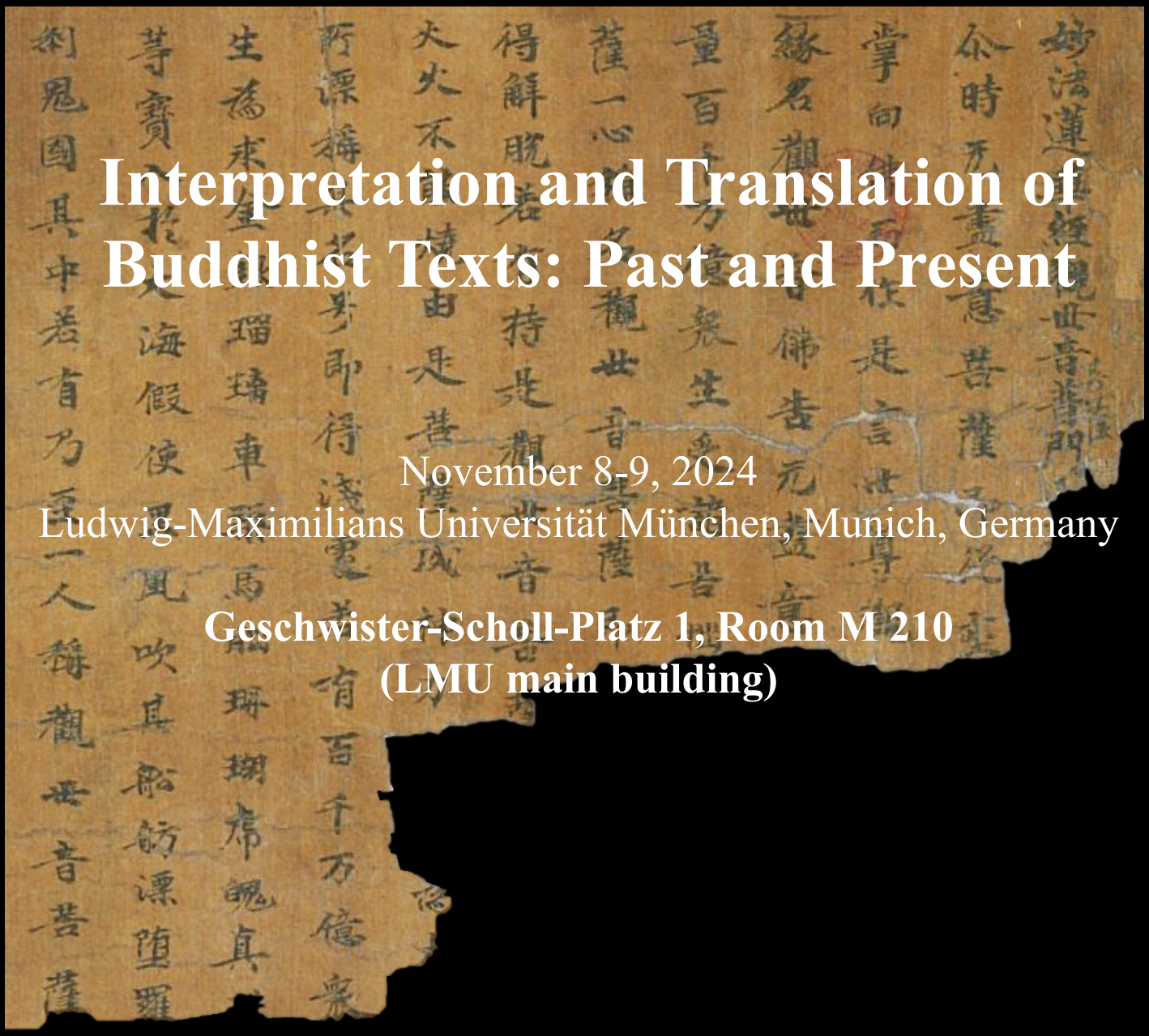
LMU LUDWIG-MAXIMILIANS-UNIVERSITÄT MÜNCHEN

DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN BUDDHIST STUDIES



Interpretation and Translation of Buddhist Texts: Past and Present

November 8-9, 2024

Ludwig-Maximilians Universität München, Munich, Germany

Geschwister-Scholl-Platz 1, Room M 210
(LMU main building)

PROGRAM

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Day One

09:00 – 09:10 Arrival & Registration (Dr. Paulus Kaufmann, Kittipong Vongagsorn, Qi Liu)

09:10 – 09:20 Opening (Kittipong Vongagsorn and Qi Liu)

09:20 – 09:30 Welcome Speech by Prof. Vincent Tournier, LMU

09:30 – 10:30 Keynote Address: *'Sakāya Niruttiyā': Translating the Word of the Buddha as a Process of Transmission*

Prof. Max Deeg, Cardiff University, UK

Chair: Dr. Stefan Baums, LMU

10:30 – 10:45 Break

Part I Chair: Prof. Martin Lehnert, LMU

10:45 – 11:30 *Three Types of Mistranslation in the Chinese Translation of Buddhist Scriptures*

Dr. Zhouyuan Li, Zhejiang University, China

11:30 – 12:15 *A Review of Debates over the Origins of the Heart Sūtra*

Prof. Michael Radich, Heidelberg University, Germany

12:15 – 13:15 Lunch break (contributors)

13:15 – 13:30 Networking time / Extended lunch break

Part II Chair: Prof. Klaus Vollmer, LMU

13:30 – 14:15 *Chinese Translations on Tocharian Manuscripts*

Angelo Mascheroni, and Adrian Musitz, University of Vienna, Austria

14:15 – 15:00 *Vārāṇasī, the Four Noble Truths, and the Dharma Wheel: Fó běnxíng jīng (T193 佛本行經) and Aśvaghoṣa's Buddhacarita in Comparison*

Xiaoqiang Meng, Leiden University, The Netherlands

15:00 – 15:30 Break

15:30 – 16:15 *Were "Embedded" Scriptures Really Understood with their Original Intention? An Analysis of the Intertextuality of the Yogācārabhūmi*

Dr. Keiki Nakayama, Leipzig University, Germany

16:15 – 18:00 Networking time / Informal get-together (all are welcome)

18:30 Dinner (contributors)

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Day Two

09:30 – 10:00 Welcome coffee

10:00 – 11:00 Keynote Address: *Translation, Re-creation, Interpretation: Reflections on the Indo-Tibetan Interface and the Translatability of Cultures*

Prof. Jim Rheingans, University of Vienna, Austria

Chair: Prof. Petra Mauer, LMU

11:00 – 11:15 Break

Part I Chair: Prof. Jonathan Silk, Leiden University

11:15 – 12:00 *Multiplicity of Textual Traditions of the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinayasaṃgraha: A Preliminary Investigation*

Assoc. Prof. Juan Wu, Tsinghua University, China

12:00 – 12:45 *Hymn on the Noble Avalokiteśvara: Study of a Newly Identified Sanskrit Text of the Āryāvalokiteśvarastava*

Enbo Hu, LMU, Germany

12:45 – 14:00 Lunch (buffet, all are welcome)

Part II Chair: Prof. i. R. Jens-Uwe Hartmann, LMU

14:00 – 14:45 *Narratives as an Exegetical Practice: Meaning and Stories in the Pāli Aṭṭhakathā*

Odeya Eshel, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

14:45 – 15:30 *The Birth Story of King Māndhātar (Dingsheng Wang) and the Etymological Explanation of His Name*

Yiren Zhang, LMU, Germany

15:30 – 16:00 Break

16:00 – 16:45 *Māyājāla-sūtra and Sautrāntika*

Dr. Gleb Sharygin, BSB, Germany

16:45 – 17:00 Closing speech by Prof. Vincent Tournier, LMU

from 17.00 Networking time / Informal get-together (all are welcome)

ABSTRACTS

Max Deeg

'*Sakāya Niruttiyā*': Translating the Word of the Buddha as a Process of Transmission

This paper will address basic issues of the translation of religious texts with a focus on the translation process from Indic languages into Chinese. It will discuss some basic translation techniques and will investigate selected examples of the Chinese discourse about the translation of Buddhist texts. Translation will be discussed as a part of the transmission process of Buddhist texts where not only content and meaning is transferred from one cultural context to another but also certain concepts of language and its analysis.

Zhouyuan Li

Three Types of Mistranslation in the Chinese Translation of Buddhist Scriptures

This study explores mistranslation as a key factor in understanding Buddhist scripture translation and language contact. Mistranslations in the Chinese translation of Buddhist scriptures are not only related to the language proficiency of the translators but also closely connected to their translation processes and habits. Utilizing parallel texts of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa sūtra*, the study identifies three common mistranslation types: 1. Colloquial convergence: Confusion arises from phonetic or graphic convergence of distinct Old Indo-Aryan terms in Middle Indo-Aryan language, leading translators to mistakenly choose one meaning over another. 2. Layered translation: Translators incorporate terminology from prior translations while adding their own interpretations, creating new textual content. 3. Semantic fixation: Translators fixate on a single meaning of a polysemous term, neglecting alternative meanings relevant to the context. The root cause lies in the inherent ambiguity and polysemy of the original terms. These distinct yet interwoven mistranslation types significantly shaped Buddhist scriptural vocabulary. Understanding these types and their causes in Chinese Buddhist scriptures helps establish a framework for textual interpretation and facilitates the scientific use of Buddhist textual materials.

Michael Radich

A Review of Debates over the Origins of the Heart *Sūtra*

In 1992, Jan Nattier published a landmark article proposing that the Heart *Sūtra* was produced in China around the seventh century, and not, as tradition believes, in India. In the years since, controversy about this theory has sputtered along in fits and bursts. In this talk, I will aim to achieve an overview of the controversy and the evidence it is based upon, and against that backdrop, consider what the controversy has to teach us about the structure of Buddhist Studies as a field, and the dynamics that animate it, and our collective understandings and attitudes regarding the category of "translation".

Angelo Mascheroni and Adrian Musitz

Chinese Translations on Tocharian Manuscripts

The fragments of Chinese texts on Tocharian manuscripts have not received much attention so far. In recent years, Chen (2019), and Pan and Chen (2020) have shed some light on this matter, providing new techniques and a solid methodology to identify and contextualize a few select examples. In Pan and Chen (2020), the authors treat Chinese texts on Tocharian manuscripts created by gluing together parts of Chinese scrolls.

On some of such fragments, the two layers of paper have become detached so that the Chinese text is visible. In our paper, we go over all of these latter cases, identify the texts and use them to make judgements about the transmission of Buddhist texts in the Tarim basin.
One particularly intriguing case is PK LC A, which contains a passage of the Chinese *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, translated by Kumārajīva. The exact same passage is found in THT 555 as identified by Pan and Chen (2020). There are many other examples of *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*-fragments in this small corpus.

This suggests that this particular text must have been widely circulated in and around Kucha, which raises questions about the translation and transmission culture within the Tarim Basin that we will address. In addition, we will make an attempt to identify the different scribal ductus found in this small corpus and categorize them according to Fujieda's paleographic scheme used by Pan and Chen (2020). This will help with dating the script of the individual manuscripts which we will in turn correlate with the relevant information regarding the Tocharian passages on the same fragments. In addition, there are interesting variations from the received text in the Taisho-canon. One fragment even seems to exhibit a different arrangement of the text altogether.

In sum, our talk will shed new light on the culture of transmission and translation of Buddhist manuscripts in and around Kucha thereby revealing the relationship between Indian, Chinese, and Tocharian Buddhist traditions.

Xiaoqiang Meng

Vārāṇasī, the Four Noble Truths, and the Dharma Wheel: *Fó běnxíng jīng* (T193 佛本行經) and Aśvaghoṣa's *Buddhacarita* in Comparison

Among the Buddha's biographies extant today, *Fó běnxíng jīng* (T193 佛本行經), which is preserved intact in Chinese, deserves more attention. Recent research has revealed its connection to the Buddhist literary and artistic traditions of Central Asia. For example, some Tocharian B fragments have been proved to be parallel to T193, while some pictorial materials from Gandhāra and Kucha are argued to reflect the narrative features of T193.

While a thorough study of the entire text remains a desideratum, this paper focuses on Canto 17, "Zhuàn fǎlún pǐn 轉法輪品" or "Dù wǔbǐqiū pǐn 度五比丘品", which is centred on the first preaching of the Buddha's Dharma to his five earliest disciples after his enlightenment. Despite the lack of the Indic original, we have comparable references for T193, among which the Sanskrit text of Aśvaghoṣa's *Buddhacarita* [hereafter BC] Canto 15 *Dharmacakrapravartana* has been published recently. Through a deep reading and comparative analysis of the verses 12, 47-48 and 55 of BC together with T193, I argue that T193 originated from the Northwestern Indian Buddhist environment, and it was substantially influenced by BC, notwithstanding the current academic consensus that it is not a variant translation of BC.

Keiki Nakayama

Were "Embedded" Scriptures Really Understood with their Original Intention? An Analysis of the Intertextuality of the *Yogācārabhūmi*

Peter Skilling ("Nets of Intertextuality," *The Foundation of Yoga Practitioners*, Cambridge, Mass, 2013, pp. 773–790) demonstrates that the *Yogācārabhūmi*, the fundamental work of the Yogācāra school in India, employs scriptural phrases without explicitly indicating their citation from canonical scriptures. In other words, the text does not always use terms like "just as in the scripture" (*yathāsūtram*). As the *Yogācārabhūmi* presupposes many canonical texts, it is crucial to read the text while recognizing the relationship between its explanations themselves and words quoted from canonical sources, i.e., Buddha's speech. Skilling refers to these indirect citations as "embedded" scriptures. Hence, one may wonder: Did Buddhist monks who learned the text, including translators such as Xuanzang, truly recognize these indirect citations of sutras? This paper explores how Buddha's words, extracted from quoted sutras were transmitted and interpreted within the Yogācāra school via the *Yogācārabhūmi*. Focusing particularly on the *Śrāvakabhūmi*, one of the oldest layers of the treatise, I will first illustrate an example of intertextuality by comparing it with its original source from extant *Āgama*s and *Nikāya*s. Subsequently, we will investigate how the scriptural phrase is used or interpreted in other parts of the *Yogācārabhūmi*, especially referring to the *Vastusaṃgrahaṇī*, which includes a section of commentary on the sutras. We will also consider how the passage is translated in Tibetan and Chinese. Through this analysis, I aim to demonstrate that the "embedded" passage appears to align with the original intention indicated in the scripture within the *Śrāvakabhūmi* and is a familiar phrase throughout the *Yogācārabhūmi*. However, translators may understand them differently in each context.

Jim Rheingans

Translation, Re-creation, Interpretation: Reflections on the Indo-Tibetan Interface and the Translatability of Cultures

Translation is a main aspect of Tibet's philology and the formation of Buddhism in the Tibetosphere. Lo tsā ba (often abbreviated with lo after a regional and before the religious name) is an honorific title for revered individuals who rendered Buddhist texts from Sanskrit, other Indian languages (and, rarely, Chinese), into Tibetan. This paper sketches their cultural roles and discusses examples of what "translation" might have meant in specific historical contexts and how it sometimes borders on "re-creation" and "interpretation." Aided by and outline of key translation styles since the advent of modern Tibetan and Buddhist Studies, this paper reflects about different translation practices in our contemporary academic research.

Juan Wu

Multiplicity of Textual Traditions of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinayasaṃgraha*: A Preliminary Investigation

The *Vinayasaṃgraha* attributed to *Viśeṣamitra is perhaps one of the least studied commentarial texts in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* tradition. Although claiming itself to be a commentary on the *Prātimokṣasūtra*, this text is more like a handbook of Mūlasarvāstivāda monastic law codes, which also contains regulations not closely related to the *Prātimokṣa* rules. It has survived mainly in three versions: Yijing's Chinese translation (T. 1458) made in 701 CE, a 9th-century Tibetan translation (Derge Tanjur 4105 / Peking Tanjur 5606), and a Tibetan manuscript from Dunhuang (Pelliot tibétain 903) representing a late 8th-century witness, with no Sanskrit version available. Moreover, excerpts of Yijing's translation, copied between the 8th–10th centuries CE, are also found in Dunhuang, suggesting the simultaneous circulation of both Chinese and Tibetan translations of this text at Dunhuang during and shortly after the Tibetan empire period.

The *Vinayasaṃgraha* was the first text translated by Yijing from the *Vinaya* corpus after his return to China. Apparently Yijing considered the *Vinayasaṃgraha* important enough to translate even before his translation of the canonical Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*. In contrast, the Tibetan polymath Bu ston Rin chen grub (1290–1364) explicitly expressed doubts over the reliability of the *Vinayasaṃgraha* (or more precisely, the version of the Tibetan translation of this text read by him).

This paper offers a preliminary comparison of Chinese and Tibetan translations of some portions of the *Vinayasaṃgraha*, by making use of five sources including Yijing's Chinese translation T. 1458, excerpts of Yijing's translation from Dunhuang, Pelliot tibétain 903, the Tibetan translation preserved in Tanjurs, and Bu ston's quotes from the Tibetan *Vinaysaṃgraha*. Through comparing the five sources and identifying their differences in content and in wording, this paper intends to shed new light on the multiplicity of the *Vinayasaṃgraha* textual traditions that circulated within and beyond ancient India.

Enbo Hu

Hymn on the Noble Avalokiteśvara: Study of a Newly Identified Sanskrit Text of the *Āryāvalokiteśvarastava*

This paper focuses on a newly identified Sanskrit text of the *Āryāvalokiteśvarastava* (*Hymn on the Noble Avalokiteśvara*). With the comparison of its Tibetan translation and Chinese transliteration, it presents the Sanskrit version of one Chinese phonetic transliteration text T 1055 *Fo shuo sheng guan zi zai pu sa zan* 佛說聖觀自在菩薩梵讚 (*The Sanskrit Hymn on the Noble Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara Said by the Buddha*) for the first time. It corrected several mistakes, misspellings and misreading of the Tibetan and Chinese canonical works. One Tibetan commentary of its Tibetan translation is also examined to deal with some difficulties. Besides, it contributes to the study of Sanskrit-Chinese phonetic comparison. Furthermore, it endeavours to delineate the process of textual transmission, illuminating the parallels and disparities among Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese languages across the continuum of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist dissemination. Notably, it stresses the value and advantages inherent in translingual comparison. For instance, the poetic structure in the newly identified Sanskrit text, although not perfectly match with each other, helps to rearrange the sequence of the sentences in the Chinese text T 1055. Through such translingual examination, this study seeks to enrich our understanding of the dynamics of textual transmission within the broader context of Indo-Tibetan Buddhism.

Odeya Eshel

Narratives as Exegetical Practice: Meaning and Stories in the Pāli *Aṭṭhakathā*

The *Aṭṭhakathā*, commentaries to the Pāli canon, is one of the largest works of commentary in the Theravāda tradition. Within this large corpus, we find various exegetical practices such as lexical and grammatical explanations, scholastic interpretations, and philosophical elaborations. With them, the *Aṭṭhakathā* also contains an abundance of literary narratives, artistically crafted, and emotionally engaging. Some of these narratives are found in collections of stories (such as the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā* and the *Jātaka-aṭṭhakathā*), while others are embedded throughout the commentaries on the Tipiṭaka. The emplacement of these narratives next to other interpretive sequences reflects their exegetical nature and invites us to explore their unique roles as such. Focusing on a collection of stories from the *Sutta-aṭṭhakathā*, I will inquire into the motives of a commentarial story, the responses it seeks to generate, and its function as an interpretive act. Reading the narratives of the *Aṭṭhakathā* from an exegetical perspective will enrich our understanding of the purposes, methods, and style of commentarial literature, advancing from a strictly explanatory view to include also generative and emotive intentions.

The narratives of the *Aṭṭhakathā* are extremely sensitive to minor literary details that appear in canonical texts. Meager characters are vitalized, locations are colorfully described, and short accounts are told patiently, embedding the sutta's teachings within a live context. The attentiveness and the creativity of this interpretive approach of the *Aṭṭhakathā* are invaluable to our understanding of the reception of the Pāli canon, enabling reflection on questions such as: How was it read? What was noticed (and what was ignored)? And how was it developed? The literary relationship between the Pāli canon and the *Aṭṭhakathā* presents the latter not only as an additional explanation but also as the imaginative context of canonical texts.

Yiren Zhang

"Born from the Head" The Birth Story of King *Māndhātar* (Dingsheng Wang) and the Etymological Explanation of His Name

An Indian *cakravartin* named 頂生王 (Dingsheng Wang) is frequently mentioned in Chinese Buddhist scriptures. In the *Mūlasarvāstivādin Vinaya* and *Avādanas*, he was said to have been born from his father's head and nursed by the palace maids of his father. He is also taken as a previous incarnation of the Buddha in several biographies of Buddha. However, in Chinese Buddhist translations and commentaries, different transcriptions for his name are attested, such as 文陀竭 (Wentuojie), 曼馱多 (Mantuoduo), 曼陀多 (Mantuoduo). Apart from 頂生 (Dingsheng) "born from the head", there are other interpretations of his name in Chinese Buddhist scriptures, such as 我養 (woyang) "I raise", 我嬭 "I nurse", 我持 "I hold", and even 最勝 "most victorious". These are various translations in different texts of what the palace maids said to express their willingness to nurse this king.

The name 頂生王 (Dingsheng Wang) corresponds to the Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit (BHS) *māndhātar-* and the Pali *mandhātā-*, which is the *cakravartin Māndhātar* in the *Mahābhārata* and *Purāṇa*(s). This is a *vṛddhi*-formation of the name of an ancient priest from the Ṛgveda named mandhātár "establisher of (correct) thought". However, King Māndhātar is not born from his father's head in the epic and *Purāṇa*(s), but from Indra (his father)'s left side or right abdomen. Moreover, what he suckled is not the milk of the palace maids but the finger of Indra, the god of war. The reason for his name comes from Indra's words, namely "Suckle on me!" (*mām ... dhay^{i}/dhā*).

Comparing Buddhist literature with the Vedic and epic sources, it can be speculated that the origin of the name Māndhātar "who has (correct) thought" has been lost after the Vedic period in India. As a result, the story of Māndhātar suckling on Indra's finger was fabricated as an etymological explanation for his name. The story in Northern Buddhism not only retained the plot of "suckling", but also changed what he suckling on. Another name for him, *mūrdhāta-* "(born) from the head", is also created. The story of his birth "from the head" is further developed. The etymological explanation of his name 頂生王 (Dingsheng Wang) in Chinese Buddhist scriptures inherited this tradition.

Gleb Sharygin

***Māyājāla-sūtra* and Sautrāntika**

The *Māyājāla-sūtra* is a "new" (hitherto un- or only very scarcely known) canonical Sanskrit Buddhist *sūtra* from the recently recovered Sanskrit *Dīrgha-āgama*. It was a canonical *sūtra* for (Mūla)Sarvāstivāda. My Ph.D. thesis was concerned with the critical edition and study of this text. This is a unique text with many unorthodox features.

One of the surprising facts about the *sūtra* is that it was often used in the literature of the Sautrāntika-leaning authors or by Sautrāntikas themselves in the proof or support of their doctrinal viewpoints. The Sautrāntika school/movement is a contentious point in scholarship, as the very existence of this school is contested. The work of Robert Kritzer revealed that many of the doctrines that are associated with the Sautrāntika are, in fact, found in the early Yogācāra treatise *Yogācārabhūmi*, and this scholar argues that "Sautrāntika" was a name/title used by Vasubandhu for the doctrines of the said treatise. Other scholars disagree. Regardless of the true nature of the school Sautrāntika, which is, according to N. Yamabe, "one of the biggest problems in current Buddhist scholarship", it is clear that early Yogācāra was somehow associated with Sautrāntika/Dārṣṭāntika, and this is confirmed by the material of the *Māyājāla-sūtra*.

In my paper for the workshop, I will overview all of the quotations and citations of the *Māyājāla-sūtra* in the Sautrāntika/Dārṣṭāntika/early Yogācāra sources and analyze the reasons for choosing and quoting this particular text, as well as the *interpretation* of the text that is witnessed by the said sources. I hope that in this way, more light will be shed both on the *Māyājāla* and on the problem of Sautrāntika.