an eristic dialogue, attested in both Pāli and in Chinese, will be analysed in detail to show how the Chinese translator(s) modified the text for the benefit of the public.

Keywords   Buddhism. Milindapañha. Menander. Serindia. Gandhara. Pāli. Chinese.

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1 A Glance at the Literary Success of the Pāli *Milindapañha*

> I venture to think that the 'Questions of Milinda' is undoubtedly the master-piece of Indian prose; and indeed is the best book of its class, from a literary point of view, that had then been produced in any country. (Rhys Davids 1890, XLVIII)

Thomas W. Rhys Davids wrote these words in his introduction to the first full English translation of the Pāli text called *Milindapañha* 'Questions of Milinda'.[1] At that time, he did not know of the existence of a Chinese rendition of the text called *Nàxiān bǐqiū jīng* 那先比丘經 (T 1670 versions A and B), which would correspond to the Sanskrit **Nāgasenabhikṣusūtra* 'the Sūtra of the Monk Nāgasena'.[2] Interestingly enough, Rhys Davids probably bestows to the text more importance than that granted by the Buddhist tradition itself. Rhys Davids was writing "from a literary point of view", but the importance of the text from a doctrinal perspective surely deserves equal attention. The significance of the *Milindapañha* within the Theravāda tradition is, indeed, quite controversial. The *Milindapañha*, together with texts such as the *Nettippakaraṇa* and *Peṭakopadesa*, is regarded as a canonical text which is part of the *Khuddakanikāya* only by the Burmese tradition.[3] However, it was considered important enough to be quoted as an authority in Pāli commentaries: some of them even define it as a *sutta* (= *sūtra*),[4] in line with its nomenclature in the Chinese versions

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1 The Pāli title of the text, as known today, seems to be due to the editorial choice made by Trenckner (1880, VI) in the first full edition of the text. A variety of titles in some manuscripts is provided by Ooi (2021, 181-4). It is also worth highlighting that a thorough revision of the current *editio princeps* made by Trenckner in light of the Siamese edition of the text is still a desideratum and a worthwhile future task to accomplish. In this regard, see Skilling (2010) and Ooi (2021, 174).

2 It would seem that we can say either that the two Chinese versions "stem from a single original rendition" (Anālayo 2021a, 15) or, in other words, that "the two extant Chinese versions are the same work, one simply an amplification of the other" (Levman 2021, 108).

3 See Norman 1983, 31 and Allon 2018, 237-8.

4 See Nidd-a I, 166 = As, 108 quoted and discussed by Mori 1997-98, 297-8.

(*jīng* 經).[5] Then, was this text an important text or not? We can say that it was important enough to reach us, a fact that should not be underestimated since the method of transmission at that time involved a great deal of effort. Another Theravāda text called **Vimuttimagga*, for example, disappeared in the Indian mainland and Sri Lanka and has reached us in its entirety only in its Chinese translation (*Jiětuō dào lùn* 解脫道論; T 1648). Now, we are legitimised to wonder for whom and why this text was important. As it was theorised since the nineteenth century, the text is a product of Northwest India (Trenckner 1880, VII) and, as recently sustained by Stefan Baums (2018, 42), was created

> for the conversion of an audience that was neither Indian nor Greek, but part of the cosmopolitan melting pot of Gandhāra that was Indianized enough for the literary form of the Questions to appeal to it, Hellenized enough to be persuaded by its Greek style of argumentation and worldly enough to identify with the figure of the most famous foreign ruler of Gandhāra as he undergoes conversion to Buddhism.

Some elements could additionally lead us to hypothesise that it was a text created by monks for lay people or for people unfamiliar with Buddhism (the text might also have had the purpose of evangelising).[6] In this regard, it is interesting to consider the comparison made by Rhys Davids (1894, XX-XXVII) between the *Milindapañha* and *Kathāvatthu*. Both texts deal with controversial points in Buddhism, but they do it in quite different ways. It is worth mentioning the words of Rhys Davids (1894, XXVI):

> the controversy in the older book [i.e. *Kathāvatthu*] is carried on against members of the same communion, whereas in the Milinda we have a defence of Buddhism as against the outsider. The Kathā Vatthu takes almost the whole of the conclusions reached in the

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5 The character *jīng* 經 does not purely mean *sūtra* but generically means 'scripture' (or originally, 'classic', including the many non-Buddhist classics revered in Chinese tradition). As such it was also used to translate the Indian word *sūtra/sutta*, but it does not necessarily point to this as the underlying term. Instead, it was often added by Chinese translators whether or not it had a counterpart in the title of the underlying Indic-language text. The Pāli commentaries' evidence might tip the scales in favour of the assumption that *jīng* 經 here actually means *sūtra/sutta* and, indeed, **Nāgasenabhikṣusūtra* has been a widespread reconstruction for the original Indian title of the text (e.g. Nanjio 1883, 304; Thich 1964; Guang 2007; 2008; 2009). For the sake of the present study, I will adopt this last rendering as a scholarly convention, bearing in mind the complexity behind this issue.

6 Similarly, Levman (2021, 113, 125) suggests that the *Milindapañha* was a sort of Buddhist 'catechism', implying with this term that the text was orally transmitted (from the Greek meaning of *katechízein* 'to instruct orally'), a fact that, in my opinion, we should be cautious to endorse.

Milinda for granted, and goes on to discuss further questions on points of detail.

It is clear that the *Milindapañha* deals with topics that are more basic than the ones treated in the *Kathāvatthu*. Moreover, we also know that the *Milindapañha* refers silently to many Buddhist texts (Rhys Davids 1890, XXVII-XXXI), and more directly to others (Rhys Davids 1890, XXXI-XXXVI).[7] Therefore, on the one hand it seems that the *Milindapañha* was composed by people that were erudite in the Buddhist doctrine;[8] on the other hand, the topics treated are not sophisticated disputes on minor issues (the kind of things that would interest scholar monks), but concepts that are at the very core of Buddhism (e.g. *anātman*, rebirth, *karman*, Buddha, *nirvāṇa* etc.) and that would interest a person who knows a little about Buddhism.[9] This is also reflected by the history of the text in China. According to the conclusion reached by Guang Xing (2009), the text was translated into Chinese in a very early stage and so it seems to be among the first Buddhist texts arrived in China.[10] This is informative about the nature of the text, which, evidently, was able to satisfy the expectations and needs of a Chinese audience. In this regard, Kōgen Mizuno (1982, 46) wrote that

> Although many Chinese were curious about Buddhism and were interested enough in the sutras to want to study them, they could not really comprehend the alien Buddhist doctrines or philosophy; thus they read primarily the general moral teachings and stories that neither contain technical terms nor expound doctrine. Those simple teachings and stories, presented in ordinary language, were comprehensible, interesting, and useful.

Therefore, it seems that the *Milindapañha*'s fate was governed by the fact of being both a simple text and a text that can appeal a huge audience. This may be the past and present's good fortune of this oeuvre, a text that was also adopted by the Theravāda Buddhist school. This

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[7] See also the updates provided by Horner (1969, XI).

[8] Horner writes that the *Milindapañha* "has a wide range and covers much ground, denoting deep erudition on the part of its compiler" (1969, IX).

[9] This, according to Thich (1964, 32), seems to be especially true for the first sections of the *Milindapañha* (following the Pāli version's division into seven sections), whereas the last three sections are more sophisticated than the previous ones.

[10] Notably, the Gandhāra region – from which the *Milindapañha* is supposed to have originated – was a pivotal area for the transmission of Buddhism in central Asia and China. In this regard, see Neelis 2011, 42-7, 229-56. As reported by Richard Salomon (2018, 26) "[r]ecently a few small fragments have been discovered of a Gāndhārī text that has some resemblance to the *Questions of Milinda*, including a reference to Nāgasena, but they seem to belong to some related tradition rather than to the *Questions* itself".

tradition preserved a Pāli version, which, however, is longer than the Chinese ones. The latter show an earlier stage of development of the work and cover only Mil, 1-89, leaving the remaining part (Mil, 90-420) without any other parallel. The Pāli version is not only longer, but is also 'Theravādised' (may the reader forgive my neologism),[11] although it maintains some odd passages which are clearly referring to the doctrines of other Buddhist traditions, such as the Sarvāstivāda school.[12] For some reasons, the Pāli version had more popularity in the West than the Chinese versions (Guang 2008, 237), and so it would make sense, not only now but also in the future, to further investigate the Chinese versions in order to shed new light on such an amazing, and to some extent unique, piece of literature.

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11   A good example to demonstrate that the Theravāda school modified the text is the presence of the concept of *bhavaṅga* in the *Milindapañha* (Mil, 299-300). The term is, indeed, peculiar to the Theravāda tradition and is found primarily in the Pāli texts. As stated by Kim (2018, 754), Vasubandhu also wrote within his **Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa* (*Dàshèng chéngyè lùn* 大乘成業論; T 1609) that *bhavaṅga* (*yǒufēn shì* 有分識) originated among the *Tāmraparṇīya*(-*nikāya*) (= *chìtóngyè* 赤銅鍱) (the full passage reports: 赤銅鍱 部經中建立有分識名; T1609.31.0785a14). Kim also writes that "*Tāmraparṇīya* refers to, or is at least closely related to Sri Lankan Theravāda tradition" (2018, 754). It could be of some interest here to highlight that the manuscripts used by Trenckner for his edition of the *Milindapañha* were mostly copied in Sri Lanka (Trenckner 1880, III-VII). Another element of the Theravāda within the *Milindapañha* is the interpretation of the term *kappa* 'aeon' in connection with the possibility on the Buddha's behalf to extend his life through the *iddhipāda* 'the foundation of psychic power'. In the canonical literature it is written that "anyone who has cultivated the four *iddhipāda*s, who has practiced them assiduously, mastered them, made them as a base, established them, become acquainted with them, properly undertaken them, he can last, as he wishes, for a *kappa* or what remains of a *kappa*" (*yassa kassaci cattāro iddhi-pādā bhāvitā bahulīkatā yānikatā vatthu-katā anuṭṭhitā paricitā susamāraddhā, so ākaṅkhamāno kappaṃ vā tiṭṭheyya kappāvasesaṃ vā*; D, II, 103). In this passage, the term *kappa* is interpreted, according to the Pāli commentarial literature, as the *āyu-kappa*, i.e. the 'life-span' (*ettha ca kappan ti āyu-kappaṃ*; Sv, II, 554), whereas the interpretation of the term *kappa* as indicating a *mahā-kappa* 'cosmic aeon' would seem the right one (Gethin 2001, 94-7). The fact that the *Milindapañha* (see Mil, 141), in the same context, also sustains the reading *āyu-kappa* may be an indicator of the Theravāda's influence. Finally, as highlighted by Thich (1964, 23), it is worth noting that the Pāli version mentions the names of Theravāda Abhidhamma.

12   There is, indeed, a mention of the existence of three times in the *Milindapañha* (see Mil, 49-50), a clear sign of the Sarvāstivāda's influence (see also Guang 2008, 239). Another of Sarvāstivāda's characteristics is found in Mil, 268-71, in which *nibbāna* (Sanskrit: *nirvāṇa*, the well-known ultimate goal of Buddhists) and *ākāsa* (= Sanskrit: *ākāśa* 'space') are described as *akammaja* 'not born of *kamma*', *ahetuja* 'not born of cause', *anutuja* 'not born of physical change'. This would remind the Sarvāstivāda's tenet according to which only *ākāśa* and two kinds of *nirvāṇas* are considered *asaṃskṛta* 'unconstructed', whereas for the Theravāda tradition the *nibbāna* only is considered as such (see Lamotte 1988, 609-10; Horner 1969, XVIII). Finally, another point that differs from the orthodox Theravāda tradition is the eight investigations (*aṭṭha mahāvilokanāni*) at Mil, 193, because these investigations are only five in the Pāli commentaries (Horner 1969, XVI-XVII).

2 Western Reception of the Chinese Versions and the Problem of the Archetype

A comparative study of the P[āli] *Milindapañha* and the C[hinese] *Na-hsien-pi-ch' iu ching* shows clearly that both versions derive from the same source as they have many points in common between them [...] the trend of the dialogues is almost identical, the dialogues veer round the same theme, with unimportant divergences scattered unevenly. (Thich 1964, 1)

[A] detailed comparison of the Chinese and Pāli texts does not support translation from a common text, as the vast majority of the translations are quite different, being not literal but paraphrases; the overall content is generally held in common, but the details of the similes are often quite different. (Levman 2021, 113)

As it might be noted from these quotations, scholars can have different inclinations concerning earlier sources underlying the extant versions of our text, being them either a common ancestral source or even the *Urtext*. The resulting judgment might seem *prima facie* based on either giving pre-eminence to similarities or differences. However, the recognition that there is something in common leaves little doubt. Here, this section aims not to establish a definitive answer to the conundrum of the existence of an archetype, but is of a more modest scope. Following the introduction of some historical data on the Chinese versions of the text, their Western reception is analysed, highlighting how, since the very beginning, some scholars showed a certain anxiety in establishing which one among the versions is closer to the original. This quest prompted the establishment of a methodological approach, exemplified by some applicable guidelines suggested by Gérard Fussman. A corollary to a guideline will be proposed and to prove its usefulness an eristic dialogue shared by all versions will be analysed.[13]

2.1 Dating the Chinese Versions of the Text

The text in its Chinese versions is called *Nàxiān bǐqiū jīng* (那先比丘經; T 1670) – which would correspond to the reconstructed Sanskrit form **Nāgasenabhikṣusūtra* – and the compilers of Chinese catalogues of Buddhist scriptures ascribed it to the Eastern Jin dynas-

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13 I use the term 'eristic' to describe the dialogue that will be analysed because the disputers will exploit the ambiguity of words to win in the debate, rather than using logic to approach a more objective truth.

ty (東晉; 317-420 CE).[14] As this date was established in retrospect by later catalogues, it would make sense to also consider the Japanese scholarship, according to which the text was translated into Chinese no later than the third century CE, probably around the second century.[15] The text has been handed down to us in two versions, A and B, whereas another lost version was translated into Chinese around the third century (Demiéville 1924, 8, 21; Fussman 1993, 67). In the Western academic environment, the text established itself gradually, partly obscured by the success of its counterpart in Pāli.

2.2 Western Reception

In his *A Catalogue of the Chinese Translation of the Buddhist Tripiṭaka*, Bunyu Nanjio (1883) cautiously wrote that the **Nāgasenabhikṣusūtra* "seems to be a translation of a text similar to the Milinda-pañho, though the introductory part is not exactly the same as that of the Pāli text" (304). Nanjio was cautious in his statement since he com-

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14   See Demiéville 1924, 9, 21; Fussman 1993, 66-7; Guang 2009, 227. It is not entirely clear to me the reason why von Hinüber (1996, 83) dated the translation of the text to the fourth century despite relying upon Demiéville, who reported the Eastern Jin dynasty (東晉; 317-420 CE) as the period of its translation, namely the fourth and, potentially, fifth centuries (Demiéville 1924, 21). Norman, who also was relying on Demiéville, wrote that "[t]here is also a Chinese version, which can be dated to a time earlier than the fourth century A.D." (1983, 111). It seems likely that Norman was considering the existence of the lost version.

15   "Modern Japanese scholar Mizuno Kogen argues convincingly that the Nāgasena Bhikṣu Sūtra was translated into Chinese in Latter Han dynasty (25-220 CE), not later than San Guo Dynasty [Three Kingdoms Period] (220-280 CE), even conservatively" (Guang 2009, 236). Guang bases his statement on Mizuno 1959, 29-33. In an English work of Mizuno it is written that he dates the Chinese translation around 200 CE (Mizuno 1982, 196), whereas de Jong (1996, 383) reports that Mizuno dates the translation around the second or third century CE. Mori (1997-98, 292 fn. 3) and Thich (1964, 104-5) also follow Mizuno's study. Given that the article by Mizuno is written in Japanese, I asked a Japanese colleague, Dr. Kenji Takahashi, to check the relevant pages for me and he kindly sent me the following Japanese quotation with its translation: "To give a conclusion first, considering the various points that I will describe in what follows, I [argue] that the translation of this text/*sūtra* is much older than Eastern Jin (東晋) period and should be placed during the period of the Later Han (後漢) and that at the latest it is not later than the Three Kingdoms (三國) period" (結論的に云えば、次に述べるような種々の點から見て、私は本經の譯出は東晋時代よりも遙かに古く、後漢代に置かるべきであり、おそくとも三國時代を下るものではないということである。; Mizuno 1959, 30). It goes without saying that a thorough examination of Mizuno's findings and Japanese scholarship in general would be of great benefit for future studies. At the moment, many scholars (including myself) can only rely on second-hand reports. The reasons adduced by Mizuno to predate the text seem to be stylistic in nature as according to Guang (2009, 236-43), Mizuno provides three reasons to support his argument: 1) the terminology used in the **Nāgasenabhikṣusūtra* is comparable with the translation made by Ān Shìgāo 安世高; 2) some proper terms and pronouns are quite archaic and were often used during the Han dynasty; 3) the *gāthā*s were translated into prose.

pared the Chinese rendition with the translation provided by Vilhelm Trenckner in his *Pali Miscellany* (1879), that reported a specimen of the Pāli version of the text. The Pāli text was edited in full by Trenckner only in 1880 and the first complete English translation was made by Thomas W. Rhys Davids only in 1890. For a full recognition of the Chinese versions, we should wait until 1893, when Edouard Specht and Sylvain Lévi clearly identified the two Chinese translations as a parallel text to the Pāli *Milindapañha* or, to be more precise, as different recensions of a text of which the Pāli version represents only one recension (Specht, Lévi 1893).[16] The discovery of the Chinese translations of the *Milindapañha* influenced the question about the existence of an original text. Trenckner already believed that the Pāli version was a translation from another text:

> It [i.e. *Milindapañha*] must have been imported from northern India, where alone the name of the conqueror [i.e. Milinda] can have been preserved. In all probability the original was in Sanskrit, and our text is a translation. (Trenckner 1880, VII)[17]

However, after the discovery of the Chinese translations, it is possible to wonder which one among the Pāli and Chinese versions is closer to the original work or if it is possible to recover an archetype comparing the recensions.[18] Just one year after the publication of Specht and Lévi's article, Rhys Davids published the second volume of his *Milindapañha*'s translation, taking into account the existence of the Chinese versions. He had the feeling that Specht and Lévi wanted to demonstrate that the Chinese versions were older recensions than the one in Pāli. Conversely, Rhys Davids seems to suggest that the Pāli version, despite being longer, might represent the closest one to the original work.[19] However, more accurate comparisons between the Pāli and

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16 "Un simple examen suffit pour constater que nous avons trois rédactions du même ouvrage qui a été successivement remanié" (Specht, Lévi 1893, 521).

17 It is worth noting that the early assumption made by Trenckner that the original language of the text was Sanskrit has been replaced by the hypothesis that it was Gāndhārī. In this regard, see Demiéville 1924, 11; Fussman 1993, 66; von Hinüber 1996, 83; Kubica 2014, 188; 2021, 430; Baums 2018, 33; Salomon 2018, 26; Levman 2021, 110.

18 Here, it is worth mentioning the recent contribution of Jonathan Silk (2021), who presents some theoretical remarks on how to approach Mahāyāna Buddhist texts. He highlights that if our sources lack a 'unique redactorial moment', it would be impossible to recover the *Urtext* simply because it never existed. However, the versions of our text share a common core that is synoptically consistent. In many cases, its analysis helps us to move close, if not to the archetype, to the best reading based on evidence (see the discussion below). This approach would be appropriate even when considering the recent contribution of Bryan Levman (2021), who rejects the idea that Pāli and Chinese versions were based on a common text but recognises the existence of a common core.

19 "Both M. Specht and M. Sylvain Lévi seem to think that the two Chinese books were translations of older recensions of the work than the one preserved in Pāli. This

Chinese versions (notably, Demiéville 1924; Fussman 1993) suggest that the Pāli version is an enlarged version and so, to some extent, the Chinese recensions are closer to the archetypal work, if any.[20] This does not mean that it is the original work and in this regard it seems useful to quote the words of Gérard Fussman, who, in a succinct but very informative passage, provides a sketch for interpreting the relationship between the different versions of the text:

> [T]out détail commun au text chinois et au texte pāli a chance de remonter à la source originale. Tout détail attesté par un seul de ces deux textes est suspect d'être une addition, surtout lorsque ce détail se trouve dans la version pāli que l'on sait avoir été profondément remaniée et amplifiée. Il existe néanmoins une possibilité théorique que l'un des deux textes, chinois ou pāli, ait conservé une information disparue de l'autre texte; dans ce cas-là il est du devoir de l'historien de prouver que cette information remonte à la source originale avant de songer à l'utiliser. Enfin, si une information livrée à la fois par le texte chinois et le texte pāli doit être décodée ou interprétée pour être pleinement utilisable, cette interprétation doit convenir aux deux textes à la fois. J'ajouterai aussi que cette interprétation doit tenir compte du fait que ces textes sont des textes indiens, utilisant une phraséologie et des procédés littéraires indiens et s'inspirant nécessairement de la conception du monde et de l'imaginaire indiens. (Fussman 1993, 68)

This passage provides many interesting guidelines which can be summarised as follows:
1. Details shared by both versions may derive from the original source.
2. Details attested in only one version may be additions (especially if occurring in the Pāli version).
3. Theoretical possibility that some details survived in only one version and disappeared in the other.

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argument does not seem to me, as at present advised, at all certain. It by no means follows that a shorter recension, merely because it is shorter, must necessarily be older than a longer one. It is quite as possible that the longer one gave rise to the shorter ones" (Rhys Davids 1894, XII). A similar position is expounded in Rhys Davids 1916, 632. In this regard, I quite agree with Olga Kubica who wrote that "when Rhys Davids expressed his opinions concerning Pāli literature, his conclusions were very reasonable, but when Chinese literature entered the discussion, it seems that the desire to emphasize the superiority of Pāli literature over Chinese prevailed" (2014, 195-6).

20 "[L]a plus proche de l'original a chance d'être la chinoise, plus anciennement attestée que le *Milindapañha*, et surtout beaucoup moins remaniée que le texte pāli y compris dans ses parties narratives" (Fussman 1993, 68). A list of reasons according to which the Chinese versions should be regarded as an older record than the Pāli version is provided by Thich (1964, 24-35) and Guang (2008, 242-3).

4. Information that occurs in both versions should be careful-
ly interpreted and the interpretation should fit both versions.
5. The Indian context of the text should be taken into account
during the process of interpretation.

I would add an additional item to this list, which can be regarded as
a sort of corollary to the last item, namely that in the case of the Chi-
nese versions, the Chinese audience should be taken into account.

2.3 An Explicative Example. A Buddhist Eristic Dialogue

In this regard, there is an interesting eristic dialogue between Milin-
da and Nāgasena survived in both recensions. This episode is report-
ed in the Pāli version as follows:

> The king said: "Venerable Nāgasena, is the Buddha one
> who observes celibacy [*brahmacārin*, lit. 'one who has the
> brahma-conduct']?"
> "Yes, great king, the Buddha was one who observes celibacy!"
> "Then Venerable Nāgasena, the Buddha is a pupil of Brahmā!"
> "Do you have, great king, a state elephant [*hatthipāmokkho*]?"
> "Yes, Venerable, I have it."
> "Does this elephant, great king, make the trumpet noise
> [*koñcanāda*] at times?"
> "Yes, Venerable, it does it."
> "Then, great king, this elephant is a pupil of herons [*koñca*]!"
> "It is not so, Venerable!"
> "And is Brahmā, great king, intelligent [*sabuddhika*] or stupid
> [*abuddhika*]?"
> "He is intelligent, Venerable!"
> "Then, great king, Brahmā is a pupil of the Blessed one
> [*bhagavant*, epithet of Buddha]!"
> "You are witty Venerable Nāgasena".[21]

In this passage, there are many puns and it is here that this way of
playing on words seems to bear the weight of a logical argument, al-

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[21] *rājā āha: bhante Nāgasena, Buddho brahmacārī ti. – āma mahārāja, Bhagavā brahmacārī ti. – tena hi bhante Nāgasena Buddho Brahmuno sisso ti. – atthi pana te mahārāja hatthipāmokkho ti. – āma bhante, atthī ti. – kin-nu kho mahārāja so hatthī kadāci karahaci koñcanādaṃ nadatī ti. – āma bhante, nadatī ti. – tena hi mahārāja so hatthī koñcaṃ sisso ti. – na hi bhante ti. – kim-pana mahārāja Brahmā sabuddhiko abud-dhiko ti. – sabuddhiko bhante ti. – tena hi mahārāja Brahmā Bhagavato sisso ti. – kallo si bhante Nāgasenā ti* (Mil, 75-6).

beit there is nothing which appears clearly logical.[22] The first question is put by Milinda to Nāgasena, asking if the Buddha is a *brahmacārin*, a term that came to mean 'celibacy' or 'chastity', in the sense of a total abstention from sexual intercourse.[23] However, since this term is composed by the words '*brahma*' and '*cāra*' plus the suffix *-in* used to create adjectives, literally it means 'one who has the brahma-conduct'. So, according to Milinda, if the Buddha has a brahma-conduct this means that he can be regarded as a follower of Brahmā (one Indian god).[24] This reasoning is certainly deceptive since it does not take into account the real meaning of the word, applying an overly literalistic interpretation. Therefore, Nāgasena answered to the king using the same reasoning, showing, at first, that it would lead to ridiculous results: as the elephant trumpets (*koñcanāda*), this would mean that it should be regarded as a follower of herons (*koñca*). Secondly, he shows that it is possible to demonstrate in the same way that the god Brahmā is a follower of the Buddha because he is intelligent (*sabuddhika*).

Now, turning to the Chinese version B, it is possible to note a slightly different phrasing for the first part concerning the *brahmacārin*'s pun, which is meaningful. The Chinese recension reports:

> The king had again a question to Nāgasena: "Has the Buddha practised the conduct of Brahmā, who is the king of the seventh heaven, having not any sexual intercourse with women?" Nāgasena replied: "[The Buddha] keeps himself completely apart from women, he is pure, without any flaw or contamination".[25]

22　It seems, indeed, that we should look at this dialogue in light of the ancient Indian way of debating. In this regard, and with particular reference to the debates in the *Milindapañha*, see Anālayo 2021a.

23　See Gombrich 2009, 202-3. Besides, as highlighted by Neri and Pontillo (2014, 160) the meaning of *brahmacariya* "cannot be limited to a life of chastity, but includes a 'path of life' and has other important links with the highest achievements of the Buddha's path". However, the meaning of 'chastity' is certainly relevant to our context.

24　A discussion on the cult of Brahmā in ancient India is provided by McGovern (2012). To be thorough, it can be worth mentioning that in addition to the interpretation of the stem *brahma/ā* as the Indian god Brahmā, another widespread meaning is that of 'excellent' or 'foremost' just as when the Pāli commentaries gloss *brahma* as *seṭṭha*. For instance: *brahman ti seṭṭhaṃ uttamaṃ visiṭṭhaṃ* (Ps, II, 27); *brahmabhūto ti seṭṭhasabhāvo* (Mp, V, 72); *brahmapattiyā ti seṭṭhapattiyā* (Spk, I, 265). Or, more specifically on *brahmacariya*: *brahmacariyan ti seṭṭhaṭṭhena brahmabhūtaṃ cariyaṃ brahmabhūtānaṃ vā buddhādīnaṃ cariyan ti vuttaṃ hoti* (Sv, I, 179). In some passages, being a *brahmacārin* is even equated with the attainment of the *arahant* state: "A pure *brahmacārin* is a monk who has destroyed the noxious influxes (i.e. an *arahant*)" (*suddhaṃ brahmacārin ti khīṇāsavabhikkhuṃ*; Sp, II, 484). According to some canonical passages, the word *brahma-* in some compounds can even be synonym with the word *dhamma*, as in *brahma-kāya*, *brahma-bhūta*, *brahma-yāna* (cf. Neri, Pontillo 2014, 170-1).

25　王復問那先: "佛審如第七天王梵所行, 不與婦女交會不?" 那先言然: "審離於婦女, 淨潔無瑕穢。" (T1670B.32.0716b05-07), other translations of this passage are provided by Demiéville (1924, 158), Thich (1964, 87), Guang (2007, 177), Anālayo (2021b, 193).

Here, it seems as though the text is trying to explain the pun to the reader, by providing the two different meanings of '*brahma*' (= *fàn* 梵) involved.[26] At first, it is written that the so called 'brahma-conduct' (*fàn suǒxíng* 梵所行) is referring to the king of the seventh heaven (i.e. Brahmā)[27] and, secondarily, it is specified that the term is referring to the fact that there is total abstention from sexual intercourse (*jiāohuì* 交會) with women (*fùnǚ* 婦女).[28] Theoretically, we may wonder whether it was either the Chinese version that added new material or if it was the Pāli version that removed these parts. In this regard, it is useful to remember both Fussman's suggestion, namely, to take into account the Indian context, and my suggestion to take into account the Chinese audience. Considering these presuppositions, we should admit that the word *brahmacārin* would not require any explanation in India since it has formed part of the Indian culture for many years, given that it also occurs within the oldest Indian text recorded, i.e. the *Ṛgveda* (10.109.05). In the same way, we can assume that a native Chinese speaker would have some difficulty in grasping the meaning of the term, let alone the pun behind the passage. Therefore, the hypothesis that the Chinese version enlarged the text in order to better convey the pun might be more plausible than to suppose that the original work had these kinds of specifications.[29] The fact that the Chinese version B modified the text to satisfy the Chinese audience is also evident from another part of the same account. In this context, it is also useful to involve the version A of the Chinese translation. The point at issue is the pun based on the trumpet of the elephant (*koñcanāda*), which would lead to the (il-)logical result that the elephant is a pupil

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26   The interpretation that the Chinese text gives to the stem *brahma/ā* is one among the many polysemantic uses and for further details see the seminal article of Neri and Pontillo (2014).

27   It is possible to compare the reconstruction of the Buddhist cosmology made by Gethin (1997, 195; 1998, 117-8) and De Notariis (2019, 66-7) to verify that the seventh world above the human realm is actually called Brahmā's retinue (*brahmapārisajja*), see the Appendix.

28   The term *suǒxíng* 所行 can also be translated as 'practice' as in the expression *shífǎ suǒxíng* 十法所行 (T0280.10.0445a28) that Jan Nattier (2007, 113) translates as 'ten practices'. This interpretation of the term would expand its scope beyond mere celibacy and would be in line with views of *brahmacariya* and *brahmacārin* as expounded in the Pāli canonical and commentarial literature (see fn. 24 above). This may shed some light upon the need to clarify the locution *fàn suǒxíng* 梵所行 that the Chinese redactors had.

29   Stefano Zacchetti highlighted that often in the process of translating, the text's interpretation or, let us say, its exegesis, was actively involved and put into the final translated version of the text. In this regard, he writes that: "Forse le prime traduzioni cinesi non erano lontane da questa situazione: in altre parole, l'elemento originariamente traducibile sarebbe stato non tanto il *sūtra*, quanto la sua esegesi orale" (Zacchetti 1996, 357-8; Author's transl.: "Perhaps the earliest Chinese translations were not far from this situation: in other words, the originally translatable element would have been not so much the *sūtra*, as its oral exegesis").

of herons (*koñca*). In **[tab. 1]** below, it is possible to compare the Pāli version with the Chinese versions A and B.

Table 1   Comparison between the Indian and Chinese versions on the elephant/bird song

Pāli version	Chinese version A	Chinese version B
"Does this elephant, great king, make the trumpet noise [*koñcanāda*] at times?" "Yes, Venerable, it does it." "Then, great king, this elephant is a pupil of herons [*koñca*]!" "It is not so, Venerable!"	Nāgasena asked to the king: "What is elephant [*xiàng* 象] song [*míngshēng* 鳴聲] like?" The king replied: "The elephant song is like the singing [*shēng* 聲] of a wild goose [*yàn* 鴈]." Nāgasena said: "If so, the elephant [*xiàng* 象] is the pupil of the wild goose [*yàn* 鴈], but each one of them is a different species."	Nāgasena asked to the king: "What is bird [*niǎo* 鳥] song [*niǎoshēng* 鳴聲] like?" The king replied: "The bird song is like the singing [*shēng* 聲] of a wild goose [*yàn* 鴈]." Nāgasena said: "If so, the bird [*niǎo* 鳥] is the pupil of the wild goose [*yàn* 鴈], but each one of them is a different species."
kin-nu kho mahārāja so hatthī kadāci karahaci koñcanādaṃ nadatī ti. – āma bhante, nadatī ti. – tena hi mahārāja so hatthī koñcānaṃ sisso ti. – na hi bhante ti. (Mil, 76)	那先問王言:"象鳴聲何等類?"王言:" 象鳴聲如鴈聲!"那先言: "如是象爲是鴈弟子,各自異類。" (T1670A.32.0700c20-22)	那先問王言:"鳥鳴聲何等類?" 王言:"鳥鳴聲如鴈聲!"那先言: "如是鳥爲是鴈弟子,各自異類。" (T1670B.32.0716b11-13)

Concerning this passage, Demiéville believed that the Chinese translator(s) did not understand the pun. Therefore, he wrote that:

> Ce passage est corrompu; les copistes chinois ne pouvaient comprendre les jeux de mots (*buddha* et *buddhi*, *koñcanāda* «barrissement» et «cri du héron»), par lesquels Nāgasena réplique à la boutade étymologique du roi. (Demiéville 1924, 158 fn. 5)

In my opinion, it is the other way around. The Chinese translator(s) modified the passage just because they understood the pun and so tried to render it in the best way for their audience. It is worth noting that the first animal involved in the two Chinese versions is different. In the version A an elephant (*xiàng* 象) occurs, whereas version B replaces it with a bird (*niǎo* 鳥). In the Pāli version, we find an elephant, just as the Chinese version A. However, the second animal (i.e. the wild goose, *yàn* 鴈) is the same in both versions, and so also the term used to designate the animal's call (*míngshēng* 鳴聲). We can note from the Pāli version that the pun is due to the similarity between the trumpet *koñcanāda* (which literally means the sound *nāda* of the heron *koñca*), and the herons *koñca*. A kind of similarity is involved also in the Chinese phrasing, but there is not a phonetical similarity as in the Pāli version, but the similarity is here an ideographic one. It is possible, indeed, to note that the combination of characters used to denote the elephant's trumpet is *míngshēng* 鳴聲 and the second animal

involved is *yàn* 鴈, a wild goose. The characters *míng* 鳴 and *yàn* 鴈 have something in common, namely they share the same radical: *niǎo* 鳥 (which is, incidentally, the first animal involved in version B in place of the elephant of the version A). Here, the pun is more ideographic than phonetical as in the Pāli version, and this kind of rendition is certainly more suitable to a Chinese audience. It is also possible that the use of *míngshēng* 鳴聲 to indicate the elephant's trumpet in version A was a little forced. This can be inferred by the existence of *xiàngshēng* 象聲, probably a more appropriate term to designate the elephant's trumpet.[30] A search into *The SAT Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō Text Database* shows that there are sixty-four occurrences for *xiàngshēng* 象聲, and only one more occurrence for *xiàng míngshēng* 象鳴聲, in addition to the occurrences in T 1670 A. It would seem that the choice of *míngshēng* 鳴聲 to designate the trumpet of the elephant (*xiàng* 象) is quite peculiar and might have sounded a bit odd. Perhaps, this was the reason why the Chinese version B emended the elephant (*xiàng* 象) with a bird (*niǎo* 鳥). It is indeed possible that for the other Chinese translator(s) the combination of characters in *míngshēng* 鳴聲 recalled something like a twitter or a chirp rather than a trumpet.[31]

Naturally, we cannot definitively exclude the possibility that the character *niǎo* 鳥 for *xiàng* 象 is the result of a hypercorrection by a scribe who thought that *xiàng* 象 must be a mistake, or even (given the overall similarity in shape of the two characters) a simple copying error. So, in this case we may wonder whether is better to assume an ancient dully scribe or skilful one. Similarly, considering in general the translation of the entire dialogue, we may wonder whether it is better to assume a dully translator – who either did not understand the pun or was not able to render it into Chinese – or a knowledgeable one who skilfully adapted the text to the target audience. Assuming, for the sake of argument, the latter case, we can read the remaining part[32] of this eristic dialogue in a new light.

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30   *Xiàngshēng* 象聲 would correspond to the Sanskrit *nāgasvara* or *nāgaśabdā*, see Hirakawa 1997, 1105.

31   This fact may support the hypothesis that sees the version B as a more revised version when compared with version A, as sustained by Guang (2009). However, as a reviewer of this paper highlighted, the picture outlined by Mizuno (1959) – who has been one of the main Guang's sources – can be much more complex, and so future studies to understand and include his findings will be needed.

32   This section occurs in the middle of the account in the Chinese versions and as the last part of the Pāli version.

Table 2 Comparison between the Indian and Chinese versions of the section including the pun based on *sabuddhika*/*abuddhika* and *yǒu niàn* 有念/*wú niàn* 無念

Pāli version	Chinese versions A and B
"And is Brahmā, great king, intelligent *sabuddhika*] or stupid [*abuddhika*]?" "He is intelligent, Venerable!" "Then, great king, Brahmā is a pupil of the Blessed one [*bhagavant*, epithet of Buddha]!" "You are witty Venerable Nāgasena."	Nāgasena asked to the king: "The king of the seventh heaven is intelligent [*yǒu niàn* 有念] or stupid [*wú niàn* 無念]?" The king replied: "Brahmā, the king of the seventh heaven, is intelligent!" Nāgasena said: "For this reason, Brahmā, the king of the seventh heaven, as well as all the high gods, should be considered a disciple of the Buddha [*fó* 佛]!"
kim-pana mahārāja Brahmā sabuddhiko abuddhiko ti. – sabuddhiko bhante ti. – tena hi mahārāja Brahmā Bhagavato sisso ti. – kallo si bhante Nāgasenā ti (Mil, 76)	那先問王: "第七天王者有念無念?"王言: "第七天王梵有念!"那先言: "是故第七天王梵及上諸天皆爲佛弟子!" (T1670A.32.0700c18-20 = T1670B.32.0716b08-11)

On the surface, we may wonder why the translator(s) did not operate any change in explaining the connection of *sabuddhika* and *abuddhika*, translated respectively into Chinese as *yǒu niàn* 有念 and *wú niàn* 無念, to the word Buddha, in Chinese *fó* 佛. The term *niàn* 念 has always been interpreted as translating the word *buddhi*, probably, considering the evidence from the Pāli version and, possibly, underpinned by the fact that *niàn* 念 as much as *buddhi* broadly relates to the mental dimension (as the radical *xīn* 心 of *niàn* 念 would suggest). The act of providing a modern translation to the Chinese passage, in addition to the convention of following the Pāli version, obscures the fact that to the Chinese reader the passage, as it is written, might already convey the pun. If we step for a moment into the Chinese readers' shoes, could we really assume that the first concept that would rise in their mind when reading *niàn* 念 is something alike the Indic term *buddhi*? Rather, arguably, other concepts involving the word *niàn* 念 were more popular and probably the foremost was *niàn* 念 understood as one of the practices of 'recollection', the first of which is traditionally the 'Recollection of the Buddha' (see, for instance, Vism, 197) that in Chinese is *niàn fó* 念佛. In this case, *niàn* 念 translates the Pāli word *anussati* (= Sanskrit: *anusmṛti*) which indicates the systematic exercise of recollecting or calling to the mind[33] something that, in the case

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[33] "Because it is a mindfulness (*sati*) that arises again and again is [called] recollection (*anussati*)" (*punappunaṃ uppajjanato sati yeva anussati*; Vism, 197). Interestingly enough, according to Rupert Gethin (2001, 37) "[t]he *Milindapañha* contains what is perhaps the earliest attempt in Buddhist literature to state fully just what *sati* is. Questioned by king Milinda as to the characteristic (*lakkhaṇa*) of *sati*, the monk Nāgasena

of the *Buddhānussati*, concerns the Buddha and his qualities.[34] This technique is transversal to many Buddhist traditions and, especially along the Silk Road, developed in popular forms that arrived till the far East Asia.[35] Even our Chinese versions B testifies the existence of that practice:

> You ascetics say: "People who during their life practices evil for one hundred years [can], once approached the time of death, recollect the Buddha [*niàn fó* 念佛] [and so] all of them will after death be born in high heavens".[36]

And also:

> Although a person has been evil in the past, having recollected the Buddha [*niàn fó* 念佛] [even] one time, he will therefore not enter into the hells but promptly he gains rebirth in high heavens.[37]

This evidence tells us that at the time of the Chinese translation of the text the practice of the *niàn fó* 念佛 was already in existence in the cultural milieu in which the text circulated and, so, likely well known by the translator(s). Therefore, it is not implausible to think that the translator(s) of the text adopted the character *niàn* 念 since it implicitly recalls the idea of the Buddha thanks to the widespread practice of the *niàn fó* 念佛. The *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism* (DDB) reports the possibility that the character *niàn* 念 can stand alone with the implied meaning of *niàn fó* 念佛, being a sort of its abbreviation.[38] This fact might suggest to us that for one who is acquainted with the practice of the recollection of the Buddha, the simple reference to *niàn* 念 can somehow recall the whole locution *niàn fó* 念佛 which includes the term *fó* 佛 (= Buddha), given that this is the first among the recollections and one that had great success in the religious market along the

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replies that it has both the characteristic of calling to mind (*apilāpana*) and the characteristic of taking hold (*upagaṇhana*)". Here, Gethin is referring to Mil, 37-8.

34 "The recollection of the Buddha is the recollection that arises with reference to the Buddha" (*Buddhaṃ ārabbha uppannā anussati Buddhānussati*; Vism, 197). Essentially, the practitioner has to recollect the qualities of the Buddha as expressed in the famous *iti pi so* formula (Vism, 198-213).

35 In Japan, for instance, this practice is known as *nenbutsu* (念仏). A nice overview on the *Buddhānussati/Buddhānusmṛti* is provided by Harrison 1992.

36 卿曹沙門言：「人在世間作惡至百歲，臨欲死時，念佛，死後者皆得生天上。」 (T1670B.32.0717b12-13).

37 人雖有本惡，一時念佛，用是故不入泥犁中，便得生天上。 (T1670B.32.0717b18-19).

38 See DDB, s.v. "念" (http://buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%BF%B5) in which, incidentally, is reported a quotation from Frédéric Girard: "Abréviation de *nianfo* 念佛, acte d'attention de la pensée".

Silk Road. Thus, we can hypothesise that the Pāli wordplay of *sabud-dhika/abuddhika* with Buddha is mirrored in the Chinese text by *yǒu niàn* 有念/*wú niàn* 無念 with *fó* 佛, assuming a stretched and creative interpretation for *niàn* 念 as implicitly paired with *fó* 佛. Endorsing this understanding means to assume the existence of a skilful translator, who played with the Chinese characters as much as the Indian creator(s) of the text did with the Indic words.

3 Conclusion

After some consideration regarding the possible audience and author(s) of the text known to us as *Milindapañha* in Pāli and *Nàxiān bǐqiū jīng* (那先比丘經) in Chinese, the relationship between the extant versions has been analysed. Beginning with some guidelines to compare the Pāli and Chinese versions provided by Gérard Fussman, a further guideline was suggested, namely, to take into account that the Chinese versions were written for a Chinese audience. In order to corroborate this point, a passage which involves a pun was analysed, showing that the Chinese translator(s) of the text adapted the translation in order to satisfy the target audience. This fact can of course have some important implications for any attempt to reconstruct the archetype, whose very existence could be questioned on the basis of some recent publications.[39] However, the question would undoubtedly deserve further inquiry. What is clear from the present study is that we can still scrutinise the extant versions comparing similar accounts and reasoning on the differences attested. This effort is not worthless, and the lack of certainty about the existence of the archetype has not negatively affected the knowledge gained by philologically working as if there were one. The findings also have some implications for our comprehension of the translator(s)' strategies in adapting foreign Indian Buddhist literature to the Chinese milieu. In the example taken into account, the Indian word *brahmacārin* conveys the ambiguity on which the pun is based since it means 'celibacy' but literally is 'brahma-conduct', and Brahmā is also a preeminent Indian god. However, we cannot expect that a non-Indian audience would easily grasp the *jeu de mots* and, indeed, a Chinese version of the passage specifies that the term is referring to the 'king of the seventh heaven' (i.e. Brahmā) and to the 'abstention from sexual intercourses' (i.e. celibacy). In this regard, during a potential attempt to reconstruct the archetype, we should assume that the Pāli version conveyed a more reliable reading since the specifications provided by the Chinese version are only necessary for a Chinese audience. It is, indeed, part of the

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39   Here, I refer to Levman 2021 and Silk 2021.

very nature of the puns to be understood with ease and immediacy, otherwise not only would the humorous intent not be grasped, but also the general meaning of the passage would remain obscure. Therefore, there is little doubt that a pun in a text from Northwest India was intelligible for an Indian audience and not for a Chinese one. The differences in the exposition concerning the trumpet of the elephant (*koñcanāda*; *míngshēng* 鳴聲) that would make the elephant (*hatthin*; *xiàng* 象) or the bird (*niǎo* 鳥) a follower of the herons (*koñca*) or wild goose (*yàn* 鴈) should be interpreted in a similar way. Also, on this occasion, the Chinese translator(s) adapted the text in order to render the pun in the best way, using the similarity of the radicals of the characters (radical *niǎo* 鳥 in *míng* 鳴 of *míngshēng* 鳴聲 and in *yàn* 鴈). The odd choice of *míngshēng* 鳴聲 to designate the elephant's trumpet may have also influenced the substitution of the elephant (*xiàng* 象) with the bird (*niǎo* 鳥) in version B, assuming that *míngshēng* 鳴聲 would better convey the meaning of a twitter or a chirp than a trumpet. Finally, it has been suggested that the way in which the Indic pun based on *sabuddhika/abuddhika* as recalling the word Buddha (thanks to the assonant term *buddhi*) has been aptly rendered into Chinese in a way that preserved the mechanics of the wordplay. The term *niàn* 念 used to translate *buddhi* can similarly recall the Buddha (in Chinese *fó* 佛), due to the widespread practice of the 'Recollection of the Buddha' called *niàn fó* 念佛. Surely, it would seem hard to demonstrate beyond doubt that this is the only univocal interpretation since we cannot check into the mind of the ancient translator(s), but this hypothesis prompts us to ask at least one question: should we let the Pāli version level out our reading of the Chinese text? The analysis of the Buddhist eristic dialogue proposed in the present study introduces us into a new, different scenario, one in which the ancient Chinese translator(s) did not impersonate the role of a dully translator but acted skilfully and creatively in presenting sophisticated foreign puns to his own audience. All in all, is it not the creativeness we find at the very core of any pun? Gérard Fussman is, therefore, certainly right in highlighting the need to take into account the Indian origin of the text. As a logical corollary, we should also pay special attention to the Chinese adaptation and its cultural circumstances.

Appendix

This extremely simplified scheme is based on the reconstruction of the Buddhist cosmology made by Gethin (1997, 195; 1998, 117-8) and adopted also by De Notariis (2019, 66-7). It is not supposed to be comprehensive, but only aims to highlight as in the seventh realm starting from that of the humans the deities begin to be called *brahma*.

	REALM (*bhūmi*)	COSMOLOGICAL SPHERE
	.	World of Pure Form
	.	(*rūpadhātu*)
	.	
	mahābrahmā	
	brahma-purohita	
7	*brahma-pārisajja*	
6	*paranimmita-vasavattin*	World of the Five Senses
5	*nimmāṇa-ratin*	(*kāmadhātu*)
4	*tusita*	
3	*yāma*	
2	*tāvatiṃsa*	
1	*cātummahārājika*	
0	Human Being (*manussa*)	
	.	
	.	
	.	

This scheme is reflected in the Chinese version B (T1670B.32.0705a18-19), in which there is evidence that the first heaven is that of the four great kings (Pāli: *cātummahārājika* = Chinese: *dì yī sì tiān wáng* 第一四天王 'first [heaven] of the four heavenly kings') and the second heaven corresponds to that of the thirty-three [gods] (Pāli: *tāvatiṃsa* = Chinese: *dì èr dāo lì tiān* 第二忉利天 'second [heaven] of the thirty-three heavenly [gods]'). In this regard, see the translation of Demiéville (1924, 89).

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As = *Atthasālinī*.

D = *Dīghanikāya*.

DDB = *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*. http://buddhism-dict.net/ddb.

Mil = *Milindapañha*.

Mp = *Manorathapūraṇī* (*Aṅguttaranikāya-aṭṭhakathā*).

Nidd-a I = *Saddhammapajjotikā* (*Mahāniddesa-aṭṭhakathā*).

Ps = *Papañcasūdanī* (*Majjhimanikāya-aṭṭhakathā*).

Ṛgveda = Aufrecht, Th. (ed.) (1877). *Die Hymnen des Ṛgveda*. Bonn: Adolph Marcus.

Sp = *Samantapāsādikā* (*Vinaya-aṭṭhakathā*).

Spk = *Sāratthappakāsinī* (*Saṃyuttanikāya-aṭṭhakathā*).

Sv = *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* (*Dīghanikāya-aṭṭhakathā*).

T = *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* (大正新修大藏經). Digital Edition. http://21dzk.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/SAT. Database version 2015.

Vism = *Visuddhimagga*.

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