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ĀŚVAGHOṢA

By

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PREFACE

An attempt has been made in this treatise to build up a connected account of the life and labours of Āśvaghosa who was one of the most distinguished poets, born and brought up in the Theravāda tradition, from the available materials. It is indeed an arduous task to prepare a useful compendium of what we yet know of Āśvaghosa both from his own works and from other relative documents. Āśvaghosa was the celebrated author of two poetical works called the *Buddhacarita* and the *Saundarananda* and a drama known by the name of *Śāriputra-Prakarana*. The first chapter gives a brief survey of his writings and the researches so far made about Āśvaghosa and his works. The second chapter forms an estimate of him as a man. The third chapter treats of his poetical works, and makes an attempt to show his poetical genius from his own compositions. The fourth chapter is devoted to a careful comparison of his views as a teacher with those given in Theravāda Buddhist books. It also deals with the part played by him as a teacher. The fifth and the last chapter shows his masterly power of delineation of human characters and objects of nature. It must be admitted that many knotty points of Buddhist philosophy and many important terms of Buddhist doctrine received lucid treatment at his hands. Many other important points connected with the history of Āśvaghosa, as for example, his knowledge of Sāṃkhya and Yoga practices, have also been treated in this book. Several theories have cropped up about this great poet, which have been discussed and discarded as they rest on a more or less slender basis of evidence. I have tried to utilize fully his works as well as the other documents that furnish any information regarding him.

This treatise is, I believe, the first of its kind. It supplies some new historical data and presents some new aspects of the problems concerning Āśvaghosa. The importance of Āśvaghosa as a poet and teacher has generally been discussed from the Brahmanical point of view. But I have tried to show here that the Brahmanical side of his *kāvyas* was of secondary importance. This was brought in just to serve as the historical background of his own faith or as a means of embellishing his poetical delineations.

It is for the scholars interested in the subject to judge how far I have succeeded in presenting a readable account of the celebrated poet. I am thankful to the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal for including it in their newly started Monograph Series.

CALCUTTA,
43 Kailas Bose Street,
September, 1945.

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BIMALA CHURN LAW.

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CHAPTER I

ĀSVAGHOṢA AND HIS WRITINGS

The life and work of Āsvaghosa, one of India's master-minds, are well worth a systematic study. The sources of this study are three-fold, viz Sanskrit, Chinese, and Tibetan. Among the pioneers who dealt with this subject we must mention the name of Samuel Beal who published an English translation of the *Buddhacarita* from the Chinese in 1883¹. He was followed by Cowell who published the first edition of the Sanskrit text of the same work² and also an English translation in the Sacred Books of the East Series³. Teitaro Suzuki's critical examination of the Chinese and Tibetan traditions in the introduction to his English translation of the *Mahāyāna Śraddhoṭpāda-kāstra* from the Chinese⁴ and Haraprasād Śāstri's edition of the Sanskrit text of the *Saundarananda-kāvya*⁵ have given a further impetus to the study of Āsvaghosa. Johnston in the introduction to his English translation of the *Buddhacarita*⁶ has carefully discussed and faithfully stated Āsvaghosa's writings, religious views, talents and eminence. The contents of the Chinese translation of a work of which the Sanskrit title was taken to be *Sūtrāṅkārā* were only imperfectly known. Samuel Beal's representation of select tales therefrom before the publication of an excellent translation by E. Huber in 1908⁷ is worthy of notice. The Bengali translation of the *Saundarananda* published by me in 1922 was the first translation made of the work in any language⁸. To F. Weller we owe the publication in 1923 of the Tibetan text of the *Buddhacarita* (Cantos I-VIII, IX-XVII) with its German translation, *Das Leben des Buddha von Āsvaghosa*.

Among the scholars who have contributed most to the study of the subject from different points of view since the time of Samuel Beal, the name of Bohtlingk⁹ stands foremost. He has been followed by such great French, German, British, Japanese, American, Dutch, Belgian, Italian and Russian Indologists as Sylvain Levi, Kielhorn, Speyer, Winternitz, Windisch I,¹⁰ Leumann, Lüders, Jacobi, F. W. Thomas, Keith, Gurner, Byodo, Anesaki, Kimura, Hopkins, Kern, Poussin, Windisch II,¹¹ Strauss, Schrader,¹² Hultzsch, Formichi,¹³ Gawronski, Wassiljew,¹⁴ Cappeller,

¹ The *Fo-Sho-Hing-Tsang-King*, NBE, Vol. XIX

² The *Buddhacarita* of Āsvaghosa (*Anecdota Oxoniensia*, 1893)

³ Vol. XLIA, 1894

⁴ Published in 1900 under the title Āsvaghosa's *Discourse on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*

⁵ *Bibliotheca Indica series*, Re-issue, 1939—First published in 1910

⁶ *Punjab University Oriental publications* No. 32, 1936, pp. xii-xviii

⁷ *Sūtrāṅkārā traduit en français sur la version chinoise de Kumārajīva* par Ed. Huber, Paris, 1908, cf. Louis de la Vallée Poussin, *Le Muséon*, N. S., X, 1909, 86 foll.

⁸ Published by Gurudas Chatterjee & Sons—First Ed. (1922) and Second Ed. (1923)

⁹ Author of *Kritische Bemerkungen Zu Asvaghosa's Buddhacarita* (1894)

¹⁰ Author of *Māra und Buddha* (1895)

¹¹ Author of *Buddha's Geburt und die Lehre Von der seelenwanderung* (1908)

¹² Author of *Nachlese Zu Āsvaghosa's Buddhacarita* (Taisho University Journal, 1930)

¹³ Author of *Āsvaghosa, poeta del Buddhismo* (1912)

¹⁴ Author of *Der Buddhismus* (St. Petersburg, 1880)

Schmidt, Wohlgemuth¹ and Balmont Among Indian scholars who have contributed to the subject mention may be made of Joglekar, Lokur, Nandargikar, Pandeya Jagannatha Prasada, Sovani, Bhandari and Sukumar Sen.²

The latest editions and translations of Āsvaghosa's *Buddhacarita* and *Saundarananda* are due to Johnston whose untimely death has snatched away from our midst a sound Sanskritist of balanced mind and weighty judgment

The Chinese Tripiṭaka contains translations of eight different works, all ascribed to Āsvaghosa and these are listed by Suzuki as follows³ —

- (i) *Tai shêng ch'í hsin lun Mahāyāna-śraddhotpāda-śāstra*, translated into English by Teitaro Suzuki under the title of '*Āsvaghosa's Discourse on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*',
- (ii) *Ta sung ti hsin wén pên lun* ⁴ A fundamental treatise on the spiritual stages for reaching final deliverance,
- (iii) *Ta chuang yin lun ching Mahālanikārasūtra-śāstra*, better *Sūtrālanikāra-mahāśāstra*,⁵
- (iv) *Fo shu hing tsun Buddhacarita-kārya*,
- (v) *Ni kan tzu wén wu wu i ching* ⁶ A sūtra on a Nirgrantha's asking about the theory of non-ego,
- (vi) *Shi pu shan yeh tao ching* A sūtra on the ten no-good deeds,
- (vii) *Shi shih fa wu shun sung* Fifty verses on the rules of serving a master or teacher, and
- (viii) *Lu tao lun 'hui ching* A sūtra on transmigration through the six states of existence

According to Bunyiu Nanjo's Catalogue of the Chinese translation of the Buddhist Tripiṭaka, Āsvaghosa (lit. a horse neighing) is the author of six works —

- (1) *Fifty verses on the rules for serving a teacher* ⁷
- (2) *Sūtrālanikāra-śāstra* ⁸
- (3) *Mahāyānaśraddhotpāda-śāstra* ⁹
- (4) *Mahāyānabhūmiguhyapariśiṣṭa-śāstra* ¹⁰
- (5) *Buddhacarita-kārya*,¹¹ and
- (6) *Daśadustakarmamāyika-sūtra* ¹²

There is another work by the name of *Mahāyānaśraddhotpāda-śāstra* translated by Paramārtha Towards the end of this śāstra Āsvaghosa

¹ Author of *Ueber die chinesische version von Āsvaghosa's Buddhacarita* (1916)

² Author of *The language of Āsvaghosa's Saundarananda kāvya* (JPASB, N S, XXVI 1920) and *On the Buddhacarita of Āsvaghosa* (IHQ 1926) Vide bibliographical lists of authors and their books and articles supplied by Johnston in his edition of the *Buddhacarita*, Pt. II, pp. vii-ix and by Mr. Chintamani Chakravarty in the re-issue (1939) of H. P. Śāstrī's Ed. of the *Saundarananda kāvya* pp. 11-13

³ Suzuki, *Āsvaghosa's Discourse on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*, pp. 36ff

⁴ This book has a decided tendency to mysticism explaining a gradual development of religious consciousness through fifty-one different spiritual stages, Suzuki, *op cit.*, p. 37

⁵ The book of Great Glory or a compilation of stories illustrating the retribution of karma, *ibid.*, p. 37

⁶ The book foreshadows the Mādhyamika philosophy of Nāgārjuna, *ibid.*, p. 38.

⁷ No. 1080

⁸ No. 1112

⁹ No. 1249-50

¹⁰ No. 1209

¹¹ No. 1351

¹² No. 1379—Appendix I, p. 369.

quotes a sūtra (probably the *Amitāyus sūtra* or *Sukhāvati-vyūha*) on Buddha Amitāyus or Amitābha and his Buddhakshetra Sukhāvati (p 274)

According to Dr F W. Thomas,¹ the following are the works attributed to Āsvaghōṣa.

- (1) *Buddhacarita-kāvya*
- (2) *Śāriputra-prakarana*, a play, fragment published by Prof H Lüders²
- (3) *Saundarananda-kāvya* edited by Haraprasād Śāstri
- (4) *Gandī-stotra*
- (5) *Vajrasūri* edited with translation by Weber

Those attributed to him in Tibetan are the following —

- (1) *Aṣṭavighna-kathā* (Tanjur, *Mdo*, xciv, foll 206-10)
- (2) *Gandī-stotra-gāthā* (Tanjur, *Bstod* foll 210b-214a)
- (3) *Daśakūśalākarmapathavirdeśa* (Tanjur, *Mdo*, xciv foll 271-3)
- (4) *Paramārthabodhicitta-bhāvanākramavāsanāsamgraha* (Tanjur, *Bstod*, xxviii, foll 145-6)
- (5) *Buddhacarita-mahākāvya* (Tanjur, *Bstod*, xciv, foll 1-119)
- (6) *Mandīpamahākārunikadevapañcastotra* (Tanjur, *Rgyud*, lxxviii, foll 157-8)
- (7) *Vajrayānamūlapattisamgraha* (Tanjur, *Rgyud*, xlviii 219b-220b)
- (8) *Śatapañcasūtanāma-stotra* (Tanjur, *Bstod*, foll 129a-136b)
- (9) *Śokavindana* (Tanjur, *Mdo*, xciv, foll 270-1)
- (10) *Samvṛtibodhicittabhāvanopadesavarnasamgraha* (Tanjur, *Mdo*, xxviii, foll 146-7), and
- (11) *Śikhūlapatti* (Tanjur, *Rgyud*, xlviii, foll 220b-221a)

In the Chinese Life of Āsvaghōṣa he is honoured with the epithet of Kung-tê-jh meaning Punvāditya (?) and with that of Kung-chang (Punyaśrī?) in another work called *Fo tsou t'ung tsai* or *The Record of Buddha and the Patriarchs*. The Tibetan historian Tārānātha, on the other hand, applies nine more epithets to him, viz Kāla, Dūrdarāa, Dūrdarśakāla, Mātṛpoeta, Pitr̥ceta, Śūra, Dhārmika-Subhūti, and Matricitra³. The confusing character of the Chinese and Tibetan traditions led Kern even to opine that 'Āsvaghōṣa was not an historical man, but a personification of Kāla, a form of Śiva'⁴.

We are here concerned with Āsvaghōṣa who is definitely known as the author of the *Buddhacarita*, the *Saundarananda-kāvya* and the *Śāriputra-prakarana*. According to Si-yu-ki, Āsvaghōṣa lived in a monastery and he preached so eloquently that the entire congregation was moved to tears⁵. His wisdom embraced all subjects and he discoursed on the minute details of the three pitakas and referred to the principle of five *vidyās*⁶. I-tsing who came to India in A.D 671-95 refers to Āsvaghōṣa as one of the great teachers of the past and asserts that his works were studied in his time⁷. Tārānātha speaks of three Āsvaghōṣas and distinguishes them as 'the great one', 'the younger' and 'one who was also called Śūra'. In Beal's opinion the first of them was the Bodhisattva Āsvaghōṣa and the author of the

¹ Introduction to the *Kaṇḍaravācānasamuccaya*, *Bibliotheca Indica Series*, No 1309, pp 25-27

² Sitzungsberichte der k preuss Akademie d Wissenschaften, 1911, xvii, cf K preuss Turfan Expeditionen, Kleinere Sanskrit-texte, Heft 1, Berlin, 1911

³ Suzuki, *Āsvaghōṣa's Discourse on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*, p 21, *Geschichte des Buddhismus*, p 90

⁴ *Der Buddhismus und seine Geschichte in Indien*, Leipzig, 1884, Vol II, p 464

⁵ Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, I, p 57

⁶ *Ibid*, II, pp 100-101

⁷ Keith, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, p 55

*Buddhacarita*¹ In a commentary on Āsvaghosa's *Śraddhotpāda-śāstra* ascribed to Nāgārjuna, it is claimed, on the other hand, that 'there were six Āsvaghosas at different times, to fulfil the prophecy of Buddha', Nāgārjuna himself being a disciple of Āsvaghosa on whose work he wrote the commentary.² The Chinese and Tibetan traditions, taken together, refer to two Āsvaghosas, one the Bodhisattva Āsvaghosa converted to Buddhism by Āryadeva, and the other converted by Pārśva or Pārśva's disciple called Puṇyayaśa.³ These traditions connect Āsvaghosa with the Brahmanical tradition and suggest his contemporaneity with a Kaṁṣka.

With regard to the date, country and other important particulars of the personal history of Āsvaghosa, traditions vary. According to a Sarvāstivāda tradition quoted in the Chinese work called *Li tai san pao chi* (fas 1), Āsvaghosa Bodhisattva, the author of the *Mahā-śūtrāṅkāra-śāstra* translated by Kumārajīva in A.D. 405, was 'born some three hundred years after the *Nirvāṇa*'. Hui-Yuen in his commentary on the *Mahā-prajñāpāramitāśāstra* places the date of Āsvaghosa's birth about three hundred and seventy years after the *Nirvāṇa* on the authority of Kumārajīva. The *Life of Vasubandhu* mentions Āsvaghosa as a contemporary of Kātyāyana (evidently the author of the *Jñānaprasthāna-śāstra*) who lived in the fifth century after the *Nirvāṇa*. In the preface to the second Chinese translation of the *Śraddhotpāda-śāstra*, Āsvaghosa is counted among the four sons of the Buddhists and is said to have appeared in the world five hundred years after the *Nirvāṇa*. According to Huen Tsang he was a contemporary of Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva and Kumāralabdha. Huen Tsang calls these contemporaries as the four sons which illumined the world.⁴ Sang-Ying, the Chinese translator of the *Mahā-prajñāpāramitā-śāstra*, too, places the date of Āsvaghosa 'towards the end of the period of orthodoxy' meaning 500 years after the *Nirvāṇa*. The *Futsou'tung chi* (Vol V) records a prophecy put into the mouth of the Tathāgata as to the transmission of the Dharma to Āsvaghosa six hundred years after the *Nirvāṇa*, which is adopted as if it were an unquestionable fact by Fa-tsang, a learned commentator of the *Śraddhotpāda-śāstra*. Keith says⁵ that Āsvaghosa knew Prajñāpāramitā doctrine. If he was really the author of the *Mahāyāna Śraddhotpāda-sūtra*, then we must assume that the doctrine of idealism developed effectively before that of vacuity (*śūnyatā*). Keith is of opinion that such an assumption seems contrary to tradition and to probability,⁶ although the doctrine was elaborated into a very complex system of thought which was distinctly influenced by the Brahmanical Absolute.⁷

As regards the author of the *Mahāyāna-śraddhotpāda*, Winternitz thinks that it cannot possibly have been written by the poet of the *Buddhacarita*. It must remain an open question whether it was attributed to the great poet or whether there was an Āsvaghosa II in about the fifth century who wrote this philosophical work which gives ample proof of an advanced stage of the development of Mahāyāna philosophy.⁸

¹ Beal, *Fo-sho Hing Tsan king*, intro, p. xxxi.

² Suzuki, *op cit*, pp. 6ff.

³ *Ibid*, pp. 2ff.

⁴ Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, II, 302ff, cf. Beal, *The Life of Huen Tsang*, p. 199—Āsvaghosa flourished in the east, Deva in the south, Nāgārjuna in the west, and Kumārajīva in the north. These were called four sons able to enlighten all that lived.

⁵ *JRAS*, 1914, p. 1092.

⁶ *Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 228.

⁷ Keith, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, 1928, p. 493.

⁸ *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. II, Calcutta University, p. 362, R. Kimura, *Hinayāna and Mahāyāna*, 1927, pp. 41, 180 foll.

According to Beal, the date of Āsvaghoṣa is uncertain. He was the contemporary of Nāgārjuna who is generally placed 400 years after the Buddha. It will not be wrong if he is placed in the first century B.C.¹

As to Āsvaghoṣa's birthplace, the Chinese traditions in two works, the *Record of the T'irvātta* and the *Accounts of Buddha and the Patriarchs*, agree with Tārānātha in referring it to eastern India. The *Life of Vasubandhu* represents Āsvaghoṣa as 'a native of Bhāṣita in Śrāvastī,' while Nāgārjuna in his *Mahāyānaśāstra-vyākhyā* connects him with western India. This is not all. In the *Record of Buddha and Patriarchs under successive Dynasties*, Āsvaghoṣa, the twelfth patriarch, is called a native of Benares, while in yet another Chinese work, the *Shittanzo* (fas 1) he is made 'a man of south India.'

Another group of traditions seeks to establish the contemporaneity of one Āsvaghoṣa of great intellectual powers and an exponent of Buddhism with a king of the smaller Yueh-chi country (i.e. Tukhāra) in north India (Uttarāpatha) who was known by the name of Chan-tan-chi-ni-cha'a. This name is usually Sanskritized as Chandana Kaniska, although Suzuki is inclined also to equate it with Chandana Kanistha (or Kanīta²). Fā-hien, the earlier Chinese pilgrim, represents Kaniska (whose name is transliterated into Chinese *Chi-ni-cha*, corresponding to Sanskrit Kanika) 'as if a different person from the king of Yueh-chih who invaded Gandhāra to get the Buddha-bowl.'³ With Tārānātha, too, Kanika and Kaniska 'are not the same king, the former being that of Tili and Mālava, while the latter that of Jālandhara.'⁴ According to a Tibetan tradition, Āsvaghoṣa, 'a Mahāyāna priest who held a prominent position in northern countries' was an elder contemporary of Kaniska, 'king of Peltāva and Delhi,' who flourished four hundred years after the *Nirvāṇa*. Here Jñānaśāstra finds mention as a leading disciple of Āsvaghoṣa.⁵ And on the strength of the tradition in the Chinese *Tsa pao tsang ching* (*Samyuktaratnapitaka-sūtra*?) the court of king Kaniska is believed to have been adorned by three wise men, viz. a Bodhisattva called Āsvaghoṣa, a minister of State called *Mo-cha-la* (Māthara) and an experienced physician called Caraka, who was the well-known author of the *Carakasamhitā*.⁶ In the Chinese work called *Fu-fo-tsan-ch'uan* (*Transmission of the Dharmapitaka*, fas 5), Āsvaghoṣa is said to have been taken by king Kaniska from Pāṭaliputra to his capital, Gandhāra, in the north-west of India.

The Life of Āsvaghoṣa accords to the Sthavira Pārśva who resided in north India (Uttarāpatha) the credit of converting Āsvaghoṣa to the Buddhist faith, while according to the *Transmission of the Dharmapitaka*, this is due to Pārśva's disciple called Punyayaśa. Āsvaghoṣa who remained in central India (better, middle country), making an extensive study of the *Sūtras*, seeking a clear comprehension of the doctrine, Buddhist as well as non-Buddhist, was treated by the ruler of the place as a man of distinction. Hsien Tsang represents the Sthavira Pārśva as a religious preceptor to Kaniska, king of Gandhāra, who reigned four hundred years after the *Nirvāṇa*. He is mentioned also as a great contemporary and colleague of Vasumitra under whose presidentship a Sarvāstivāda or Hīnayāna Council was held in Kāśmīra.⁶

¹ *Romantic Legend of the Sākya Buddha*, vii, f n

² Legge, *Fā-hien*, pp 33ff

³ Suzuki, *op cit*, pp 2-15; p. 15 f n

⁴ See the article on king Kaniska in the *Journal of the Buddhist Text Society*, Vol. I, pt. 3.

⁵ Wasmijew, *Der Buddhismus*, p. 52 note

⁶ Watters, *On Yuan Chwang*, i, pp 208 and 270ff

As to the parentage of Aśvaghōṣa, too, traditions widely differ. According to one, he was born in western India as son of Loka by Ghonā,¹ while Tārānātha describes him as a son of a rich Brāhman called Saṃgha-guhyā who married the youngest daughter of a merchant in Khorā. The Tibetan chronicler also adds that as a youth, when fully equipped with every branch of knowledge, Aśvaghōṣa 'went to Odiviśa, Gauda, Tirahuti, Kāmarūpa, and some other places (all in eastern India) defeating everywhere his Buddhist opponents by his ingenious logic.'² In the colophon of the extant text of the *Saundarananda-kāvya*, on the other hand, its author Aśvaghōṣa is respectfully described as 'the great eloquent poet, the mendicant and teacher, his reverence Aśvaghōṣa, the noble son of Suvarnākṣi of Śāketa.'³ In the colophons of the *Buddhacarita* and *Sāriputra-prakarana*, he is described as a Śāketaka, son of Suvarnākṣi.⁴

It is easy to make at least three Aśvaghōṣas out of these conflicting traditions. (1) Aśvaghōṣa, the author of the *Mahāvastūlankāra-sāstra*, who flourished three hundred or three hundred and seventy years after the Nirvāṇa, (2) Aśvaghōṣa, better Sthavira or Bhikṣu Aśvaghōṣa, a Hinayānist monk who lived four hundred years after the Nirvāṇa, and a disciple or disciple's disciple of the Sthavira Pārśva,⁵ and (3) Aśvaghōṣa, i.e. Bodhisattva Aśvaghōṣa, the author of the *Mahāyāna Śraddhotpāda-sāstra*, who appeared five or six hundred years after the Nirvāṇa. Here one must increase each of the three dates by a century in order to rectify the mistake due to the confusion made in the Indian Buddhist traditions between king Aśoka and king Kālāśoka.

The *Sūtrāṅkāra-sāstra* ascribed to Aśvaghōṣa is found to be in its Chinese translation by Kūmārajīva (A.D. 405) a compilation of stories that illustrate the retribution of karma and relate mostly to the events which occurred in western India. There is specifically nothing in its contents to indicate that it was a Mahāyāna work. The stories related in it rather go to show that the author of the work was a man of western India. Going by the traditional date, he flourished in the first century B.C.

The Sthavira Aśvaghōṣa who is connected by tradition with the Sthavira Pārśva or his disciple Puṇyayaśa was a contemporary of Kaniska, king of Gandhāra. This Aśvaghōṣa is described as a man of the middle country and a powerful Buddhist teacher whose place of activity was thus very region of India, while Pārśva is associated with the Uttarāpatha including Kāśmīra. Although the tradition does not mention his works, it is not difficult to connect him with Aśvaghōṣa, the son of Suvarnākṣi of Śāketa, who is eulogized in the colophon of the *Saundarananda-kāvya* as 'the great eloquent poet, the mendicant and teacher, his reverence Aśvaghōṣa'. It goes without saying that the tenets of the Buddha expounded by Aśvaghōṣa in his two kāvyas, viz. the *Buddhacarita* and *Saundarananda*, are all doctrines of Hinayāna, there being not the slightest trace of Mahāyāna in them. There is neither any mention of Avalokiteśvara, the typical Mahāyāna Bodhisattva, in the writings of Aśvaghōṣa nor in the Hinayāna books. According to Nanjo's Catalogue of the Chinese Tripiṭaka, the *Buddhacarita* of Aśvaghōṣa was just an integral part of the Vinaya Piṭaka of the Dharmagupta sect which seceded like the Sarvāstivāda from

¹ & ² Suzuki, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

³ *Saundarananda-kāvya*, Johnston's edition, p. 142. *Ārya Suvarnākṣiputrasya Śāketakasya bhikṣor ācārya bhadrāntīśvaghōṣasya mahākāver mahāvādīnāḥ kṛtirityam*.

⁴ Johnston, *The Buddhacarita*, Pt. II, introd., p. xii.

⁵ In the list of the Buddhist patriarchs Aśvaghōṣa figures as the twelfth, and his name is mentioned immediately after Puṇyayaśa and before Kapimāla and Nāgārjuna. Suzuki, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

the Mahīśāsakas, a typical Hīnayāna denomination. The *Milinda-Pañho*¹ preserves the tradition of a leading Buddhist therā named Assagutta (Āsvagutta) who belonged to a Hīnayāna sect having for its centres of activity the Sankheyya (Sāṃkhya) Parivena at Sākala, the Vattaniya monastery in the Vinḍhya region and the Rakkhitatala in the central Himalayan region five hundred years after the *Nirvāṇa*,² that is to say, in the first century A D There is, perhaps, no other exponent of Buddhism than Āsvaghoṣa the poet whose writings are very much instinct with the Sāṃkhya doctrine³ The school of thought to which Assagutta of the Kusāna age belonged may be easily represented as one, probably the Dharmagupta, the views of which are similarly influenced by Sāṃkhya. It seems that Āsvaghoṣa himself was a personality, like Assagutta, of this very school of thought. There is at least one internal evidence in one of the kāvyas of Āsvaghoṣa, namely, the allusion to the practice of Suttē,⁴ to connect him with the Kusāna age

The Bodhisattva or Mahāyānist Āsvaghoṣa who is counted among the four sons of the Buddhists and who is said to have been placed in charge of the eastern quarter meaning eastern India flourished after 'the period of orthodoxy', that is to say, six or seven hundred years after the *Nirvāṇa*, i.e. in the second or third century A D He is represented as a contemporary of a Tukhāra king called *Chan-tun-chi-m-ch'a* The Sanskrit equivalent of this name in Chinese transliteration so far suggested is Chandana Kāṃśka, Chandana Kanika, Chandana Kanistha or Chandana Kanita Whatever might have been the right Sanskritization of the name, it cannot certainly be mistaken for an appellation of the Kusāna king Kaniska Both Fa-hien and Tārānātha represent king Kanika as a different person from Kaniska, the king of Yüeh-chih According to the latter, Kanika was a king of Tili and Mālava, that is to say, of western India The Indian name of the king might as well be Castana Kanika At all events, he must be relegated to the second or third century A D

Whether he was the Bodhisattva, or the Sthavira Āsvaghoṣa, traditions correctly represent him as a powerful personality who was weaned from the Brahmanical tradition and persuasion This is as true of the Āsvaghoṣas as of other great exponents of Buddhism who made their mark in the history of Indian Buddhism since the demise of the Buddha It may be taken, then, for granted that Āsvaghoṣa, the author of the *Buddhacarita* and *Saundarananda*, was born and brought up in a Brahmin family of the middle country, or that he was a master of the Brahmanical lore before his conversion to the Buddhist faith. He is truly represented as a powerful *tīrthaka* or protagonist belonging to a different school of thought in his earlier days After his adoption of the Buddhist faith he studied the Buddhist scriptures that were believed to have contained the genuine teachings of the Buddha Whether as an adherent of the Dharmagupta or as that of the Sarvāstivāda sect and school of thought, he belonged to the fold of orthodoxy, and, as such, he is to be classed as a Hīnayānist or an advocate of the ideal of Arhatship His writings bear an eloquent testi-

¹ Pp 6 foll and 14 foll

² *Milinda Pañho*, Trenckner Ed., p 3—'parinibbānato pañcavassasate atikkante'

³ Vide *Buddhacarita*, xii, where Āsvaghoṣa has set out the Sāṃkhya system Here we get a formal statement of the Sāṃkhya and Yoga systems together with a refutation of them *JRAS*, 1930, pp 866-878, E H Johnston, *Early Sāṃkhya*, *JRAS Publication*, 1937, pp 8, 9, 27, etc.

⁴ *Saundarananda-kāvya*, VIII, 42 'pravisantyapī hi strīyascūtāmanubadhnantyaps muktajīvātāḥ'—women enter into the funeral pyre of their husbands and follow them even at the risk of their lives.

mony to his mastery of Sanskrit diction and to his knowledge of Sanskrit grammar, Rhetoric and Prosody, Dramaturgy, Kāmaśāstra (erotic science), Rājadharmā (royal duties), Sāmkhya-Yoga and Epics and Upaniṣads. His definition of Madhyadeśa (Middle Country) differs from that met with in Buddhist literature, and it agrees exactly with the definition of Āryāvarta as given by Baudhāyana and Patañjali.¹

No importance should be unduly attached to the tradition representing Aśvaghoṣa as the composer of an excellent tune called *Lav cha hero la* (Rāgasvara²), the classical, mournful and melodious music of which induced the citizens of Pāṭaliputra to ponder on the misery, emptiness, and non-ātman-ness of life,³ the songs referred to being no better in their purport than those sung in Ceylon by the maids while fetching water in pitchers (*ghatacetiḥā*).⁴ The two kāvya of Aśvaghoṣa are full of such reflections.

The identity of Aśvaghoṣa and Mātṛcētā is sought to be established on the ground that both were known in the same way as the author of one hundred and fifty slokas describing the six *Pāramitās* (Perfections) and eulogizing the excellent virtues of the *Tathāgata*. Keith says that the question of Aśvaghoṣa being identical with the poet Mātṛcētā is of literary rather than philosophical interest.⁵ According to a Tibetan tradition Mātṛcētā sent an epistle to king Kanika of the Kusa race.⁶ I-tsing in his correspondence from the South Sea,⁷ states that both Aśvaghoṣa and Nāgārjuna composed some beautiful and popular hymns that were sung by Buddhists throughout India at the time of his pilgrimage.⁸ Which Aśvaghoṣa, whether the Hīnayānist poet or the Mahāyānist doctor, is meant, we cannot say. The hymns and the songs mentioned, as far as may be judged from their contents and burden, fall well within the scope of the two kāvya of Aśvaghoṣa. The same remark holds equally true of the *Sūtra* on the doctrine of non-ego addressed to a Nīrgrantha which is ascribed to Aśvaghoṣa.⁹

The discovery, even though in fragments only, of the Sanskrit originals of some of the works indiscriminately ascribed to Aśvaghoṣa in the Chinese and Tibetan traditions, has enabled scholars to ascertain the exact position. Luders,⁹ for instance, has succeeded in identifying the fragments of a manuscript found in Central Asia with the Sanskrit original of the work known so long from its Chinese version as Aśvaghoṣa's *Sūtrāṅkām*. Keith says that this work even through the medium of a Chinese translation shows much merit. It is a collection of edifying legends of the Jātaka type in

¹ *Saundarananda*, II, 62. *Madhyadeśa* wa *vyakto* *Himavat Pāṇipātrayoh*. Cf. *Baudhāyana Dharmaśūtra*, II, 10, *Mahābhāṣya* to Pāṇini, II, 4. 10.

² Suzuki, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

³ *Paramatthajyotikā* on the Suttanipāṭa, II, p. 397—
 bhāṣapariyāpannā ghatacetiḥāgitakapariyāpannā vāhoti, tathāpi subhāṣitā eva lokiyalo-
 kuttara hitasukhāvahatā, sīhaḍadipe maggapasse sassan rakkhantiyā sīhaḍetiḥāyā
 sīhaḍaken'eva jāti-jarāmaraṇayuttam gītaṃ gāyantiya sutvā maggaṃ ga-chantā saṭṭhi-
 mattā vipassakubhikkhū c'eṭṭha arahattam pattā. The songs sung by
 them are translated into Pali as follows:

'Pātākaphulitakokunadām suriyālokena taj jiyato,
 ovaṇ manussattagutā sattā jarābhayegena maddhiyanti
 Jarāya parimadditam etaṃ mīlāta chavicaṃmanussitam
 maraṇena bhujjati etaṃ macussa ghaṣam āmisaṃ
 Kimiṇaṃ ālayaṃ etaṃ nānākunapena pūritam
 asucissa bhayaṇaṃ etaṃ kadakkhandhasomaṃ idan.'

⁴ *Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 229.

⁵ *IA*, 1903, pp. 345ff.

⁶ *Nan hai chi kwei ch'uan*, Ch. 32, on Chwang.

⁷ Suzuki, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁹ Cf. *Bruchstücke Buddhistischer Dramen*, p. 63, Poussin, *Muscon*, X (1909), 86ff.

which Āsvaghosa applies the sources of his poetic spirit to adorn the teachings of the faith.¹ The fragments of the Sanskrit text go to establish that its title is *Kalpanāmanditkā*² or *Kalpanā-lamkrutikā* instead of *Sūtrālanhā*³ and that its author is Kumāralāta instead of Āsvaghosa. This is borne out by the Tibetan translation of the work, and the Chinese translator of the work is not probably Kumārajīva but a later writer.⁴

The *Vajrasūci*⁵ which is 'a clever piece of polemics' against the caste-system upheld by the Brahmins is one of the works ascribed to Āsvaghosa.⁶ The violent diatribe against the Brahmins in this work explains and is explained by the dignified contempt for the Buddhist in *Pratyñāyagan-dharāyana* (pp. 43-46) and a calm vindication of a Brāhmana's superiority in *Pañcarātra* (i, 25, 7).⁷ The Chinese translation ascribes it more correctly to Dharmakīrti. It is certain that the work itself was inspired by the *Vajrasūci*ka *Upaniṣad* on the one hand and the *Matrakanyakāvadāna* in the *Dvayāvadāna*⁸ on the other.

As regards the *Gandistotra*⁹ Keith points out that this work shows Āsvaghosa's power of music. It is an attempt to describe the religious message carried to the hearts of men by the sounds produced by beating a long strip of wood with a short club.¹⁰ F. W. Thomas says¹¹ that its Chinese name is *Kien-ch'ui-fan-tsan* edited by A. Von Stael Holstein. It is a noteworthy literary achievement. Its commentary is in Russian. It is mentioned in Nanjio's catalogue of the Chinese Tripitaka under 1081 where it is called *Ghanti* (*kā*)—*Samskrta-stotra* or *Ghanti sūtra*. In the Tibetan Tanjur it is represented by a translation. It is a fine work worthy of Āsvaghosa and it is characterized by much metrical and literary subtlety. A number of lines consist of mere experiments in musical sound, the various *rasas* being conveyed phonetically by meaningless syllables. The *Gandī* quite different from *Ghanti* (bell) is a long, symmetrically shaped, piece of wood whence sounds are produced by beating.¹² According to Winternitz, the *Gandistotra* has tried to reconstruct in the Sanskrit original on the basis of the Chinese transliteration. It is a beautiful poem, worthy of Āsvaghosa, both in form and contents.¹³ But the *stotra* which is a collection

¹ *Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 227.

² Luders (*DLZ*, 1919, p. 414—*Bruchstücke der Kalpanāmanditkā des Kumāralāta*, 1926), cf. *Bruchstücke Buddhistischer Dramen*, p. 63, Pousan, *Museon*, X (1909) 86ff. It is a collection of pious legends after the manner of the *Jātakas* and *Avadānas*, told in prose and verse in the style of ornate poetry. Some of the legends are well known, e.g. legends about Śibi and Dīrghāyu (*M. Winternitz, A History of Indian Literature*, II, p. 267). *Kalpanāmanditkā* and *Kalpanālamkrutikā* appear as titles in the colophons.

³ Trans. Ed. Huber, Paris, 1908, Levi, *JA*, 1908, n. 57ff.

⁴ Tomomatsu, in *JA*, 1931, n. p. 163.

⁵ It is called Diamond needle—'Wuira Soochi' published by L. Wilkinson with the translation by B. H. Hodgson, *Transactions of the RAS*, Vol. III, 1829, A. F. Weber, *über die Vajrasūci*, *ABA*, 1859, pp. 205ff., *Indische streifen*, I, 186ff., cf. B. H. Hodgson, *Essays on the languages, literature and religion of Nepal and Tibet*, London, 1874, pp. 125ff., S. Levi, *JA*, 1908, S. 10 t. XII, 70ff., E. Burnouf, *Introduction à l'histoire du Bouddhisme Indien*, Paris, 1876, pp. 192ff.

⁶ R. L. Mitra, *The Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal*, 1882, p. 268. This work has been translated in a very spirited style into English by B. H. Hodgson in his *Essays* (pp. 126ff.).

⁷ *JRAS*, July 1921, p. 377.

⁸ (Ed. Cowell and Neil), pp. 586-609.

⁹ Ed. *Bibliotheca Buddhica*, St. Petersburg, 15, 1913.

¹⁰ *History of Sanskrit Literature*, 1928, p. 56.

¹¹ *JRAS*, 1914, pp. 752-753.

¹² For description, vide the work of Von Stael-Holstein, pp. xxi-xxii, *JRAS*, 1914, pp. 752-3.

¹³ *A History of Indian Literature*, II, p. 266.

of 29 stanzas, mostly in the *Sragdharā* metre, in praise of the Buddha and the monastery-going, shows in its 20th verse that it was written in 'Kashmir during one of the periods of misrule', and its style also bears little resemblance to that of Aśvaghosa.

As shown by Johnston, only one of the few verses quoted in the *Kaṇḍavacanasamuccaya* in the name of Aśvaghosa is to be found in the three works that were genuinely his. The authenticity of the attribution of the five verses in the *Subhāsitāvalī* is highly problematic.

The Tibetan tradition confused Aśvaghosa with Subhūti among many other writers. Vasubandhu in his *Abhidharma-kośa* cites a verse of the Dhārmika Subhūti which is now traced in a recently discovered Sanskrit text of the *Saṁgatikārikā*, of which the Pali counterpart is named *Pañcagaṇidīpana*.¹ Aśvaghosa the poet cannot be mistaken for the author of the *Saṁgatikārikā* since he speaks of five *gatis* only in his *Buddhacarita*, XIV and *Saundarananda*, XI, 62.

Sten Konow says that Aśvaghosa's literary efforts on behalf of Buddhism extended also to the sphere of drama. From the fragments of his work known as the *Śāriputra-prakarana*, it is evident that he was master of the technique of the art and that his drama already manifests most of the characteristics of the Indian theatre.² As a dramatist Aśvaghosa was a worthy predecessor of Kālidasa.³

The earliest dramas known to us by fragments are the Buddhist dramas of Aśvaghosa. The *Lalitavistara*⁴ does not hesitate to speak of the Buddha as possessing knowledge of the drama among his accomplishments. The Buddha is even called one who has entered to gaze on the drama of the great law.⁵ The discovery of Aśvaghosa's fragments shows that the drama has already attained a very definite and complete form.⁶

It must be borne in mind that Aśvaghosa was the exponent of the faith which had originally insisted on the use of the vernacular as opposed to Sanskrit and that it is absurd to imagine that it would have occurred to him to use Sanskrit in dramas of Buddhist inspiration and aim, had not the use of that language been established in the drama of the day. It leads us to the conclusion that the drama from the beginning was written in part at least in Sanskrit.⁷ Aśvaghosa has three dialects which suggest much older forms of Sauraseni, Māgadhī and Ardha-Māgadhī. The use of these dialects for characters by Aśvaghosa explains itself naturally from his familiarity with the Buddhist scriptures whose original was very probably in something akin to the Ardha-Māgadhī known to him.⁸ The stage reached in the Prakrits of Aśvaghosa shows clearly how late are the Prakrits of the orthodox classical drama and reminds us how much more closely akin to Sanskrit must have been the Prakrit of the drama of the time of Patañjali.⁹ Of the three Buddhist dramas discovered at Turfan the authorship of one of them is certain for the colophon of the last act has been preserved and it records

¹ It is an extra Canonical Pali work edited by M. Leon Feer (*JPTS*, 1884, pp. 152-161) dealing with the five *gatis* or destinies which are in store for beings according as they commit good or bad deeds in this world by body, mind, etc. For details vide B. C. Law, *A History of Pali Literature*, II, pp. 627 foll.

² *Das Indische Drama*, pp. 60 foll.

³ H. Lüders, *Das Śāriputraprakaraṇa ein drama des Aśvaghosa* in *SBA*, 1911, 388 foll.

⁴ XII, p. 178, cf. *Dvāyāvadāna*, pp. 357, 360 and 361.

⁵ Keith, *The Sanskrit Drama*, p. 43.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 75, cf. Jacobi, *Bhaviṣṭakāṇḍā*, pp. 84 foll.

that the drama was the *Śāriputra-prakarana* of Aśvaghosa. Its fuller title is *Śāradvatīputraprakarana* consisting of nine acts. The brief fragments of Aśvaghosa's drama establish the certainty of his authorship, for one verse is taken bodily from the *Buddhacarita* just as he twice refers in the *Sūtrā-lankāra* to that important work.

According to Anesaki, 'We have not enough evidence either to affirm or deny the identity of any of the Aśvaghosas with the author of the *Buddhacarita-kāvya*. The epithet may have been applied to many authors of different periods.'¹

Thus we have ultimately to rely upon the three works which are definitely known as Aśvaghosa's for all discussions concerning him as man and as poet and teacher.

¹ Hastings, *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, II, pp. 159-160.

CHAPTER II

AŚVAGHOSA THE MAN

Aśvaghoṣa is not known to have written an autobiography, nor is there any piece of writing which might be treated as his authentic biography. He left behind him at least three works, two *kāvya*s and one drama, which are definitely known to be his, and in their colophons he is described as a man of Śāketa who was the son of Suvarnākṣi, and rightly eulogized as a great poet, teacher and monk. Suvarnākṣi was evidently the name of his mother, presumably a gotra name. It was usual with the Brahmins and Kṣatriyas to be known by matronymics rather than their patronymics, a fact which goes only to prove the prevalence of polygamy, particularly in the two upper social grades. But how far the information supplied in the colophons of his three works regarding his birthplace and mother is authentic, none can say. If it is a genuine one, he was certainly a person who belonged to the Midland or Middle Country as defined in the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*, *Manusamhitā* and Buddhist literature.¹ But when Aśvaghoṣa spoke of the Middle Country as placed between the Himalayas and the Pāṇipātra, he made a confusion between the definition of Āryāvarta (Aryandom) by Baudhāyana² and Patañjali on the one hand and Manu's definition of the *Madhyadeśa*³ on the other. Its eastern and western boundaries being not given, it is difficult to say what he actually meant by the word Middle Country, whether the whole of Āryāvarta or northern India or only its middle portion watered by the Ganges system of rivers. The definition agrees only with that offered in the law book of Vāśiṣṭha.⁴

The tradition which represents Aśvaghoṣa as a person born and brought up in a Brahmin family of the Middle Country and as an erudite Brahmin scholar prior to his conversion to Buddhism may be taken for granted. We have similar traditions regarding Moggallāṇa Tissa,⁵ Nāgasena,⁶

¹ It (*Madhyadeśa* or *Madhyamadesa*) extended in the east to the town of Kajangala beyond which was the city of Mahāsāla, in the south-east to the river Śālāvatī (Śārāvati), in the south to the town of Satakannika, in the west to the Brāhmaṇa district of Thūna and in the north to the Uśtradhaja mountain (*Vinaya*, V, pp. 12-13, *Jāt*, I, 49, 80). Kajangala which is identical with *Ka-chu-wen-ki lo* of Yuan Ch'wang formed the eastern boundary of the *Madhyadeśa* (*Sumangalavilāsinī*, II, p. 429). It lay at a distance of above 400 li east from Champā (Bhāgalpur). As Yuan Ch'wang's account makes Thanoswar the western most country of the Buddhist middle country, Thūna may, according to some, be identified with Sthānvisvara (Cunningham, *Ancient Geography of India*, Intro., p. xliii, fn. 2). Uśtradhaja may be identified with Uśragiri, a mountain to the north of Kānkhal (Hardwar) — *Indian Antiquary*, 1905, p. 179.

² In the *Dharmasūtra* of Baudhāyana (I, 1, 2, 9, etc.) Āryāvarta or Aryandom which is practically identical with the country later on known as *Madhyadeśa* is described as lying to the east of the region where the river Śarasvatī disappears, to the west of the Kālākavana or Black Forest (identified with a tract somewhere near Prayāga), to the north of Pāṇipātra and to the south of the Himalayas (B. C. Law, *Geography of Early Buddhism*, p. I, Cunningham, *AGI*, pp. xi and fn. 1).

³ The *Dharmasūtra* of Manu calls the Āryāvarta of the sūtras to be the *Madhyadeśa* which he defines as extending from the Himalayas in the north to the Vindhya in the south and from Vināśana (the place where the river Śarasvatī disappears) in the west to Prayāga in the east (*Himavad-Vindhayor-madhyam yat prakṛt Vināśanād api pratyag eva Prayāgādeśa Madhyadeśah*).

⁴ I, 8.

⁵ President of the Third Buddhist Council — *Mahāvamsa*, V, 95ff., 131 foll.; *Dīpa-vamsa*, V, 55ff., 82ff., 94, 96, 100ff., 107, etc.

⁶ He was the son of a Brahmin. He was well versed in the Vedas and was later

Buddhaghosa,¹ and other later great exponents of Buddhism. It is, for instance, said of Buddhaghosa, the greatest known Pāli scholiast, that as a Brahmin youth born at Bodhgayā, he acquired the knowledge of all the sciences and arts and mastered the three Vedas. He perfectly understood the meaning of the doctrine and was well versed in all the (Brahmanical) systems of thought, especially in that of Patañjali. As an able disputant, he wandered about in India to engage himself in controversies.² But Āsvaghosa excelled all of them, even Buddhaghosa, in bringing his Brahmanical education to bear upon his interpretation of Buddhism.

Johnston rightly points out³ that the upper limit for Āsvaghosa's date is determined by the mention of the Asoka legend in Canto 28 of the Chinese version of the *Buddhacarita*.⁴ The lower limit is similarly fixed by the date of the Chinese translation of this work by Dharmarakṣa in about 420 A.D. The Chinese traditions place the date of the Bodhisattva Āsvaghosa, the author of the *Mahāvāna Śradhōtpāda-śāstra*, definitely after the period of the Orthodoxy, i.e. six hundred years after the *Nirvāṇa*. If 488-87 B.C. be accepted as the date of Buddha's *Nirvāṇa* the beginning of the history of Mahāvāna must be placed in at least the second century A.D. The Sthavira Āsvaghosa, on the other hand, is placed within the period of the Orthodoxy, and at least five hundred years after the *Nirvāṇa*. One of the traditions, as we noted, connects him with the Sthavira Pārśva who was a contemporary of Kaniska and an adherent of the Sarvāstivāda sect. This tradition goes to make the Sthavira Āsvaghosa a younger contemporary of Pārśva and Vasumitra, the latter being leading Thera under whose presidency the Buddhist Council of Kaniska's time is said to have been convened in Kashmir.

The *Milinda* and a few of Buddhaghosa's commentaries maintain the tradition of a great Thera called Assagutta (Asvagupta)⁵ whose date is placed five hundred years after the *Nirvāṇa* and who is wrongly represented as a contemporary of the Bactrian King, Milinda-Menander. He is described in the *Milinda* as the ablest known exponent of Buddhism of the age who was a great contemporary of the Thera Āyupāla of the Sankheyya Parivena⁶ (Sāṃkhyā monastic school) in Sāgala (Sākala), situated in Uttarāpṛthā, as well as of the Thera Dhammarakkhita who was evidently a master of the Sutta Pitaka and resided in the city of Pāṭaliputṛa.⁷ Assagutta usually lived in the Vattaniya hermitage⁸ which is located elsewhere in the Vindhya forest. He was evidently the leader of the Saṅgha at the time, for it was he who summoned an assembly at Yugandhara to discuss

converted into Buddhism. He learnt the teaching of the Buddha. (For details see *Milinda Puñño*, pp. 6 foll.)

¹ A celebrated Buddhist Commentator of the Hīnavāna School (vide B. C. Law, *The Life and Work of Buddhaghosa*).

² *Ulaṅkama*, edited by Geiger, Vol. I, vv. 215-217.

Bodhimandasamipamhi jāto brāhmana-mānava |

vijjā suppa-kalāvodi tisu vedesu pārāgo ||

Sammā viññūta-samayo sabba vāda visārado |

vādathā Jambudīpamhi āhūḍanto pavādino ||

Vihāraṃ ekam āgamaṃ ratiṃ Pāṭāliyaṃ matam |

parivatteti sampunnāpadam suparimaṇḍalam ||

³ *Buddhacarita*, Pt. II, Intro., pp. xiii foll.

⁴ *Fo Shō-Hing Ts'an King* (S. B. E. Vol. XIX), pp. 325f., 336.

⁵ *Milinda Puñño*, Trenchner Ed., pp. 6, 7, 14, etc.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 16—Pāṭaliputtanagare Asokārāme āyasmā Dhammarakkhito paṭivassati.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 14—āyam kho Nāgasena āyasmā Assagutto Vattaniya senāsano viharati.

the danger caused by Milinda's controversies.¹ In the commentaries he is regarded as an example of a Kalyāṇamitta, full of compassion, association with whom leads to the destruction of ill-will.² The *Milinda* refers to the Rakkhitatāla which was a protected plain, in the Himalayan region, where the arahants met and discussed what they should do to solve the questions put by Milinda.³ Buddhaghosa in his *Visuddhimagga*⁴ and *Athasālinī*,⁵ speaks of a Thera Assagutta, evidently a visitor to the Vattaniya hermitage in the Vindhya forest, by whose desire the pool water was turned into curds before the meal and became natural water again after the meal.

Āsvaghosa's reference to the Suttē rite⁶ gives rise to a chronological problem. So far as the classical writers are concerned, it is Strabo who, basing his account on the authority of Aristoboulos, a companion of Alexander, says that he had heard from some persons of wives burning themselves along with their deceased husbands and doing so gladly and that those women who refused to burn themselves were held in disgrace.⁷

It is clear from Strabo's account that Suttē was until then only a Taxila usage. It is highly doubtful if the usage was prevalent even in Taxila in Alexander's time. Strabo must have recorded what he came to know of the rite as it was prevalent in his time (i.e. first century A.D.). There seems to be much truth in Vincent Smith's opinion when he says, 'Suttē probably was a Scythian rite introduced from Central Asia'.⁸

The *Mahābhārata* is full of descriptions of the different customs and usages of the peoples of Uttarāpatha. The widows preferred to betake themselves to ascetic life instead of burning themselves with their deceased husbands.⁹ The Kuru ladies are not known to have observed the Suttē rite. But in the *Mahābhārata*¹⁰ (*Strīparva*) Vidura is represented as burning on a funeral pyre, by the king's orders, all the widows who gathered together from the different parts of the country and in the *Śāntiparva* of the same Epic¹¹ the Suttē rite is praised as a practice in the case of all chaste widows.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6—Atha kho āyasmā Assagutto dibbāva sotadhātuyā Milindassa rañño vacanam suttvā Yugandharamatthake bhikkhusangham sannipādetvā bhikkhū pucchā.

² *Sumangala-vilasini*, II, p. 779, *Manoratha-pūraṇī* (Sinhalese Ed.) I, p. 28, *Sam mahāvinnodanī*, p. 272. Assaguttatthorasadiṣe mettābhāvanārāte kalyāṇamitto sevantaṣṣāpi vyāpādo pahiyatī, Malalasekera, *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names*, I, p. 224.

³ *Milinda*, p. 6—Tena kho pana samayena kotisatā arahanto Himavanto pabbate Rakkhitatālo paṭivasanti.

⁴ *Visuddhimagga*, p. 430—Assaguttatthero Vattaniyaseṇāsane bhikkhusaṅgham sukkhabhāttam bhuñjamānam disvā udakasandim divase divase pure-bhātte dadhurasam (dadhurasam) hotūti adhiṭṭhāsi. Pure-bhātto gahitaṃ dadhurasam (dadhurasam) hoti, pacchābhattē pākatika-udakam eva.

⁵ *Athasālinī*, p. 419—Assaguttatthero Vattaniyaseṇāsane bhikkhusaṅgham sukkhabhāttam bhuñjamānam disvā udakasandim divase divase pure-bhāttam dadhurasam hotūti adhiṭṭhāsi. Purebhāttam dadhurasam hoti pacchābhattē pākatikam eva.

⁶ *Saundarananda*, VIII, 42.

⁷ Strabo, Bk. XV, Ch. 1, Sec. 62, McCrindle, *Ancient India as described in Classical Literature* (Constable, 1901), p. 69.

⁸ *Oxford History of India*, p. 62.

⁹ *Mahābhārata*, XV, 148, 3—'Socyā bhavati bandhūnām patikīnā tapasvini'.

¹⁰ Chapter 26, vv. 42 and 43—'Yo cāpyanāthastatrasannānādoṣasamāgātāḥ | tāmśca sarvān samānūyā rāśin kṛtvā sahasraśaḥ || etvā dārubhirvyagraiḥ prabhūtaiḥ snehapāitaiḥ | dāhayaṃśa Viduro dharmarājasya śśānat' ||

¹¹ Chapter 148, vv. 8-10.

Patihinā tu kṛā nārī satī jīvitumutsahet
Evam vilapya bahudhā karuṇaṃ sū suduhkhitā
Pativrataṃ sampradīptam pravivṛṣa hutāśanam
Tataścitraṅgadadharaṃ bhartitāram sānvapaśyata
Vimānastham sukṛtibhiḥ pūjyamānaṃ mahātmanbhiḥ.

Āsvaghosa must have lived in some part of Uttarāpāṭha or heard about the Suttē rite which became prevalent in the country of Gandhāra. And if it became a widely prevalent usage among the women of India of his time, he must have flourished even after the Kuṣāna age.

Even admitting that Āsvaghosa was a Hinayāna Buddhist, Johnston has pertinently raised the interesting question as to the particular Buddhist sect and school of thought to which he might have belonged and tended to maintain that he was 'either a Bahuśrutika or an adherent of the school (the Kaukūlikas?) from which the Bahuśrutikas issued'.¹ The Kaukūlikas were evidently a typical school of Buddhist pessimists, the main proposition of their doctrine being *sabbe dhammā kukkulā*, 'All conditioned things are without qualification no better than a welter of embers'.² The Bahuśrutikas who had seceded from the Kaukūlikas (Pālī Gokūlikas) were also known in the Pālī Chronicles by the name of Bāhulikās.³ Combining the two names into one, one may get a name corresponding with *bahulam-assutika*, meaning 'one guided by much of non-Buddhist doctrinal tradition,' which as an epithet is applied in the *Mahāvamsa* ⁴ to a Thera of Ceylon called Tissa who brought about a separation between the Mahāvihāra and the Abhayagiri monks. The Tibetan tradition derives the name of the Bahuśrutikas from their teacher, Bahuśrutiya, and tells us that 'in addition to the five propositions held by the Mahāsaṅghikas, they considered it as a fundamental doctrine that there is no mode of life leading to real salvation, that the truth of suffering is the Noble Truth, that to perceive the suffering of the *samskāras* is to enter perfect purity, that there is no way of seeing the misery of suffering and the misery of change, the Saṃgha is but subject to worldly laws and conditions, arahants acquire the doctrine of others, there is a rightly preached way and a right entry into *samāpatti*'.⁵

According to Vasumitra, the Bahuśrutikas generally followed the Sarvāstivādin doctrine, differing from it mainly on two points, while in the *Mahāvīyutpatti* (275) they are counted among the schools which seceded from the Sarvāstivāda.

Johnston's argument for connecting the Bahuśrutikas with the Mahāsaṅghikas is rather weak. The acceptance of 'the five points of Mahādeva' was held as the common feature of all the sects and schools of thought belonging to the Mahāsaṅgha family. These points were all directed against Orthodoxy upholding the ideal of Arhatship.⁶ Now the fourth point of Mahādeva lays down that Arhats gain spiritual perception by the help of others.⁷ And if the Bahuśrutikas maintained this view and Āsvaghosa, too, did the same,⁸ it follows that both the Bahuśrutikas and Āsvaghosa belonged to the opposite camp, and not to the Mahāsaṅghikas.

¹ *The Buddhacarita*, II, Intro., p. xxxiii.

² *Kathāvatthupparakaraṇa-aṭṭhakathā*, JPTS, 1889, p. 57. '*Sabbe saṃskārā kukkulā vitaccakāṅgāra-sammassā*'.

Video also B C Law, *The Debates Commentary*, PTS Tr. Series, p. 70.

³ *Kathāvatthupparakaraṇa-aṭṭhakathā*, p. 2. '*Gokūlikanīkayāto bhijjita aparāṇi dve ācariyakulāni jātāni Pannattivāda ca Bāhulikā ca Bahussutikā ti pi tesam eva nāman*'. Cf. *Dīpaṃsa*, V, 41. '*Gokūlikānāṃ dve bheda aparakālamhī jāyatha Bahussutikā* (variants *Bahussutikā*, *Bāhulikā*) *ca paññatti divedhā bhijjitha bhikkhavo*'.

⁴ XXXIII, 96. '*Tassa siso Bahalamassu Tissatthero ti vassulo, Kuddho bhayagiriṃ gantvā vaṣṭipakkham vāham taṃ*'.

⁵ Rockhill, *Life of the Buddha*, pp. 183, 189, Malalasekera, *Dictionary of Pālī Proper Names*, II, p. 274.

⁶ N. Dutt, *Early History of the Spread of Buddhism and Buddhist Schools*, p. 230.

⁷ La Vallée Poussin in *JRAS*, 1910, pp. 413ff.

⁸ *Saundarananda*, V, 17. *Yatnena tu pratyayaneyabuddhīr vsmokṣam āpnōti parārayena*—He whose intelligence is susceptible only to external conditions obtains salvation with difficulty and only by depending on others.

There must have been something wrong somewhere. The seceders from the Kaukūlikas were the Bāhulikās, and the Bahusūtrakas (Bahusuttakā) according to the *Dīpaṃśa* ¹ Whatever the sect or school of thought to which Āsvaghosa belonged, it was closely connected with the Sarvāstivāda, and this is clearly borne out by the Chinese tradition connecting the Sthavira Āsvaghosa with the Sthavira Pārśva or his disciple Puṇya-yāsa. The Pali Chronicles ² speak of the Kāśyāpiyas as seceders from the Sarvāstivāda, and of the Sarvāstivāda and the Dharmagupta as seceders from the Mahīśāsaka sect. It is not unreasonable to think that the Dharmagupta sect was better an offshoot of the Sarvāstivāda, and it would be historically sound if the Dharmaguptas were taken as those who were also known by the name of Bahusūtrikas. The Kāśyāpiyas, as their name implies, upheld the tradition of Mahākāśyapa and venerated him as their great patriarch or patron saint. 'The doubling of the epithet mahā before Kāśyapa's name proved', says Johnston, 'that this saint was specially revered by Āsvaghosa's sect, a conclusion supported by the story of his conversion in the *Buddhacarita* (Chinese version), xvi.' Johnston quotes the views of Przyluski ⁴ to establish that the Mahāsaṅghikas also are known to share with Āsvaghosa a knowledge of the saint Sudarśana, a special veneration for Kāśyapa, and an insistence on the connection of the asterism Puṣya with the Buddha ⁵.

These constitute only a presumptive evidence which is inconclusive in effect. The Sthavira Sudarśana mentioned by Āsvaghosa in his *Saundarananda* ⁶ may not have been the Sudarśana revered by the Mahāsaṅghikas. The Tibetan tradition speaks of a Sthavira Sudarśana who was formerly Śmha, king of Kashmir, and a contemporary of Kaniska and the Mahayanist priest Āsvaghosa of northern countries ⁷.

If Āsvaghosa has upheld the points of the doctrine which tradition associates with this or that sect and school of thought, it may be due to the fact that he was a Bahusūtrika within the definition of Hinayāna and closely connected with the Sarvāstivāda tradition. It is truly said of the Sthavira Āsvaghosa of the middle country associated with the Sthavira Pārśva that he made 'an extensive study of the *Sūtras*, seeking a clear comprehension of the doctrine, Buddhist as well as non-Buddhist' ⁸.

As for the Dharmaguptas, none of the propositions controverted in the *Kāthāvatthu* is referred to them in the commentary. The Tibetan tradition would have us believe that they derived their name from their leader called Dharmagupta. They maintained, *inter alia*, that there is a reward for offerings made to the Buddha but not for those made to the Saṅgha.

The effectiveness of offerings made in the name of the Buddha is advocated in the *Milinda* ⁹ containing the doctrinal views of the school of Āsvagupta. The importance of *śraddhā*, *vīrya*, and other points of the doctrine stressed in the writings of Āsvaghosa ¹⁰ is equally emphasized in the *Milinda* ¹¹. In the *Milinda*, just as in the *kāvya*s of Āsvaghosa, we have a

¹ V, 41.

² *Mahāvamsa*, Chap. V, vv. 89—*Mahimsāsakabhikkhūhi bhikkhū sabbatha vādino Dhammaguṭṭhikabhikkhū ca jātā khalu ime dve Jātā sabbathavādhi Kassa-piṇḍa*.

³ *The Buddhacarita*, Pt. II, Intro, pp. xxvii-xxviii.

⁴ *Le Concile de Rājagṛha*, 206.

⁵ *The Buddhacarita*, Pt. II, Intro, p. xxix.

⁶ XVI, 89.

⁷ Suzuki, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

⁸ Suzuki, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁹ *Milinda*, pp. 291, 294, etc.

¹⁰ *B.*, XII, v. 111, *S.*, XVI, 47, 93 foll., *S.* IV, 29, V, 1, 5, XV, 21, XVIII, 4 (*bhakti*).

¹¹ *Milinda*, p. 36—*Saddhāya tarati oghaṃ viriyena dukkhaṃ acceti*.

synthesis of the views of different Buddhist sects and schools. Both presuppose the Sāṃkhya and Yoga, the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika systems of philosophy.¹ The true spirit of the Dharmaguptas is probably set forth by Āśvaghosa in the following exhortation of the Buddha addressed to Nanda —

‘Rise up, for you stand in the Law, beloved of my followers. Do not lay your head at my feet, you do not do me so much reverence by obeisance as by this acceptance of the Law.’

‘To-day you have learnt that which is of good purport and full of learning and have followed the Law according to the learning.’²

It is stated at the end of the Chinese translation of the *Abhimukramana-sūtra*³ that the following titles of the Life of the Buddha have been adopted by different schools: the *Mahāvastu* by the Mahāsaṅghikas, the *Lalitavastu* by the Sarvāstivādins, and the *Śākyamuni-carita* by the Dharmaguptas. There is no life of the Buddha known as yet in Sanskrit bearing the title of *Śākyamuni-carita*. If by the *Śākyamuni-carita* is meant no other work than the *Buddhacarita*, then we have a definite tradition to connect Āśvaghosa with the Dharmaguptas.

Āśvaghosa was a well-read man and he was accurate in his knowledge.⁴ A careful study of the two kāvyas of Āśvaghosa shows that the poet was well acquainted with the Rgveda, the Epics and the Upanisads. Even the Divyāvadāna, a work of the Sarvāstivāda school, was not unknown to him. The ceremony of measuring out soma as referred to in the *Saundarananda* (I, 15, II, 36) suggests the possibility of his knowledge of the Śatapatha Brāhmana. His close acquaintance with the Svetāśvatara among the Upanisads may be easily inferred from a number of possible parallels.⁵ Āśvaghosa’s exposition of the Sāṃkhya system through the mouth of Arāda⁶ has close parallels in the Mokṣadharmas section of the *Mahābhārata*. Keith says that Buddha’s meeting with Arāda gives ample proof of the influence of Sāṃkhya on Buddhism.⁷

Āśvaghosa refers to Brhaspati who begot Bharadvāja on Mamatā.⁸ There are many other references to Brhaspati in the *Buddhacarita* (I, 41, IV, 74-5, VII, 43).⁹ Brhaspati and Śukra were the first authors of works on polity. The *Saundarananda* (I, 4) and the *Buddhacarita* (II, 56, X, 18, XII, 88) mention the name of Āṅgiraśa.¹⁰ Agastya asked for Rohini, wife of Soma and obtained Lopāmudrā who resembled her.¹¹ The name of this sage occurs in the Rgveda (VII 10 33). He was called Mānva.¹² In the *Buddhacarita* and the *Saundarananda* there is a mention of Parāśara.¹³ The Rgveda (VII 18 21) refers to him along with Satya-yātu and Vasistha. According to the *Naukā* (VI, 30), he was the son of Vasistha. Ambarīśa

¹ *Milinda*, p. 3, *Sāṃkhya-Yoga-Nīti-Vivartikā*.

² *Saundarananda* XVIII, 22, 25.

Uttistha dharmo sthita śivasajuste
kim pādāyorme patito’si mūrdhnā |
abhyarcanam me na tathā pranāmo
dharmo yathaisā pratipattireva || 22
Adyārthavatto śrutavac chrutam
twech hrutānurūpaṃ pratipadya dharmam | 25

³ Nanjo, No. 680 — A catalogue of the Chinese translation of the Buddhist Tripitaka by Bunyū Nanjo, p. 163.

⁴ Johnston, *Buddhacarita*, Pt. II, p. xlv.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. xlv and xlv.

⁶ *Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 139.

⁷ Cf. *Mahābhārata*, I, 76, 3191.

⁸ *Buddhacarita* IV, 73, cf. *Mbh.*, III, 110, 10092, III, 130, 10541. IV, 21, 655.

⁹ Rgveda, I, 165.

¹⁰ *Buddhacarita*, IV, 76, *Saundarananda*, VII 29. Cf. *Mbh.*, I, 60, 2209.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, xi.

¹² *Buddhacarita* IV, 74.

¹³ See *Vedic Index*, II, p. 72.

is mentioned in the *Buddhacarita* and *Saundarananda*¹ The Rgveda mentions Ambarisa as a Vārsagira (I, 100, 17) There were many Ambārīśas of whom the most important was the son of Nābhāga Prajāpati is mentioned in the *Buddhacarita* (XII, 21) It occurs several times in the *Mahābhārata* (XIII, 19, 1475, 20, 1498, 40225—*sargāt prajāpateh*) The name of the Kaurava king Pāndu occurs in the *Saundarananda* (VII, 45) and in the *Buddhacarita* (IV, 79)² He was the son of Vyāsa by Ambālikā, the widow of Vicitravīrya, husband of Kuntī and Mādri, and father of the five Pāndavas Aśvaghosa mentions the name of the royal sage Yayāti who dallied with the Apsarā Viśvākī in the Cātrāratha grove³ In the Rgveda (I 31 17, X 63 1) he is mentioned once as an ancient sacrificer and once as a king⁴ Vyāsa arranged the lost Vedas in many sections⁵ He was kicked by the harlot Kāśīsundarī⁶ He was also called Dvapāyana who classified the Vedas⁷ He was the son of Parāśara and Satyavatī⁸ Viśvānūtra who was the son of Gādhi (Gādhiya)⁹ was captivated by the Apsarā Ghrīti¹⁰ The *Buddhacarita* (IV, 19) mentions Rṣyaśṛṅga who was enticed by Śāntā¹¹ He was the son of Vibhāṇḍaka according to the *Rāmāyana* (III, 110, 9991) Dīrghatapas Gautama is mentioned in the *Buddhacarita* (IV, 18) He was captivated by a low caste young woman¹² Dīrghatapas later came to be called Dīrghatamas¹³ Aja is mentioned in the *Buddhacarita* (VIII, 79)¹⁴ Aśvaghosa refers to Manu, son of Vaisvasvata¹⁵ Tālajangha fell in love with Menakā¹⁶ Aśvaghosa mentions Aurva,¹⁷ Prthu,¹⁸ and Māndhātṛ¹⁹ The *Saundarananda* mentions Sagara,²⁰ Bhārgava,²¹ Vālmīki²² and Kāṇva²³ Sagara twice referred to by Aśvaghosa (*B*, I, 49, *S*, I, 25) occurs also in the Bālakāṇḍa of the *Rāmāyana* It is mentioned in the *Saundarananda* (I, 15, II, 36) that king Śuddhodana caused his priest to measure out the Soma at the proper time and with due ceremony Aśvaghosa refers to Yoga in his *Saundarananda* (V, 32)²⁴ King Śāntanu, son of Pratipa, lost all self-control when Gangā left him²⁵ Aśvaghosa refers to the fall of Indra²⁶ Janaka was able to instruct the

¹ *Buddhacarita*, IX, 69, *Saundarananda*, VII, 51

² *Mahābhārata*, I, 115, 4487, I, 95, 110, 117-8, I, 40, 1665, I, 60, 2213, etc

³ *Buddhacarita*, IV, 78, *Saundarananda*, II, 53, XI, 50, cf *Mahābhārata*, I, 75, 3158, sec 144

⁴ Cf *Mahābhārata*, I, 75, 3164, 3171 2

⁵ *Buddhacarita*, I, 42, cf *Mbh*, I (anukram)

⁶ *Buddhacarita*, IV, 16, cf *Saundarananda*, VII, 30

⁷ *S*, VII, 29

⁸ *Mbh*, I, 17, 20, 25, 55, 56, 59-60, 75-6, 79, etc

⁹ *Buddhacarita*, IV, 20, *Saundarananda*, VII, 85

¹⁰ *Mbh*, I, 71, 2914, 2917, 2918, I, 74, 3056, I, 175, 652, etc, cf *Rāmāyana*, IV, 35, 7, I, 65

¹¹ Cf *Saundarananda*, VII, 34, *Rāmāyana*, I, 9, 3, cf *Mbh*, I, 2, 443; II, 440, III, 110, 9994, cf also Nalmikā Jātaka, *Jāt*, V, pp 193ff

¹² Cf *Mbh*, I, 170, *Bhāsmasatyavati samvāda*, *Mbh*, I, 104, 4192, 4198

¹³ Cf *Saundarananda*, I, 4

¹⁴ Cf *Mbh*, XIII, 5668, 7684

¹⁵ *B*, VIII, 78, cf *Harivaṃśa*, 433, 633, *Mbh*, I, 75, 3126, 3137, 3138, etc

¹⁶ *S*, VII, 39, *Mbh*, I, 75, 2915, 2916, 2918, I, 8, 943-4, 945, etc

¹⁷ *B*, I, 10, *Mbh*, III, 315, 17465

¹⁸ *Buddhacarita*, I, 10, cf *Mbh*, XII, 29, 1030-32

¹⁹ *Buddhacarita*, I, 10, cf *Mbh*, VI, 17, 645—Māndhātṛ is stated to have been taken out by the Aśvins from his father's womb by a surgical operation

²⁰ *Saundarananda*, I, 25, *Mbh*, XII, 29, 1023

²¹ *Saundarananda*, I, 25, cf *Mbh*, XI, 661, XII, 60

²² *Saundarananda*, I, 26

²³ *Ibid*, I, 26, cf *Mbh*, I, 68-70

²⁴ *Mbh*, I, 916, I, 1218

²⁵ *Saundarananda*, VII, 41, *Mbh*, I, 95, 3797, I, 99, 3920, 3923, 3965-7

²⁶ *Saundarananda*, XI, 48; cf *Mbh*, XII, 8142.

twice-born in the methods of Yoga ¹ In the *Buddhacarita* (II, 3),² Padma is mentioned as the lord of elephants Siddhārtha took his delight with the Śākya king's daughter-in-law as the thousand-eyed Indra with Śacī ³ The Śuddhāvāsa gods placed an old man in front of the prince to incite him to leave his home ⁴ God Puramdara fell in love with Ahalyā, the wife of Gautama ⁵ Sanatkumāra in the third heaven approached Maghavat ⁶ The horse Kanthaka is like that of Tārksya in speed ⁷ Ugrāyudha met his death at the hands of Bhīṣma ⁸ There is a reference to Vrddha Parāśara in the *Buddhacarita* (XII, 66) ⁹

As an inhabitant of Śāketa, Āsvaghosa was well acquainted with the *Rāmāyana* In the *Buddhacarita* (I, 43) he refers to Vālmīki as the ādikavi and in the *Saundarananda* ¹⁰ he extols him as dhīmān (wise) The narrative of Rāma's journey to the forest and the subsequent return of Lakṣmana to the desolate city bears a striking resemblance to the description given in the *Buddhacarita* of the departure of Siddhārtha and the subsequent return of the charoteer Chandaka to Kapilavastu In canto VIII of the *Buddhacarita* there are four references from which may be inferred his familiarity with the Ayodhyākāṇḍa of the *Rāmāyana* Similarity in words between the two is conclusive on this point ¹¹

The parallelism existing between Āsvaghosa and the epic literature on the one hand and Āsvaghosa and Kālidāsa on the other may be regarded as marking a period of transition in the development of classical Sanskrit literature The trend of both the *Buddhacarita* and the *Saundarananda* with their motif of renunciation naturally brings them more closely into contact with the *Rāmāyana* Gawronski ¹² draws our attention to some references in the *Rāmāyana* One of these, according to Gurner,¹³ is probably taken from the Daśaratha Jātaka and not from the *Rāmāyana* Two references to Vālmīki are, of course, significant in this connection Gurner argues, however, that the words *Vālmīkināḍau ca sasariṇa padyam* ¹⁴ may or may not be a direct allusion to the well-known incident in the *Rāmāyana*—*māniṣṭha*, etc ¹⁵ In Cowell's text of the *Buddhacarita* there is a more conclusive evidence in the matter in the word, *Vālmīkināḍaś ca* The allusion to Vālmīki as the tutor of the two sons, in *Saundarananda* (I, 26), points unmistakably to the Uttarākāṇḍa Similarly, it may be shown that Āsvaghosa directly refers to incidents in the *Mahābhārata* ¹⁶ In both the kāvyaś of Āsvaghosa, the legend of Mādrī and Pāṇdu shows the consequence of addiction to women (B, IV, 79, S, VII, 45) As pointed out by Gawronski, the allusion in Āsvaghosa's works to Gautama Dirghatapas

¹ *Buddhacarita*, I, 45, *Mbh*, XII, 327, 12282

² *Rāmāyana*, I, 42, 16, *Mbh*, VI, 2866

³ *Buddhacarita*, II, 27, *Rāmāyana*, VI, 35, 1, *Mbh*, III, 113, 10092

⁴ *Buddhacarita*, III, 26, cf *Dīvyāvadāna*, 408

⁵ *Buddhacarita*, IV, 72, *Saundarananda*, VII, 25, cf *Mbh*, V, 12, 373, XII, 343, 13205

⁶ *Buddhacarita*, V, 27, cf *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VII, 26, 2

⁷ *Buddhacarita*, VI, 5, cf *Mbh*, VIII, 687, *Dīvyāvadāna*, 444

⁸ *Buddhacarita*, XI, 18, *Mbh*, IX, 2, 93, *Harivaṃśa*, 1082

⁹ Cf *Mbh*, XII, 8431 foll

¹⁰ *Saundarananda*, I, 26

¹¹ Vido *J.P.A.S.B.*, N.S., Vol XXIII (1927), pp 347 foll

¹² *Studies about the Sanskrit Buddhist Literature*, 1919, pp 27-39 and *Notes on the Saundarananda*, 1922

¹³ *J.P.A.S.B.*, N.S., Vol XXIII (1927), pp 347ff, cf *Buddhacarita*, IX, 59, with *Rāmāyana*, VI, cxxviii, 3

¹⁴ *Buddhacarita*, I, 48

¹⁵ *Rāmāyana*, II, XV

¹⁶ *Buddhacarita*, XI, 31 and *Saundarananda*, IX, 17

also shows the influence of the Sabhāparvan of the *Mahābhārata* (Chap XXI). The description of the city of Rājagṛha, as given in the *Buddhacarita* (B, X), bears ample testimony to the fact that it is based on a similar description given in the Sabhāparvan of the *Mahābhārata*. The works of Aśvaghoṣa mark a definite stage in the development of kāvyā literature from a more or less narrative poem to a series of set pieces on conventional topics. This tendency appears also in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Thus barring a few passages of purely Buddhist doctrine, the whole range of topics used by Aśvaghoṣa, whether in the main body of his narrative or incidentally, is found alike in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. These topics consist of descriptive passages of purely literary value and fragments of thought from the prevailing body of ideas as expressed in the different schools of philosophy, political and military science, ethics and psychology, grammatical and aesthetic theory, etc. The duties of a king, the technique of an army, the duty of telling unpleasant truths, the moral conflict over the renunciation of vows, the pain of separation and consolation in the transitoriness of the world, are common in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and Aśvaghoṣa. Thus the ideal reigns of Daśaratha and Rāma, with the combination of climatic blessings, material prosperity and general goodwill of the people, are also reflected in the conditions of Kapilavastu during the reign of Sudhodana and after the return of the Buddha (cf. R, I, VI, R, VI, cxviii, 18ff. B, II, 1-16, S, III, 30-41). The allusion to Manu in *Rāmāyaṇa* (I, VI, 4) is also found. The description of the city as given in *Saundarananda* (I, 42-55) is evidently based on the model of *Rāmāyaṇa* (I, V). The hermitages as described in the *Buddhacarita* (VII, 32) and the *Saundarananda* (I, 5-17) are similar in description to those in the *Rāmāyaṇa* (III, 1, 1-9, III, VI, 47-52). The types of asceticism as given in the *Buddhacarita* (VII, 14-18) seem to be an elaboration of the list of technical terms for ascetics as given in the *Rāmāyaṇa* (III, VI, 2-5, XII, XCII, 91-93, V, XIII, 38ff). The nature and tone of Yaśodharā's lament (B, VIII) or Sundarī's lament over desertion by her husband (S, VI, 13-24) are echoed in Tārā's laments (R, IV, XX and XXIII) and Sītā's mourning (R, V, XXV-XXVI and XXVIII). The picture of Sundarī, tearing and throwing her ornaments ('Na bhūsanārtho mama sampatitī sā dikṣa cikṣepa vibhūsanām'—*Saundarananda*, VI, 28) is the same as that of Kaikeyī (*Rām*, II, IX, 59). The beautiful description of the contrast in human fortune which we find in many passages of Kālidāsa, is reflected in the writings of Aśvaghoṣa. The animal-faced demons of Māra, armed with trees and stones, remind us of the hosts of Rāvana and the weapons of the apes. The juxtaposition of animals in the expression—'Yaśodhara nānā-vidhaghorarūpāḥ vyāghrostranāgēndramigūśvavaktraḥ' (R, VI, lx, 23) is similar to what we find in the *Buddhacarita* (XIII, 19). The shout of an army and such other noises are described by both.¹ The descriptions of mountains and heavenly gardens to which the Buddha leads Nanda² recall similar passages in the *Rāmāyaṇa*.³ The interpretation of nature in terms of human passions, a characteristic feature of classical Sanskrit literature from Kālidāsa to Jayadeva, has its prototype in the *Rāmāyaṇa*.⁴ The same method is also followed by Aśvaghoṣa when he describes the restlessness of Nanda on his following the Buddha for the first time.⁵ Cowell points out that there is a striking resemblance in the description of women

¹ *Rāmāyaṇa*, VI, xli, 38, etc., and *Buddhacarita*, XIII, 52ff

² *Saundarananda*, X, 4-14 and 18-31

³ V Ivi, 26-50, VII, lxii, 1-16

⁴ E.g. the description of the seasons in *Rāmāyaṇa*, IV, xxviii and *Rāmāyaṇa*, IV, xxx

⁵ *Saundarananda*, III, 5.

asleep in the palace of Śuddhodana and those in the harem of Rāvana ¹ The festival of Indra's banner may be traced from the *Rāmāyana* through Āsvaghosa to Kālidāsa ² The sense of dejection at the end of the festival and the general elation when the banner is raised are found in the *Rāmāyana* as also in Āsvaghosa The father of Siddhārtha collapses on hearing his son's departure like Daśaratha under similar circumstances ³

The didactic passages and allusions which are so numerous in the works of Āsvaghosa are also to some extent derived from the *Rāmāyana* The *Rāmāyana* in passages of fervent appeal rather than of didactic insistence, pauses to dwell on examples from familiar names, such as those of saints who went to heaven, ⁴ or of faithful wives ⁵ The name of Nahusa is mentioned to illustrate not the attainment of heaven but the transitoriness of heavenly state ⁶ Such topics as the breaking of ascetic vows, ⁷ the fulfilment of *dharma* by royalty ⁸ and methods of attaining mokṣa ⁹ or salvation, etc., have not escaped the attention of Āsvaghosa

Āsvaghosa employs the term *rājasāstra* for the science of politics and treats as standard authorities the works of Uśanas or Śukra, and Brhaspati The principles of this science upheld by the poet appear to have been based on the *rājadharmā* section of the Great Epic The *Buddhacarita* ¹⁰ refers to Udāyin as an authority on *nīti* or the science of worldly conduct and in the *Saundarananda* ¹¹ occurs the word *dandanīti*

Āsvaghosa in his *Buddhacarita* (II, 4) mentions horses adorned with various auspicious marks

Rsi Ātreya incidentally finds mention as the first propounder of the science of healing ¹² But from this fact it cannot be inferred that Āsvaghosa kept in view Caraka, the legendary court physician of Kaniska

The picture of the pleasures of love drawn by Āsvaghosa is marked by that wealth of intimate detail which appeals to all Indian poets But still more sincere is Āsvaghosa's burning enthusiasm for his own ideal In the *Saundarananda* Nanda's rejection of Sundarī may seem to us heartless, the transference of his fickle affection to the *apsarās* has its comic side but in the end he seeks the welfare of others even as does the Buddha Rāma on the contrary in his rejection of Sitā after the long agony of separation has no warmer motive than obedience to the doctrine that Cæsar's wife must be above suspicion ¹³

Āsvaghosa seems to be acquainted with Kāmaśāstra He refers to the methods of Yoga in his *Buddhacarita* ¹⁴ The Uttaramīmāṃsā (Vedānta system) and Vaiśeṣika systems were entirely unknown to him Although there is no specific reference to the Pūrvamīmāṃsā sūtras, the term *vidhi* is used in the technical sense of this school There is every reason to believe that Āsvaghosa had knowledge at least of the first section of the Nyāya-sūtras now extant

The reference to *kāvya-dharma* in the *Saundarananda* shows Āsvaghosa's acquaintance with poetics

¹ Cf. *Buddhacarita*, V, 47-63 and *Rāmāyana*, V, 2, 30-49, V, 12, 33-36 and V 21, 29-36

² Cf. *Rāmāyana*, II, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000

³ *Buddhacarita*, VIII, 73, *Rāmāyana*, II, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100

⁴ *Rāmāyana*, II, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100

⁵ *Ibid.*, II, cxviii, 10-12, etc

⁶ *Saundarananda*, XI, 42-51 and *Buddhacarita*, XI, 13-18

⁷ *Buddhacarita*, X, 58 and *Saundarananda*, VII, 51

⁸ *Buddhacarita*, IX, 20

⁹ *Ibid.*, XII, 67

¹⁰ IV, 64

¹¹ II, 28

¹² *Buddhacarita*, I, 43.

¹³ Keith, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, 1928, p. 61

¹⁴ *Buddhacarita*, I, 46; II, 46 and XII, 105, vide *JRAS*, 1914, pp. 747 foll.

In the *Saundarananda* ¹ there is a reference to *śūnyavāda* and the words *śūnya* and *śūnyatā* occur in verses 20 and 17. The theory of *śūnyatā* was evolved in the minds of the teachers who lived long before Nāgārjuna. ² Aśvaghosa's employment of the terms of the theatre and the dramatic forms of address bear testimony to his knowledge of the principles of dramatic technique.

The various kinds of metre employed by him lead us to think that prosody was fully developed in his time. He did not strictly follow the rules of Pāṇini.

¹ Canto XII, 16-22

² *JRAS*, 1914, pp. 747-748. Cf. Baston, *JA*, 1912, i, 79 foll., Hultsch, *ZDMG*, lxxii, 111 foll., lxxiii, 229 foll.

CHAPTER III

AŚVAGHOŚA THE POET

The kāvya poetry as exemplified by Aśvaghosa's *Buddhacarita* and *Saundarananda* and Kālidāsa's *Kumārasambhava* and *Raghuvamśa* represents a stage in the development of literary art in India which is beyond the earlier stage of poetry of which the two best examples are the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyana*. The same remark holds true, *mutatis mutandis*, of Aśvaghosa's *Śāriputraprakaraṇa*, Bhāsa's *Pratimānātaka* and *Pratijñā-Yaugandharāyana* and Kālidāsa's *Abhijñāna-Sakuntalam* taking us as they do beyond anything produced in earlier times in the form of dramas.

Aśvaghosa was earlier than Kālidāsa and Bhāsa. Keith says that Aśvaghosa's *Buddhacarita* is probably the source of a verse in Bhāsa's *Pratijñā-Yaugandharāyana* and its prākṛit is unquestionably older in character.¹ It cannot be accepted that Bhāsa stands nearer Aśvaghosa in technique than Kālidāsa.² Aśvaghosa influenced Kālidāsa's style but the chief cause of its perfection must have been natural taste and constant re-working of what he had written.³ A comparison of the Nāṭyāśāstra with the works of Aśvaghosa will show that the Prakrits recognized by the Nāṭyāśāstra are later than those of Aśvaghosa.⁴

There were *kavis* in earlier times, many in number, whose personal history is either completely forgotten or imperfectly known. But who were these *kavis* of the earlier ages? The gifted Vedic seers through whose mouth the inspired hymns in the Rgveda found their animated utterances were revered as *kavis* and *ṛṣis*, and not inappropriately as *sadvipras*. The Brāhmaṇas of later ages traced the origin of their gotra names to these best of men in whom the poet was inseparably combined with the philosopher, the seer with the teacher and priest. There is then nothing to be surprised at when in the oldest known Sanskrit lexicon of Amarasimha the *kavi* or poet is defined by a set of synonyms as a person who is learned, wise, able to judge what is right and wrong, possessed of good understanding, clever in sciences and arts, intelligent, steady in character, talented, endowed with knowledge, prudent man of judgment, deeply versed, sensible, the foremost among men, accomplished, distinguished for culture, an adept, foresighted and far-sighted.⁵ Even Aśvaghosa himself, while speaking of Vālmīki, pays to him the compliment of being the *ādikavi* (pioneer among poets) and *dhi-mān* (sensible). The epithet of *kavi* is applied to both Brhaspati and Śukra, the former of whom is eulogized as *vācaspati* (master of speech) and *surācārya* (teacher of the gods), and the latter as *kārya* (son of a poet, *kaviputra*) and *kavi* (one who imparts instruction, *kuyate*).⁶ The adjective, *ādi*, is applied where the person is found to be an originator, pioneer or fore-runner (*pubbangamo*) of anything, the maker of a school of thought, e.g. the epithets of *āgare* (*ādikaro*) and *tūthagare* (*tūthakaro*) as applied to

¹ *Sanskrit Drama*, pp. 93-94.

² *Ibid.*, p. 95.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 292.

⁵ *Amarakoṣa*, Brahmayarga, 10.

*vidvān vipaścāt doṣajñān saṁ sudhāḥ kauśalo budhah |
dhiro manīṣ jñān prājñān samkhyāvān paṇḍita kavah ||
dhi-mān sūri kṛts kṛtślabdhavarṇo vīcakṣaṇah
dāradarśī dīrghadarśī*

⁶ *Amarakoṣa*, Svargavarga, 127, 128.

Mahāvira, the founder of a system of thought; the epithet of *ādividvān* as applied to ṛṣi Kapila, and the originator of a new style or school of poetry; the epithet of *ādikavi* as applied to Vālmīki.

Going by all these accepted ideas, a person is not entitled to the epithet of *kavi* or poet if he is not at the same time a seer and a creator (*draṣṭā*, *sraṣṭā*), a propounder and an instructor, the seer of truth, good and beauty, the creator of a literary art of conveying truth, good and beauty. This two-fold function of a poet is stated by Aśvaghosa himself through the following admonition of the Buddha to Nanda.

Ihottamebhyo 'pi matah sa tūttamo
ya uttamam dharmamavāpya naisthikam |
acintayitvātmagatam parīśramam
śamam parebhyo 'pyupadeśumicchati ||
Vihāya tasmādiha kāryānātmanah
kuru sthīratman parakāryamapyatho |
bhramatsu sattvesu tamovratmasu
śrutapradīpo nūi dhāryatāmayaṃ || ¹

'Here he is considered the best of men who, after obtaining the best and final state of things, desires, unmindful of the personal trouble, to instruct others about tranquillity. Leaving aside, therefore, thy own work, go on doing, thou of steady character, the work for others and hold up this torch of tradition in the darkness of night to the beings who are wandering, being themselves enveloped by darkness.'

Aśvaghosa expressly states at the conclusion of his *Saundarananda* that he had not composed the poem for the sake of poetry. Here the form of poetry is subordinated to the nobler purpose of conveying the ultimate truth about salvation and tranquillity. 'This poem, dealing thus with the subject of salvation,' says he, 'has been written in the *kāvya* style, not to give pleasure, but to further the attainment of tranquillity and with the intention of capturing hearers devoted to other things. For that I have handled other subjects of *kāvya* poetry to make it palatable, as sweet is put into a bitter medicine to make it drinkable.'

Yan mokṣāt kṛtamanyadatra hi mayā tat kāvyadharmāt
kṛtam |
pātum tiktamiva śadham madhuyutam ² hṛdyaṃ katham
śyāditi || —XVIII, 63

The function assigned by Aśvaghosa to the *kāvya* poetry goes to make it only a handmaid of religion and philosophic thought. If religion and philosophy are concerned with the subject of *śreya* or *nihēreyas* (ne pas ultra) the function of poetry consists in rendering it *preya* or palatable in its form. Evidently this view of the function of poetry was promulgated in the *kāvya-dharma* or work on poetics with which Aśvaghosa was acquainted.

There were poets and poetry in the Buddha's time. The Buddha speaks of the four classes of poets, viz. *cintākavi* or the poet of imagination, *śutakavi* or the poet of tradition, *āthakavi* or the poet of set purpose, and *paṭibhāṇa-kavi* or the improvisatore ³. The Thera Vāṅgisa (Vāṅgīsa, same as Vācaspati), who excelled other brothers in the art of extemporizing, describes his previous career as being that of a person who wandered about in the

¹ *Saundarananda*, XVIII, 66, 67

² Cf. Bhāṇaka's *Kapubhayaṃ*

³ *Angutara*, II, p. 230. Cattāro une bhikkhave kavi! katame cattāro? *cintākavi*, *śutakavi*, *āthakavi*, *paṭibhāṇakavi*.

country 'drunk with poesy' (*Kāveyyamatto*)¹ There was a grave reason for the Bhikṣu Āsvaghoṣa in describing himself as an *arthakavi*.² *mokṣārthagarbhā kṛtiḥ*³ The attaching of undue importance by the mendicants to the poems skilfully composed by outsiders was apprehended by the Buddha as one of the probable causes of future danger to the Good Faith, and the Discourses in which he dwelt on this subject were included by Asoka in the list of the seven texts recommended for constant study and remembrance by all sections of the Buddhist community

It does not follow from the Buddha's statement that he condemned the art or form of poetry All that he did was to warn his disciples and followers against being carried away by the emotional appeal of any and every kind of poetry, against sacrificing truth to sentiment I should better quote the words of the Buddha to indicate what was precisely in the Buddhist traditional background of Āsvaghoṣa's mind and thought

'There may be, O Brethren, in times to come mendicants of undeveloped body, undeveloped sense (virtue), undeveloped mind, and undeveloped wisdom When those discourses which are delivered by the Tathāgata, which are deep and profound in their meaning, which deal with things extraordinary and which are concerned with matters relating to voidness, are recited, they will not pay attention to them, nor will they give ear nor will they produce a heart to know, nor will they deem them worth learning by heart and studying, when on the other hand, those texts which are composed by the poets, which are in the form of poems (*Kavikatā Kāveyyā*) sweetly worded and sweetly phrased (*cittakkharā cittaṭṭhājanā*) and which are presented by the adherents of another school of thought, are recited, they will pay attention to them, give ear, produce a heart to know, etc. Thus, indeed, O Brethren, from the corruption of the Doctrine will follow the corruption of the Discipline, and *vice versa* This is, O Brethren, the fourth future danger (to the Good Faith) which has not arisen now but may arise in the long run'⁴

Evidently in the Buddha's opinion the appeal of a *kāvya* or poem lies to the emotional side of human nature, and that is made through the skilled art of versification, the rhetorical art of embellishment, and the charming phrases and idioms

To be a poet and a faithful follower of the Buddha at the same time Āsvaghoṣa had no other alternative than to justify his indulgence in the art of poesy on the ground that it was just meant by him to administer sugar-coated quinine pills as a remedy to the epidemic of evil in the world. But he proved himself to be a pre-eminent poet in spite of himself, and while giving an admirable poetic garb to the tenets of salvation which are other-

¹ *Samyutta*, I, 110

*Mandiyā nu sesi udāhu kāveyya matto |
utthā nu te sampacurā na santi ||
eko vevitte sayanāsanamhi |
niddāmmukho kim idam soppasevā ti ||*

² According to Rhys Davids the *arthakavi* means 'the poet of real life' — *Buddhist India*, p 184

³ *Saundarananda*, XVIII, 63

⁴ *Anguttara Nikāya*, III, p 107 *Puna ca param bhikkhave bhavissanti bhikkhū anāgata-moddhānam abhāvutakāyā, abhāvutacittā, abhāvutapaññā, ye te suttantā Tathāgata-bhāsītā gambhīrā gambhīratthā lokuttarā suññatāpaṭisaṃyutā tesu bhāṇāmānesu na sussesenti, na sotam odhassanti, na aññācittam upatthapessanti, na ca te dhamme ugghaṭṭabham pariyāpūṇitabham mañhassanti, ye panu te suttantā karitvā kāveyyā citta-kharā cittaṭṭhājanā bāhira-kā sāvakabhāsītā, tesu bhāṇāmānesu sussesenti, sotam odhassanti, aññācittam upatthapessanti Iti kho bhikkhave Dhammasandosa Vīṇayasandosa, Vīṇayasandosa Dhammasandosa Idam bhikkhave catuttham anāgata-bhayaṃ etarahi asamuppannam āyatam samupparijjesati*

wise dull and uninteresting, he had to conform to all the laws and canons of kāvya poetry (*kāvyaadharmā*) and to adroitly employ all the means of prosody and rhetoric thereby enabling us to judge him as a poet apart from his position and mission as a bhikṣu and religious teacher.

As a poet Āsvaghoṣa is revealed to us through his two *kāvya*s, the *Buddhacarita*¹ and the *Saundarananda*² while, as a dramatist he stands or falls, in literary estimation by the merit of his *Śāriputraprakaraṇa*. The *Buddhacarita-kāvya* records the acts of the Buddha from his birth to his demise. In Pali literature there is a *kāvya* known as the *Jinacarita*³ dealing with the life of the Buddha less successfully on the model of Āsvaghoṣa's *Buddhacarita*. Keith is of opinion that none arose to surpass Āsvaghoṣa's achievement in depicting the life of the Buddha.⁴ The description of the entrance of the prince in the *Buddhacarita*⁵ is similar to that of the actions of the women of the city on the advent of Śiva and Pārvati in the *Kumārasambhava*⁶ and this has also a parallel in the *Raghuvamśa*⁷ in connection with the entry of Āja and Indumatī⁸. In the third canto of the *Buddhacarita* the descriptions of women with misplaced jewellery (v. 14), of the tumult and clinking of anklets which frightened the birds in the house (v. 15), of the females who were unable to move fast on account of heavy hips and breasts (v. 16), and of the rush of women at the window whose ear-rings came into contact and whose faces like lotuses were bound into a bundle (v. 21) have their parallels in the *Kumārasambhava* (I, 4, III, 55, I, 11) and in the *Raghuvamśa* (XVI, 56).

A complete Sanskrit text of the *Buddhacarita* is not available. Samuel Beal offers us an English translation of the whole text from its Chinese version which also includes an account of the distribution of Buddha's relics and their enshrinement. In the Chinese version, the text of the *Buddhacarita*⁹ consists of twenty-eight cantos while in the Sanskrit text edited by Cowell and subsequently by Johnston the first thirteen cantos only can be claimed to be the composition of Āsvaghoṣa together perhaps with some portions of canto XIV. The remaining four cantos (XIV-XVII) added by Amṛtānanda must be left out of account here.

MM Shāstri has compared Cowell's edition of the *Buddhacarita* with the new manuscript which he received. He has noticed a passage consisting

¹ Edited by E. B. Cowell, 1893, and translated by him in *SBE*, Vol. 40; Translated into German by C. Cappeller and R. Schmidt, 1924, into Italian by C. Formichi, Poussan, *JRAS*, 1913, pp. 417-419, L. Finot, *JA*, 1898. E. Hultsch, *ZDMG*, 1918, E. H. Johnston, *JRAS*, 1927, *Buddhacarita* (Acts of the Buddha), Pts I and II (Text and Translation), Madhava Shāstri Bhandari, *Buddhacarita*, cantos II and III, 1929 (*Kāvyaśāstrasamgraha*), C. W. Gurner, *Some textual notes on Āsvaghoṣa's Buddhacarita*, *JASB*, 1926, E. W. Hopkins, *Buddhacarita*, *JASB*, 1901, Duttatraya Shāstri Nigudkar and K. M. Joglekar, *Buddhacarita* (cantos I-V), 1912, Gopal Raghunath Nandargkar, *The Buddhacaritām* (I-V), Poona, 1911, Lokur, *Buddhacaritām* (cantos I-V), 1912, Pandeya Jagannath Prasad, *Āsvaghoṣa's Buddhacarita*, canto VIII, Bankipore, 1920, V. V. Sovani, *Buddhacaritām*, cantos I-V with notes, Poona, 1911.

² Edited by H. P. Shāstri (*Bibliotheca Indica Series*, 1910, re issue in 1936 by Chintaharan Chakravartty), E. H. Johnston, *Saundaranandakāvya* (Text and Translation); *Saundaranandakāvya*, Bengali Translation, by B. C. Law (1st Ed. 1922 and 2nd Ed. 1923).

³ B. C. Law, *A History of Pali Literature*, II, pp. 614 foll. It is a Pali *kāvya* composed in different metres. It represents a poetic development in Pali similar to that represented by the *Buddhacarita* in the Sanskrit Buddhist literature.

⁴ *History of Sanskrit Literature*, 1928, p. 51.

⁵ III, 13-24.

⁶ VII, 50-69.

⁷ VII, 5-13.

⁸ Keith, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, 1928, p. 191, vide B. C. Law, *Saundarananda*, Bengali Tr., Preface.

⁹ Vide *Some critical notes on Āsvaghoṣa's Buddhacarita* by J. S. Speyer, *JRAS*, 1914, pp. 105-118.

of 11½ verses which was a lacuna in Cowell's work. The lacuna commences from the middle of the second line of verse 41 in chapter 9 of Cowell's edition. The eleven verses which he has quoted complete the sense of the context. These have been translated in the Chinese version in 16 verses. MM Shāstri has given a comparative table of the verses in each canto in the two translations by Cowell and Beal. He has shown from this table that the Chinese translation is a 'free one and not a close translation' ¹

Johnston ² points out that Dr F Weller ³ has concentrated on producing a correct Tibetan text of the *Buddhacarita* and an accurate translation of it. Johnston admits that he has derived much help from this work although he has not agreed with some of his interpretations. Here he has given his own conjectures regarding some of the variants. He has given a few corroborative references mainly from the Chinese translation, from the *Saundarananda*, from Āryasura's *Jātakamālā* and from Beal's *Romantic Legend of Śākyi Buddha* which contains a number of passages taken direct from the *Buddhacarita* especially from canto IX.

We are not prepared to accept the views of Keith and Winternitz that *Saundarananda* was his first attempt ⁴. We do not agree with Hultsch who says that from the concluding verses it may be assumed that Āsvaghosa wrote the *Saundarananda* first and the *Buddhacarita* afterwards (ZDMG, 72, 121f). Traces of fully developed kāvya poetry are found in the *Saundarananda* and not in the *Buddhacarita*. Had it been an earlier work, we could not have found such an advanced kāvya poetry in the *Saundarananda* which surely excels the *Buddhacarita* as a piece of poetry. The *Buddhacarita* is essentially the work of an artist. The poet shows his skill in depicting the loving ruses by which the ladies of the harem seek to divert the mind of the prince from the desire to renounce the vanities of the world. Keith says that Āsvaghosa was well skilled in the Kāmasāstra. ⁵

The *Buddhacarita* is based either on the *Lalitavistara* or on the same materials and save in its spirit of devotion to the Buddha it is not markedly different from the *Hinavāna* as pointed out by Keith. ⁶

The *Buddhacarita* has many points of agreement and difference with the *Lalitavistara* traditionally known as a Sarvāstivāda work. Some of the points of agreement are as follows.

On his return from Śuddhodana's palace Asita compassionately enjoined the son of his younger sister (i.e. Naradatta ⁷) in every way to become the disciple of the sage (Buddha)

'Kṛtamatiranirjāsutam ca dṛṣṭvā
munivacanaśravane 'pi tanmatau ca |
bahuvyidhamanukāmpayā sa sādhuḥ
priyasutatavadviniṣṭojyāñcākāra' ||
(*Buddhacarita*, Canto I, verse 86.)

Cf. 'Vande tvam varasārthavāha tribhave sarve jage pūjitam
Asitah prāha ca bhāgineya muditah samārūyatām bhāsato |
Buddhābodhu vadā ānosa jagato varteti cakram hyayam
Sighram pravraja śāsane'sya munaye tatprāpsyase nurvṛtim' ||
(*Lalitavistara*, Lefmann's Ed., p. 111)

¹ A new manuscript of *Buddhacarita*, JPASB, 1909, N S pp 47-49

² JRAS, 1927, Pt. I, January, pp 209-226

³ Das Leben des Buddha von Āsvaghosa, Leipzig, 1926—Tibetan text with German translation covering cantos I-VIII

⁴ History of Sanskrit Literature, 1928, p. 57, History of Indian Literature, II, p. 262.

⁵ History of Sanskrit Literature, p. 58, cf. *Buddhacarita* (Cowell), Book XI, vv. 22-34

⁶ *Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 227.

Cf. Also ' . . . tatra khalvasito maharṣinaradattam mānavakametadvocat Yadā Naradatta śrṇuyā buddho loke utpanna itī tadā tvam gatvā tasya śāsane pravrajeh Tatte bhaviṣyati dirgharātramarthāya hitāya sukhāyeti' (*Ibid.*, p. 108).

'Attano santikam āgataṃ āha

Tāta Suddhodanamahārājassa kule putto jāto Buddhakuro, esa pañcatimsa-vassāni atikkamtvā Buddho bhaviṣṣatīti, tvam etam datthum labhissasi, ajj'eva pabbajhīti'

(Nidānakathā, *Jātaka*, Vol I, p. 55)

Since a universal accomplishment of all objects took place with the birth of Siddhārtha, the newly born baby is named accordingly

'Evaṃvidhā rējasutasya tasya
Sarvārthasiddhīśca yato babbhūva |
Tato nṛpastasya sutasya nāma
Sarvārthasiddho'yamiti pracakre' ||

(*Buddhacarita*, Canto II, verse 17)

Cf. 'Asya hi jātāmātreṇa mama sarvārthah saṃsiddhuh Yannvaha-masya Sarvārthasiddha itī nāma kurvām Tato rājā Bodhisattvaṃ Sarvārthasiddho'yam kumāro nāmnā bhavatu itī nāmāsy ākāreṣit'

(*Lalitavistara*, Lefmann's Ed., pp. 95ff)

Cf. 'Jātāmātre kumāre 'rthasiddhī sukhī sarvasatvā abhū yāvadavī-
cam utthāpaniyā gāthā

Jāte jagapradhāne sarve
arthā pradakṣiṇā rājño |
Tena naralambakāśya nāman
Sarvārthasiddha itī ||'

(*Mahāvastu*, II, p. 26)

Assuming the majestic form of an elephant, white like the Himalaya mountain, with six tusks, the Bodhisattva entered the womb of Māyā

'Dhrtvā humādrīdhavalam gur sadvisānam
dānādhivāsitamukham divyadasarūpam |
Suddhodanasya vasi dhādhipatē mahusāh
kuksuṃ viveśa sa jagadvāsanakṣayāva' ||

(*Buddhacarita*, Canto I, verse 20)

Cf. 'Himarajata nikāśasandra sūryātirekah
sucarana suvishaktah sadvisānomahātma
gajabaru drdhasandhi vajrakalpassurūpah
udari mama pravistastasya' ||

(*Lalitavistara*, Lefmann's Ed., p. 56)

'Atha Bodhisatto setavaravārano hutvā . . . uttaradisato āgamma rajatadāmavaṇṇāya sondāya setapaḍumam gaḥetvā koñcanādam naditvā kanakavumānam pavisitvā mātusayanam tikkhattum padakkhipam katvā dakkhiṇapassam tāletvā kucchim pavitthasadiṣo ahoṣi'

(Nidānakathā, *Jātaka*, Vol I, p. 50)

Cf. also *Mahāvastu*, II, p. 20.

Regarding the unusual way of the birth of Bodhisattva, Aśvaghoṣa speaks thus

'Pārsvātsuto lokahitāya jajñe
nirvedanam caiva nirāmayam ca'

(*Buddhacarita*, Canto I, verse 25.)

Cf. 'Jāte Bodhisattve mātuh kuṣipārēvamaksatam-
anupahatamabhavadyathā pūrvam tathā paścāt'
(*Lalitavistara*, p. 96)

Cf. again ' . adyo jane sarvaloke hitam '
(*Ibid*, p. 92.)

Cf. also *Nidānakathā, Jātaka*, Vol I, pp 52-53

The *Lalitavistara* agrees in toto with the *Buddhacarita*, when Āsvaghosa describes that the Bodhisattva's toes and fingers were webbed and that there was a tuft of hair between his brows and that his testicles were withdrawn from sight like those of an elephant

Jālāvanaddhāngulipānpādām
Soraṇabhruvām vāranavastukośam . '
(*Buddhacarita*, Canto I, verse 65)

Cf. 'Urṇā . sarvārthasiddhasya kumārasya bhruvormadhye jātā
kośapagatavastiguhyah jālāngulihastapādāh'
(*Lalitavistara*, pp 105ff)

Bodhisattva's determination to vanquish Māra as we find in the *Buddhacarita* bears a close resemblance with that in the *Lalitavistara* ¹

The account in the *Buddhacarita* of Siddhārtha bewildering Śuddhodana who tried to dissuade him from renouncing the world is similar to that found in the *Lalitavistara* ²

The following are some of the points of disagreement

'Tasy ātīśobhāvirātīśobhā raviprabhevastatamah prabhāvā |
— Samagradevī nīvahāgradevī bahhūva māyāpagateva Māyā' ||
(Canto I, verse 15)

The above description of Māyā in the *Buddhacarita* is not to be found in the *Lalitavistara*

Cf. 'Śuddhodanasya pramadā pradhānā nārīśahasresu hi sāgraprāptā
manoramā māyākṛteva vimbam nāmena sā ucyatī Māyādevī '
(Lefmann's Ed., p. 28)

'Tato mātaram vlokento "Buddhamātā nāma lolā surādhuttā na hoti,
kappasatasahassam pana pūritapāramī, jātito patthāya akhandapañcasīlā-
yeva hoti, ayañ ca Mahāpāyā nāma devī edisā, ayañ ca me mātā bhavissatī"
ti'

(*Nidānakathā, Jātaka*, Vol I, p. 49.)

According to Āsvaghosa the palm of the Buddha was marked with the wheel whereas in the *Lalitavistara* the feet were so marked

'Cakrāṅkapāṇim sa tathā maharsir . '
(Canto I, verse 64)

Cf. ' . tasya tau sucarapau cakrāṅkitau śobhanau '
(*Lalitavistara*, Lefmann's Ed., p. 110)

Cf. also 'Pādatalayormahārāja (Lefmann's Edition reads differently)
Sarvārthasiddhasya cakre jāte (R. L. Mitra's edition of *Lalitavistara*, p. 121).
Cf. *Buddhavaṃsa*, I, 37—*Yathā tuyham mahāvira pādesu cakkalakkhaṇaṃ*

¹ *Buddhacarita*, canto XIII, vv 1-2 Cf. *Lalitavistara* (Lefmann's Ed.), pp 299ff
Cf. also *Nidānakathā, Jātaka*, Vol. I, pp 71-72

² *Buddhacarita*, canto V, vv. 34-35; cf. *Lalitavistara*, (Lefmann's Ed.), p. 199.

In the *Buddhacarita*, Asita controls himself while weeping for not being able to live to see Siddhārtha attaining Buddhahood whereas in the *Lalitavistara* he freely does so

‘Dhātryankasamvistamavekṣya cainam
devyamkasamvistamivāgnisūnam |
Babhūva paksmāntarivāñcitāśturniśvasya
caivam tridivonmukho’bhūt ||
Drstvāsitam tvaśrupariplutāksam
snehāttu putrasya nrpaścakampe |
Sagadgadān bāspakasāyakanthah
papraccha ca prāñjalirānatāngah ||
Svalpāntaram yaśya vapurmuneḥ syād
vahuḍbhutam yaśya ca janma dīptam |
Yasvottamam bhāvinamāttha cārtham
tam prekṣya kasmāttava dhīra vāspah’ ||

(*Buddhacarita*, Canto I, verses 66-68)

Cf ‘Pratyatthāya tatah kṛtāñjaliputo caranāni so vandate
anke grhya mahātmaśāstrakusalīndhyāyati preksate |
So’psyadvaralakṣanān Kavacitam nūrāvanasthāmavam
śīrsam kampya sa vedaśāstrakuśalo dve tasya paśvadgati ||
Rājā vābhavi cakravartī halavān buddho vā lokottamah
vāspam tyakta sudinākāyamanasi gambhīra niśvasya ca |
udvignaśca vabhūva pāṭhivavarah kim brāmhano roditi
mā vigluṇam khalu paśyate’vamasitah sarvārthasiddhasya me ||
Bhūtam vyāhara kim tu rodisi rse śreyo’tha kim pāpakam
Pāpam nāsti na cāntārāyamiha bhoh sarvārthasiddhasya te’-

(*Lalitavistara*, Lefmann’s Ed., pp. 110ff.)

In the *Jātaka-nidānakathā* (I, 55) the sage Kāladevala (Asita) freely wept when he perceived that he would not survive to see the Bodhisattva attaining Buddhahood

‘Tato aham imam Buddhahhūtam datthum labhissāmi nu kho’ti
upadhārento’na labhissāmi, antarā veva kālam katvā Arūpabhaye
nibbatti-sāmi’ti disvā ‘mahati vata me jāni bhavissati’ti parodi’

Cf also *Mahāvastu*, II, p. 32

The description of Sarvārthasiddha’s marriage with Yaśodharā (= *Gopā* of the *Lalitavistara*) in the *Buddhacarita* is somewhat different from that of the *Lalitavistara* (*Buddhacarita*, Canto II, verses 26-27. cf *Lalitavistara*, pp. 141, 142 and 159)

Buddhacarita—

Kulāttato’smai sthiraśīlasamvyutātsādhvīm vapurhrī vmaṣ opapannām |
Yaśodharām nāma yaśoviśālām tulyābhidhūnām śriyamājuhāva ||
(v. 26)

Āthāparam bhūmipateḥ priyo’yam Sanatkumārpratimāḥ kumārāḥ |
Sārdham tayā Śākyanarendravadhivā śacyā sahaśrūksa ivābhireme ||
(v. 27)

Cf *Lalitavistara* The Prince was asked about the girl he desired to marry. The priest who was sent to find out a girl of prince’s liking met the daughter of Daṇḍapāpi who gave her consent thus

‘bhaṇahi kumāru yadi kārya mahū vilamba
mā hinaprākṛtjanena bhaveya vāsaḥ’ (p. 141)

'Tell the prince not to make delay (in marrying me) He should not mix with ordinary people'

The king then arranged for a party where the prince alone had to distribute gifts among the girls present Gopā, the daughter of Daṇḍapāṇi, who was present there, fixed her steadfast gaze on the Bodhisattva Then both of them (Gopā and the Prince) thus indulged in courtship

'Bodhisattvena sarvānyāśokabhāṇḍakāni dattāni Tadā sā (Gopā) Bodhisattvamupasaṃkramya prahasitavadanā Bodhisattvamevamāha

Kumāra kṃ te mayāpanitam yastvam mām vimānayaṣi
Āha nāham tvām vimānayaṣyaṃ va khalu punastvamalūpaśāśā-
gateti Sa tasyai cāṇekasatasahasramūlyamanguliyakam nirmucya prādāt

Sā prāha Idamaḥam kumāra tavāntikādarhām

Āha Imāni madīyānyābharaṇāni gṛhyantām

Sā āha na vayam kumāram vyalamkarisyāmah

Alamkarisyāmo vayam kumāram' (p 142)

Those who were engaged by the king to watch them in secret reported to the king thus

'Deva Daṇḍapāṇeḥ Śākyaṣya duhitā Gopā nāma śākyakanyā tasyām kumāraṣya cakṣurnivistam muhūrtam ca tayoh samlāpo'bhūt' (p 142)

On hearing this the king approached Daṇḍapāṇi and allowed the prince to marry Gopā

'Yathā ca putro mama bhūṣito gunaiḥ

Tathā ca kanyā svagunā prabhāṣate |

Viśuddhasattvaṃ tadubhau samāgatau

sameti sarpīrvathā sarpiṃmande || (p 159)

The *Saundarananda kāvya* which is chronologically later than the *Buddhacarita* is a poem consisting of eighteen cantos. As a piece of poetry it excels the *Buddhacarita*. It is undoubtedly one of the most noteworthy specimens of Sanskrit kāvya literature. Its earlier cantos contain a kind of resumé of the *Buddhacarita*¹ which means that the latter poem is presupposed by it, and not *vice versa*. It has for its theme the Buddhist story of conversion by the Buddha of his step-brother Nanda who was married to Sundarī, a rare female beauty of her time. No Tibetan translation has as yet been found of this poem. A Buddhist work translated by Beal from the Chinese under the title of the *Romantic Legend of Sākyā Buddha* not only contains a version of the story of Nanda's conversion suggesting an acquaintance with Asvaghosa's narrative but also lays the *Buddhacarita* in its earlier part frequently under contribution.

MM Dr. Haraprasad Shāstri in his paper entitled 'The Recovery of a Lost Epic by Asvaghosa' says that a new ancient epic poem entitled *Saundarananda-kāvya* written by Asvaghosa, a great poet, musician and philosopher of the first century of the Christian era, who was the spiritual preceptor of the greatest Indo-Scythian monarch Kaniska, has been discovered. Asvaghosa was the first great writer of the Mahāyāna School of Buddhism and the author of the first artistic epic in Sanskrit, the *Buddhacarita*. He says that it was not known whether he had written any other great work in poetry though some beautiful songs are attributed to him by the Chinese and the Tibetans. The style of the new poem *Saundarananda-kāvya* is the same as that of the *Buddhacarita*, the sentiments, the religious teaching, the boldness in deviating from the rules of Pāṇini and the versification and the language are the same. This poem deals with the great love

¹ JASB, N S, Vol V, 1909

which Nanda, half-brother of Buddha, bore for his wife Sundarī. Then it describes how Buddha took Nanda to his hermitage and made him a mendicant. Nanda was anxious to return to the world and to his wife, but Buddha always persuaded him to persist in his mendicant life. Now this spiritual struggle between Buddha and his royal disciple forms the central point of interest of this fascinating epic. During the course of this struggle Buddha takes him to heaven and shows that even heaven should not be worthy of one's desire and ends the work by giving a taste of the nectar of *Nirāṇa*. In the first chapter Āsvaghosa gives a description of Kapilavastu as a great hermitage. In the last colophon, Āsvaghosa the author is described as a Bhadanta, as a Śāketaka, meaning born at Śāketa or Ayodhyā and as Suvarnākṣaputra. The same colophon is given in the Tibetan version of Āsvaghosa's *Buddhacarita*. So we see that there is no doubt as to the authorship of these two works *Saundarananda* and *Buddhacarita*. A complete work of *Buddhacarita* in original Sanskrit has not yet been obtained anywhere. Dr. Shāstri says that he at first thought the *Saundarananda-kāvya* to be another name for the lost portion of the *Buddhacarita*, but all his doubts have been dispelled by a comparison of Beal's translation of the Chinese version of the *Buddhacarita* and the *Saundarananda-kāvya*. In 1907 he saw a palm leaf manuscript of this poem. The first line is complete. Several letters of the second have disappeared in the centre, many more of the third and subsequent lines. He then got a paper manuscript from the Librarian of the Nepal Dharmaraj Library and had it copied. Thanks to the efforts of MM. Dr. Shāstri to discover this excellent work of Āsvaghosa, we have it now in toto published in the *Bibliotheca Indica series* (No. 1251, 1910 and re-issued in 1939 No. 1524) of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal.

C. W. Gurner in his Notes on the Text of Āsvaghosa's *Saundarananda*¹ has given his own interpretations of some passages of the *Saundarananda-kāvya* in order to make the meaning clear. Some of his interpretations no doubt help to improve the meaning as in *Saktah* (7th sarga, verse 20) in place of *Saktah*. In the 4th sarga, 14th śloka, he has drawn the readers' attention to the *Raghuramā* (VII, 68) which suggests *vāspena* for *vātena*. In the 13th sarga, verse 22, he suggests *śamvedah* (*śamvedah śamvedo jñānadarśanam*) in place of *śamvegah*.² In the 14th sarga, verse 48, his suggestion to read *kr̥stodgatā* ('straying into the cultivated field') in place of *kr̥stādako* is good (*kr̥stādako gauriva śasyamadhyāt*). In the 9th sarga, verse 34, his reading of *balavān* in place of *karavān* is appropriate. Āsvaghosa has used the word *balavān* in verse 60 of the 15th sarga of the *Saundarananda-kāvya* as pointed out by Gurner—'*Prasūtah puruṣo loke śrutavān balavānapi*'.

Āsvaghosa's predilection for subjects dealing with conversion may be taken to suggest a personal reason. The reverberation of thought may even go so far as to presume that the poet has revealed his own personal history through the career of Nanda which he masterfully delineated.

The doctrine of vacuity (*śūnyatā*) has been alluded to in the *Saundarananda-kāvya*³ which incidentally gives much information on the faith and the same doctrine together with the distinction of absolute and apparent truth is found in another treatise attributed on Chinese authority to Āsvaghosa.⁴

¹ *JRAS*, 1928, Pt. I—January, pp. 131-132.

² *Vavṛgyasyāpi śamvegah śamvedo jñānadarśanāśu*.

³ Cf. Baston, J.A., 1912, I, 79ff., Hultzsch, *ZDMG*, LXXII, 111ff., LXXIII, 229ff.

⁴ *JRAS*, 1914, pp. 747 foll.

Poussin says that H. P. Shāstri and M. A. Baston¹ assume that Āsvaghosa's *Saundarananda-kāvya* is a Mahāyāna work. He does not see any evidence in favour of this view. Whether the author of the *Buddhacarita*, the *Saundarananda* and the *Sūtrālaṅkāra* (translated from the Chinese by E. Huber, Paris, 1908) is also the author of the *Mahāyānaśraddhotpāda* is by no means evident. It is clear that there is no tinge of Mahayanism in the *Saundarananda*.²

The *Śāriputraprakaraṇa* of which only a few passages are extant in a central Asian manuscript is found to be a nine act play, having the story of the conversion of Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana for its theme. It deals with the events which led up to the conversion of the young Maudgalyāyana and Śāriputra by the Buddha and some of the incidents are certain. Śāriputra had an interview with Āsvajit, then he discussed the question of the claims of the Buddha to be a teacher with his friend, the Vidūṣaka, who raised the objection that a Brahmin like his master should not accept the teaching of a Kṣatriya. Śāriputra repels the objection. Maudgalyāyana greets Śāriputra asking him the cause of his glad appearance and learns his reasons. The two go to the Buddha who receives them and who foretells to them that they will be the highest in knowledge of the Buddha's disciples. In this point there is a deliberate and artistic deviation from the ordinary version of the incident followed in the *Buddhacarita* in which the prophecy of the Buddha is addressed not to the disciples themselves but to others of the Buddha's followers. The end of the play is marked by a philosophic dialogue between Śāriputra and the Buddha which includes a polemic against the belief in the existence of a permanent self, it terminates in the praise of his two new disciples by the Buddha and a formal benediction.³

The most remarkable thing regarding the *Śāriputraprakaraṇa* is its close correspondence to the classical type of drama as laid down in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. It is a *prakaraṇa* and has nine acts, which accords perfectly with the rule of the *Śāstra*. The acts bear no titles. This is in accordance with the normal usage. The hero is Śāriputra who corresponds to the Brahmin hero of the *Śāstra* and who is of the noble and calm type. Whether the heroine was a lady or a *hetera* we do not know. The Buddha and his disciples speak Sanskrit and use both prose and verse and the Vidūṣaka speaks Prakrit. The presence of this figure is a remarkable proof of the steady character attained by the drama. There is nothing more absurd than that a youthful ascetic seeking after truth should be troubled by one who is a proper attendant on a wealthy merchant, Brahmin or a minister. Āsvaghosa wrote a type of drama in which the rôle of such characters was too firmly embedded to permit its omission. In the story of the drama now lost to us the Vidūṣaka was introduced for comic relief. He disappears from the last act where Śāriputra had no need as a member of the Buddhist fraternity for a jester. We find a clear discrepancy between Āsvaghosa's practice and that of the later drama only in one point. In the later drama we find that the phrase *ataḥparam api priyam asti* occurs but in the drama of Āsvaghosa this phrase is omitted and the benediction proceeds without prelude with the word spoken by the Buddha 'from now on shall these two ever increase their knowledge, restraining their senses to gain release'. It appears that Āsvaghosa did not recognize the traditional usage. He was

¹ J.A., 1912, I, pp. 79-100.

² Critical notes to *Saundarananda-kāvya* by L. V. Poussin in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, London Institution, Vol. I (1917-1920), pp. 133-140.

³ The conversion of Śāriputra and his friend Maudgalyāyana is also related in the *Mahāvagga* of the *Vinayapitaka*, I (PTS), pp. 39 foll.

acquainted with the usage and he had the power to vary it in case of need. In the *Sāriputraprakaraṇa* we find the allegorical figures of *buddhi* (wisdom), *kīrti* (fame), and *dhṛti* (firmness), appearing and conversing. This is followed by the advent of the Buddha himself adorned with the halo. In this drama we find the *hetāra* named Mūgadhavattī, a Vidūsaka named Kōmudhagandha, a hero named Nāyaka, a Dusta (rogue), a maid-servant, Sāriputra and Maudgalīyāna. The drama is doubtless intended for the purposes of religious edification. It is too fragmentary to show that the author was possessed of humour. The drama alludes to an old garden as the place where part of the action passed as in the *Myśchakatikā* and the house of the *hetāra* served as the scene of another part of the action. The drama shows close agreement with the classical model as the name of Vidūsaka shows. The name of the *hetāra* does not observe the rule exemplified in the *Cārudatta*. The fact that the Dusta and the Nāyaka appear by these titles only has a parallel in the *Cārudatta* and the *Nāgānanda*, a Buddhist drama of Harsa.

In this drama we find the Buddha, his disciples, the hero of the *hetāra* play, and Dhanañjaya speaking Sanskrit which is faulty. The errors in Sanskrit are Prakritisms. There is no doubt that the Sanskrit is excellent and the fragments show traces of able versification and the style of Āśvaghoṣa. The other characters speak Prakrit. Three different forms of Prakrit may be distinguished: the first spoken by the Dusta (rogue), the second by the mysterious Goban and the third by the *hetāra* and the Vidūsaka. The Dusta's speech is generally similar to the Māgadhi of the Prakrit grammarians. The Prakrit of the Goban agrees with the old Māgadhi in having *l* for *r* and *e* in the nominative singular, but it reduces all sibilants to 's'. Other points of similarity are the retention of the dental for cerebral in *vanna*, the lengthening of the vowel before the suffix 'k', the accusative plural neuter in *pupphū* and the infinitive 'bhūṃjīyate'. Śaurasenī is ascribed to the *hetāra* by the Śāstra which gives *prācya* or eastern dialect to the Vidūsaka. There is no softening or omission of intervocalic consonance as in the other Prakrits of the drama. In the words of the *hetāra* the word *Surada* occurs with softening of *t* to *d*. In the dialect of the Dusta we have a form *makkatuho* which may be genitive as in Apabhramśa. It is interesting to study the language of the drama which contains many archaic features of Pali and the dialects of the older inscriptions. The drama of Āśvaghoṣa has no clear evidence of Mahārāstri at all. Ardhmāgadhi is prescribed for slaves (*cetas*), *rājaputras*, and guildsmen (*śreṣṭhino*).¹

The fragments of the two plays have been found by Lüders,² along with those of Āśvaghoṣa's *Sāriputraprakaraṇa*. The first of them appears to be a Buddhist allegory and the second one is concerned with the love affair of a young nāyaka called Somadatta ending probably in his conversion to the Buddhist faith.

The fragment of the allegorical play contains rhymes composed much in Āśvaghoṣa's style. If the surmise that Somadatta's love affair ended in his conversion to Buddhism be correct, the plot of the second play is based on a story which is substantially the same as that of Āśvaghoṣa's *Saundarananda-kāvya*. 'The motif of the lover holding his mistress's mirror' forms a central point in both. But the occurrence of three verses in the *Śragdharā* metre which became popular with later Buddhists, specially those of Kashmir, goes against connecting the second play with any of

¹ Keith, *Sanskrit Drama*, p. 336. Cf. *Uddāna, Nandavagga*, III, 2, pp. 21 foll.

² *Bruchstücke Buddhistischer Dramen* (1911), Sitzungsberichte der Königl. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin.

the three known works of Āsvaghosa. The occurrence of two verses in the *Harinī* metre and one in the *Āryā* goes alike against the presumption as to the second play being a work of Āsvaghosa (Johnston, *The Buddhacarita*, II, Intro, pp xviii ff.) According to Levi, Āsvaghosa was the author of a lyrical drama treating the legends of Rāstrapāla (*JA*, 213, 1928, pp 200 foll.)

Āsvaghosa's indebtedness for phrases and idioms, thoughts and ideas becomes greater and more palpable when we consider his kāvyas in reference to the two epics and the earlier Buddhist works. As regards the Great Epic, Johnston would, for the striking parallels, draw our attention particularly to the story of Nala and the *Bhagavadgītā*. One may observe that it was not only the *Gītā* but the *Gītāmāhātmya* as well which was in the literary background of Āsvaghosa's works. In the *Saundarananda* (XVIII, 11) Nanda says that he had all his desires appeased after the drinking, like a calf from the cow, of the Buddha's teaching, 'with the teats of benevolence, the beautiful dewlap of clear expression, the milk of the good law and the horn of imagination'

Maitristanīm vvañjana-cārusāsnām saddharmadugdhāmpratibhāna-
śrngām |
tavāsmi gām sādhu nīpīya trpta-trseva gāmuttamavatsavarnah ||

This reminds us at once of the stanza 5 in the *Gītāmāhātmya* which reads

sarvopanisado gāvo, dugdhā Gopāla-nandanah |
Pārtho vatsah, sudhū bhoktā, dugdham Gītāmrtam mahat ||

It may be rightly pointed out that some of the verses of the *Saundarananda* are no doubt good sayings. As a piece of poetry the *Saundarananda* excels the *Buddhacarita*. It is not wanting in high poetic excellence. The style is very graceful. It contains beautiful similes which amply testify to the fact that Āsvaghosa was a great poet. It contains some peculiar nominal and verbal forms.¹ In the two kāvyas of Āsvaghosa cognate accusative is found frequently especially with verbs meaning to speak. Upasarga 'prati' has been used with the accusative to denote the various case relations. The locative is used with a number of substantives and adjectives in various case-ideas. The absolute genitive does not occur in the *Saundarananda*. The perfect participle is used both as an adjective and a finite verb. The past participles are generally used with a finite verb. The passive imperative is also found. The conjunctive has sometimes been used ungrammatically. Some phrases and idioms occur frequently in the *Saundarananda*. Finite verbs are often used. Desiderative formations may be noticed. Yamaka is not rare in Āsvaghosa's works (*Pranastavatsyām vva vatsalām gām*). Āsvaghosa adopts the *udgītā* for Canto III of the *Saundarananda*.² The *Suvadanā* and the *Vardhamāna* species of the *upasthitapraupita* are also found.³

The metres employed by Āsvaghosa are very numerous. At the time of Āsvaghosa the distinction between prose and verse, essentially lyric in type, was fixed and the elaborate structure of the verse normally with

¹ JPASB, N S, Vol XXVI, 1930, 181ff

² Koith, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, pp 63-64

³ Cf *Saundarananda*, II, 65, Jacobi, *ZDMG*, XXXVIII, 603

udvegātpunarbhavē manah prandhāya
sa yayau sayitavarāṅganādanāsthah |
nibīrpatinīslayanādvāganamanakṛtamanāh
sarasa vva mathītanālinākalaharṣah ||

four lines of equal length and identic structure rendered it quite unsuitable as a medium of conversation ¹

Gurner ² in dealing with the style of Aśvaghoṣa points out that it is a mixture of naïve effort and artificial embellishment. Aśvaghoṣa often builds up his lines in well-knit descriptive phrases which lack the harmony of the later kāvyas and recall the elaborate descriptive passages in the epic literature. Sometimes he gives a long series of nouns or verbs for the sake of mere emphasis and we notice an incessant stream of *anuprāsa* (synonyms), *yamaka*, and simple puns typical of an early stage in the development of *Alaṅkāra*. His style differs widely from that of the epic but its leading features are undoubtedly epic in character. Thus '*kṛtsnam kṛtam me kṛtakārya kāryam*' ³ '*Kulasya nāndījananaśca nandah*' ⁴ and '*Kācīl-padmavanādetiṣa sapadmā padmalocanā padmavaktraśya pārśve'sya padma-śrīrīvā lasthuṣi*' ⁵ are epic in fashion and as such insipid in comparison with the style of the later kāvyas. Labourer construction and the practice of piling up verbs and nouns as we find in the *Rāmāyaṇa* (IV, xxviii, 27) may be found in Aśvaghoṣa ⁶. The use of hyperboles and rhetorical repetition of the concluding pāda of a śloka are also common in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and in the works of Aśvaghoṣa ⁷. The doubling of the gerundive verb ⁸ has its parallels in the epic ⁹.

The grammatical usage of Aśvaghoṣa stands between that of the epics and of Kālidāsa. The self-expression in Aśvaghoṣa's poetry gave the introspective thought a place in literary Sanskrit ¹⁰.

Although the Jātaka version of the story of Rśvaśrṅga is almost the same as that in the great epic, Aśvaghoṣa's allusion to it with the express mention of the king's daughter as Śāntā by her name, ¹¹ presupposes the legend in the two epics. The tradition of Tāla-jangha as alluded to by Aśvaghoṣa differed from that in a stanza incorporated in Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra*

rakto gīrmūrdham Menakāyām
kāmatmakatvācca sa Tāla-janghaḥ |
pādena Viśvāvasunā sarosam vajrena
hantāla ivābhijaghne ||

(S, VII, 39)

kopāḥ Janamejaya Brāhmanesu vikrāntaḥ
Tāla-janghaś ca Bhṛgīḥ
(*Arthaśāstra*, I, 6)

The stanzas cited in the *Arthaśāstra*, I, 6, refer to the destruction of Dāṇḍakya Bhoja and Karāla Vaideha on account of a lascivious attempt (kāmat) on a Brahmin maiden, while the Jātakas preserve a tradition which accounts differently for the destruction of king Dāṇḍakī. It is yet to be ascertained what were precisely the sources of the legends of Hiranyaretaś and Svābhā, Indra and Ahalyā, Sūrya and Saranyū, Vaivasvata and Agni,

¹ Keith, *Sanskrit Drama*, p. 90

² JPASB, N S, Vol XXIII (1927), pp 347-67

³ *Saundarananda*, XVIII, 10

⁴ *Ibid*, IV, 6

⁵ *Buddhacarita*, IV, 36

⁶ *Saundarananda* VI, 34, *Buddhacarita*, V, 42, *Saundarananda*, XVII, 59

⁷ Cf. *Buddhacarita*, IX, 68, VIII, 46, XI, 28, *Rāmāyaṇa*, III, XXXVII, 37-54; V, xli, 18

⁸ *Saundarananda*, VI, 27

⁹ *Rāmāyaṇa*, IV, XXVIII, 22

¹⁰ JPASB, N S, Vol XXIII, 1927, pp 347-67

¹¹ *Saundarananda*, VII, 34

Vasīṣṭha and Akṣamālā, Parāśara and Kālī, Dvaipāyana and a harlot in Kāśī, Aṅgiras and Sarasvatī, Dilīpa, Kāśyapa and a divine damsel, Aṅgada and Yamunā, Gādhin and Ghṛtācī, Sthūlāsiras and Rambhā, Pramadvārā and a serpent, Budha's son and Urvaśī, Jahnu and his wife, Śantanu and Gangā, Somavarman, Saunandakam and Urvaśī, Bhīmaka-Senāka and his wife, Janamejaya and Śantanu's widow, Pāṇdu and Mādri, alluded to by Āśvaghosa in his kāvyas.¹ Similarly one has got to find out the source of the allusion to the cause of the destruction of the Kurus, Andhaka-Vṛṣṇis, and the Mekhala-Dandakas.

If the *Buddhacarita* be the earlier of the two kāvyas of Āśvaghosa, as it undoubtedly is, two questions are apt to arise in this connection (1) What is the earlier model on which it was based? (2) Whether or not its Sanskrit text in Cowell's edition represents the Indian original of its Chinese version bearing the title of *Fo-sho-hing-tsun-king*?² It is easy to answer the second question in the affirmative. By comparing the English renderings of the Sanskrit text and the Chinese version none can help coming to the conclusion that if the Indian original of the Chinese version differed anywhere from the former, it must have been on some minor points of variation in readings.

As to the earlier model, it is found in neither of the two great Sanskrit epics nor in any other Brahmanical or Jaina work. Our attention has been drawn to the stanzas constituting the prologue to the *Nālaka Sutta* in the *Sutta-nipāta*, suggesting that this prologue of which the composition was a matter of accident served as the earlier literary model for a consistent self-conscious attempt on the part of Āśvaghosa for the production of a magnificent kāvya on the life of the Buddha.³

The original title of the *Nālaka Sutta*, as given in Asoka's Bhabru Edict, is *Moneyya Sutta*. The prologue (*Vatthugāthā*), while supplying the historical context to this discourse, incidentally narrates the visit of Rṣi Asita, the Indian Simeon, to Kapilavastu to see the newly born Bodhisattva in the house of king Śuddhodana, and to predict his future greatness as a Perfect Buddha. The self-same theme is poetically dealt with in the *Mahāvastu* (II, pp 33-43), as well as in the *Lalitavistara* (VII). This is treated also in a magnificent kāvya like the *Buddhacarita*.⁴ So far as the *Mahāvastu* is concerned, the mixed Sanskrit counterpart of the Pali *Nālaka Sutta* is presented apart from the story of Asita. Three stages in the development of the Sutta concerned are apparent. In the first stage it passed off till the time of Asoka as the *Moneyya Sutta* without the historical context bringing in Nālaka as the interlocutor. In the second, it came to bear, with the context supplied, the title of *Nālaka Sutta*. And in the third the prologue appeared with the Nālaka context expanded into a distinct poem on the rôle of Asita in the life of the Buddha.

The three poets dealt independently with the same theme with a common Buddhist legend behind them, producing three poems of distinctive literary effect. The prose legend which is met with in the *Jātaka Nidānakathā*⁴ may be treated as a common presupposition of them all.

¹ *Saundarananda*, VII, 25-45, *Buddhacarita*, IV, 79.

² Barua, *Old Brāhmī Inscriptions in the Udayagiri and Khandagiri Caves*, p 172.

³ See J. Muir's instructive article—*Asita and Buddha or the Indian Simeon in I.A.*, 1878, Sept., Bapat's edition of the *Sutta-nipāta*, p 102.

⁴ Fausboll's *Jātaka*, I, pp 54f. It is not claimed that the legend as narrated in the *Nidānakathā* is itself anterior to the Prologue to the *Nālaka Sutta*. All that is suggested above is that what the form of the earlier prose legend might be, can be inferred from the Nidāna version.

Pali *Nālaka Sutta*—*vatthugāthā*, 8-9, *Sutta-nipāṭa* (PTS), p. 133

Tato kumāram jalitam iva suvannam
ukkāmukhe va sukusala-sampahattham |
dadallamānam siriya anomavannam
dassesu puttam Asitavhayassa Sakyā ||
Disvā kumāram sikhim iva pajjalantam
tārāsabham va nabhasigamam visuddham |
suriyam tapantam sarada-r-iv'abbhamuttam
ānandajāto vipulam alattha pītim ||

Mahāvastu, II, p. 38, vv. 52-54

Svāgatamanurāgatam te supṭo
tāvat privadarāsi kumāro |
diaksvasi tvam prativibuddham
vighraha iva jātārūpasya ||
Pratibuddham ca kumāram praveṇyam
astamangalakṛtīyam |
upanāmayi mātusmā ghanavivaiakṛtam va ādityam ||
Drstvāna tam rśvaro kundalamiva
pattakambalanyastam |
abhyutthahitva tvaritam amkena
pratīcchati kumāram ||

Lalitavistara, VII, p. 110

Sādhu svāgatu yācase kilamitaḥ prito'smi te darśanāt
Eso'ssu sayitaḥ kumāra varado draṣṭum na śakyo'dhunā |
Sādhu tāva muhūrtamāgama ihā yaddiakshyase nirmalam
Candram vā yatha pūrnāmāsi vimalam tārāganairmanditam ||
Yad cāsau pratibuddhaḥ sāratthivaraḥ paṇipūrṇa Candraprabhaḥ
Tadarājā pratigrhya vanhuvapusam sūryātirekaprabham |
hantā paśya rse nrdevamahitam hemāgī avimbhopamam
Asito drsta ca tasya tou sucaranau cakrāmkitou śobhanau ||

The metre used in the stanzas cited from the *Vatthugāthā* conforms more to the Rucira than to the Praharsinī variety of the Atijagati class. That employed in the stanzas from the *Mahāvastu* must be broadly classed under Pamkti, while the metre of the *Lalitavistara* gāthās stands midway between the Brhati and Pamkti classes. The metre of the stanzas from the *Buddhacarita* is obviously an Upajāti variety of Tristubh. Although the Pali stanzas are in the Atijagati metre and those of the *Buddhacarita* in the Upajāti, in wording, general movement, music, and rhythm, there is a closer resemblance between the *Vatthugāthā* and the *Buddhacarita*.

The Pali lines—

Tato kumāram jalitam va suvannam
ukkāmukhe va sukusala-sampahattham |
dadallamānam siriya anomavannam

were clearly in the background of Āśvaghoṣa's lines

Buddhacarita, III, 23

Dr̥ṣṭvā ca tam rājasutam striyastā jājvalyamānam vapuṣā śriyā ca

Ibid., I, 55.

Tam Brahmaṇid Brahmanidam jvalantam Brāhyā śriyā cava
tapaśśriyā ca

Upajāti is the metre which is abundantly used by Āsvaghosa in his *Buddhacarita*. The monotonous effect of its trochaic cadence in a continuous narrative is sought to be effected by the changes on the possible variations of rhythm. The other metres employed in the two kāvyas consist of Anuṣṭubh, Vamśastha, Rucirā, Praharsini, Vasantatilakā, Śarabhā, Mālinī, Śikharinī, Kusumitalatāvellitā, Śārdūlavikṛitā and Suvadanā among the Samāvṛttas, Vyoginī or Sundarī, Anpachandasika, Aparavaktra or Vastūhya and Puṣpitāgrā among the Ardhasamāvṛttas, and Udgatā and Upasthitapracupita among the Viśamāvṛttas. An example of Sālinī is met with in the *Śāriputraprakaraṇa*. Bharata's *Nāṭya-śāstra* is the only other work where we have a description of the metre called Śarabhā. Āsvaghosa has skilfully employed Udgatā and Upasthitapracupita among difficult metres. The employment of the Vipulā in the ślokas contained in the two kāvyas, which fell out of use in classical kāvya, keeps the works nearer to the *Great Epic* in which it is common enough. The metre Mandākrāntā does not occur in the *Saundarananda* and in the *Buddhacarita*. Fifteen metres have been used in the *Saundarananda*. Āsvaghosa's style is of the Vaidarbha type.¹ It is simple. Āsvaghosa is at his best in simple and elegant description. The proportion of Vipulās to Pathyās about 11·7 per cent is much lower than this in the Nala and slightly less, according to Hopkins,² than the general average of the *Mahābhārata*, while it is more than half of the corresponding figure in Kālidāsa's *Raghuvamśa*.³

Āsvaghosa's treatment of the legend of Rsi Asita in his *Buddhacarita* takes us beyond the stage in the development of poetry which is represented by the gāthās in the Pali *Vaṭṭhugāthā*, the *Lalitavistara* and the *Mahāvastu*. The same conclusion is to be drawn from the fully developed character of the prosodical system of kāvya in Āsvaghosa's poems. The question arises—was such a development of Sanskrit kāvyas historically possible in the first century A D ?

The writing of kāvyas in conformation to the definite rules of prosody and canons of kāvya poetry in the Kusāna age is not historically an impossibility. The Junāgarh Rock Inscription of Rudradāman I dated A D 150 bears a clear testimony to the development of the science of rhetoric and prosody, and no less that of poetics. It is here for the first time that we have the following account of the proficiency of a ruling prince in these sciences and arts: *Sphuta-laghu-madhura-citra-kānta-śabda-samayodārā-lamkṛta-gadya-padya-kāvya-vidhāna-prarīnena pramāṇa-mānonmāna-svargatī-varṇa-sārasatvādibhiḥ parama-lakṣaṇa-vyamaṇuair-upeta-kānta-mūrtinā-svayam-adhigata-Mahākṣatrapa-nāmnā*.

The *kāvya-vidhāna* of this dated epigraphic record is the same word as the *kāvya-dhāra* of our poet. Here, however, we are not concerned with Indian poets in general but with a Buddhist poet in particular. When precisely was classical Sanskrit adopted by the Buddhists as the vehicle of expression ?

Since Professor D R Bhandarkar seriously doubted the rise of the Buddhist sects before the reign of Aśoka on the evidence of his Schism Pillar Edict, it is maintained⁴ that the names of the sects appear in the inscriptions that date from the first century B C to the second or third century A D. According to the *Dīpavamsa*,⁵ each sect with its rise changed the original texts, their arrangement, language and interpretation. The

¹ Keith, *Hist. of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 60.

² *Great Epic of India*, pp. 223-24.

³ Johnston, *Acts of the Buddha*, Introduction, p. lxiii ff.

⁴ Barua, *Asoka and His Inscriptions*, Pt. I, Ch. IX.

⁵ Oldenberg Ed., V, vv. 32-50.

language of the *gāthās* in the *Mahāvastu* and the *Lalitavistara* is a kind of mixed Sanskrit, Prakrit with Sanskritic tendency or Sanskrit retaining its Prakrit legacy. According to a Tibetan Buddhist tradition, the text of the *Prātimokṣa-sūtra* was recited in Apabhramśa by the Sammitiyas, in Sanskrit by the Sarvāstivādins, in a corrupt (mixed) dialect by the Mahāsaṅghikas and in Paisāci by the Śhāviras. These are precisely the four languages which find mention in the *Mahāvastu* (p. 64). The bearing of this evidence on the point at issue is still uncertain. The utmost the tradition wants to say is that the Sarvāstivādins preferred to have their scriptural texts in Sanskrit. But the prose portions of both the *Lalitavistara* and the *Mahāvastu*, the former of which was a work of the Sarvāstivādins and the latter that of the Mahāsaṅghikas, go to establish that from a certain date the prevailing tendency of all the Buddhist sects was to Sanskritize the texts from an earlier diction which was allied more or less to Pali and Prakrit. The evidence of the various inscriptions in which the Buddhist sects are mentioned goes only to show that the official language of India tended, as time went on, to be more and more Sanskritic from an earlier Prakrit stage until it was completely replaced by Sanskrit throughout India in the Gupta age.¹ Such a culmination of the process of linguistic transformation in official documents was undoubtedly reached for the first time in the Junāgaṛh Rock Inscription of Rudradāman I in the middle of the second century A.D. But the Sanskrit *prāsaṣṭis* (royal panegyrics) composed by the court poets in the metres and style of kāvya date from the third or fourth century A.D. This fact must be taken into consideration in discussing the date of the kāvyas of Aśvaghoṣa.

Johnston in his comments on the language and style of Aśvaghoṣa has sought to establish that the rules of Pāṇini, which are generally adhered to, are not sufficient to account for certain peculiar grammatical forms. Aśvaghoṣa's acquaintance with a Dhātupāṭha is rendered possible by the *Buddhacarita*, XI, 70, illustrating nine senses of the root $\sqrt{av}$

Athendraraddhryava śaśvadarkarad
gunairava śreya thāva gāmava |
avāyurāyavava satsutān ava śriyaśca
rājannava dharmamāt-manah ||

But the *Saundarananda*, verse XII, 10, as piquantly observed by Johnston, 'refers to the threefold use of *astī* as a particle for the past, present and future,' the rule playing a part in the famous Buddhist controversy over the reality of the past and future, but not being found in Pāṇini or the orthodox grammars.²

triṣu kāleṣu sarveṣu nipāto 'stiriva smṛtaḥ

In instances where, as Johnston observes, Pāṇini's rules are not complied with, the odd forms or constructions in Aśvaghoṣa's works have their parallels in the epics, while a few usages are peculiar to Buddhism. There are several examples in Pali, for instance, of the form of compound typified by Aśvaghoṣa's *udākṣyamānarūpa*, cf. Pali *taramānarūpa*.³ The use of the phrase, *prāg eva* (Pali *pag eva*), as equivalent to *kim punar* is primarily Buddhist. The expression, *yenāśramas tena*,⁴ conforms to the Pali idiom, *yena bhagavā tena*. The employment of the enclitics, *me* and *te* as instrumental is frequent in Pali works and Asoka's inscriptions, it is known as

¹ R. G. Bhandarkar, *JBRAS*, 1901, Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, p. 151.

² *Acts of the Buddha*, Intro., p. lxxviii.

³ *Sutta-nipāta* (PTS), 417.

⁴ *Buddhacarita*, VI, 65.

well to the epics but not generally sanctioned in classical Sanskrit. The method of comparison by relatives, e.g. *duḥkham eva viśiṣyate*, is not infrequently met with in the Mahāyāna Sūtras. The use of *asmi* for *aham* may be accounted for by *asmi* in the Pali word *asmimāna*, equivalent to *ahamkāra* and *ātmābhīmāna*. We may not agree with Johnston in thinking that *pūrvatama*¹ is a mistake for *pūrvatana*, the archaic *pūrvatama* being met with in the *Lalitavistara* gāthās. (Cf. Pali *Purimatara*, *Purimatame*). Like other Buddhist writers, Āsvaghosa is addicted to the case-ending *taḥ* in place of the ablative or instrumental, a frequent use of which is with a verb in the sense of knowing or understanding, e.g. *śubhato gacchasi*,² *drastavyam bhūtataḥ*,³ cf. Pali *bhūtam bhūtato*, *abhūtam abhūtato*. His fondness for the cognate accusatives is due to the earlier and epic usages. His kāvyas are rich in verbal forms in which the tenses are normally employed but no distinction is made between the perfect, imperfect and aorist. He often places, for the sake of emphasis, the conjunction *ca* and the interjection *hi* towards the end of a sentence. His works are 'pleasantly free from overgrown compounds' and the compounds used by him are 'never filled out with padding', though some of them are irregular.

In Āsvaghosa's vocabulary one may trace with Johnston the Rgvedic use of the word *divya* for *agni*,⁴ and verb *śrī* in the sense of 'emit (heat)',⁵ and the epithet *Aurvaśeya* for *Vaśiṣṭha*.⁶

In connection with the ceremony of measuring out *soma* he makes use of the plain root $\sqrt{mā}$ without compounding with the prefix *vi* or *ud*,⁷ the instances of which occur in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. It is again the Brāhmaṇas that may sanction the use of the words *nvarta*⁸ and *vimad*⁹ in the sense of 'grow sober'. The reference to Prajāpati's act of creation by *tapas*¹⁰ points to the same conclusion.

The employment of *proksana* and *abhyukṣan* which is indicative of his knowledge of the finer points of ritual goes to prove his indebtedness to the *Śrautasūtras*.

The two stanzas, cited below, betray undoubtedly their historical connection with the two ślokas in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*.

śaśiśaḥ kapilaścheha pratibuddha itī smṛtiḥ |
saputrah pratibuddhaśca Prajāpatiḥocyate ||

B, XII, 21.

Yo yonim yonum adhitusthatyeko viśvāni rūpāni yonīś ca
sarvāḥ |
raṣaṃ kapilam sastam agre jñānair bibharti jñāyamānaṃ ca
paśyet ||

Śvetāśvatara, V, 2

Pravṛtti-duḥkhasya ca tasya loke tṛṣṇādayo dosaganā nimuttam |
naiveśvaro na prakṛtina kālo nāpi svabhāvo na vidhir
yadrecchā ||

S, XVI, 17

Kālāḥ svabhāvo nīyatir yadrecchā bhūtāni yonih puruṣa itī
cintyam |
samyoga eṣām natvātmabhāvāt ātmāpyanīśaḥ sukha-duḥkha-
hetoh ||

Śvetāśvatara, I, 2.

¹ *Buddhacarita*, XIII, 10

² *Ibid*, XIII, 44

³ *Buddhacarita*, IX, 9

⁴ *Ibid*, XV, 44

⁵ *Buddhacarita*, XI, 71

⁶ *Ibid*, LX, 30

⁷ *Saundarananda*, VIII, 48

⁸ *Saundarananda*, I, 2

⁹ *Saundarananda*, II, 36

¹⁰ *Buddhacarita*, II, 51

One may correctly observe with Johnston that though many of the legends alluded to are to be found in the *Mahābhārata*, they are not quite in the same form. Many of the stories referred to by Āsvaghōṣa are not to be found in the *Mahābhārata*. There must, therefore, have been some other literature dealing with these legends, possibly often in a kāvya form, which is now lost for ever.¹ The Jātaka representation of certain legends,² probably based on an earlier form of the Great Epic, goes to show that there grew up different legends, obviously in a ballad or kāvya form, about certain kings, nations, and personages, speaking of their destruction or degradation but accounting for it in different ways.³

Besides many Buddhist technical terms and words peculiar to Buddhism, Āsvaghōṣa freely employs several terms and expressions derived from the terminology of Sāṃkhya-Yoga, Rājadharmā and other Indian sciences of which the source, among others, was the Śāntiparva of the *Mahābhārata*. Such proper names as Samkrandana, Lekhaṣabha, Māyā and Ambara, and such ordinary words as *ari*,⁴ *avasanga*, *arhavat*,⁵ *upakara*, *drpti*, and *vallari*,⁶ all employed in special senses are only to be found in the lexica and not in any previous literature which is now known. The special kāvya vocabulary which grew richer and richer from the days of Kālidāsa is traceable in Āsvaghōṣa's poems only in their initial stages.⁷

Turning to Āsvaghōṣa's style, we cannot fail to appreciate the difficulty which he created for himself by trying to employ the literary art for purposes so incompatible as those of the story-teller, preacher, poet and scholar. Johnston characteristically observes 'Āsvaghōṣa is a writer of baffling contrasts, on the one hand the literary artist as story-teller, preacher and poet, on the other the scholar anxious to conform with all the rules and to parade his knowledge. The possession of good qualities implies a liability to the corresponding defects, and among a people who treasured intelligence and learning it is not surprising to find some who lapsed at times, like the Buddhist poet, into pedantry. For if his matter is excellent, his manner is often disconcerting.'⁸ A blend of such contradictions and opposites in Āsvaghōṣa marks out his singular greatness and genius.

The kāvya poetry as typified by the two works of Āsvaghōṣa follows a method of construction of the verses which is diametrically opposite to that in the Ākhyānas and Epics. In the *Rāmāyana*, for instance, almost the entire composition is in a kind of śloka metre having an even flow without any clear division. In it monotony is sought to be relieved by endless variations of rhythm, and the verses appear only as parts of a whole, and not as units by themselves, while frequent repetitions and recurrences of the stock phrases and the slow movement of the story are made to mitigate the monotony and tension of listening. In the kāvyas of Āsvaghōṣa, on the other hand, each verse is treated as 'a separate unit by itself both grammatically and in its sense and it is constituted of four clearly articulated pādas, in which cross reference and similarity of framework serve equally to bind the whole together and to delimit it from the contiguous verses.' Āsvaghōṣa occasionally demonstrates how a verse

¹ Johnston, *Acts of the Buddha*, p. xlvii.

² See allusions in the *Sarabhaṅga J* (522) and *Samkuccha J* (530).

³ Barua, *The Arthashastra: A Blend of Old and New in the Bhārata-Kaumudī*, I, pp. 93ff.

⁴ In the sense of 'mountain'.

⁵ Meaning 'man'.

⁶ Meaning 'feather'.

⁷ Cf. such special words as *praeṇyidha*, *pratyātānā*, *karāla* and *nyghna*, Johnston, *op. cit.*, p. lxxix.

⁸ *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, p. lxxxvii.

can be constructed on an epic basis. Or he takes a common phrase to build round it a complicated pun. The treatment of each verse as a separate unit *per se* might in a sense be regarded as a reversion to the practice of the *Rgveda*. It might historically be due to an older tradition of *kāvya* which developed in the country under the aegis of the ballads or on the lines of the reflective and didactic *gāthās*. Some earlier instances of this may perhaps be found in the *Psalm of the early Buddhist brothers and sisters*, or even in some of the Jātaka poems.

This *kāvya* method underwent further development in the classical stage. The principle that each verse is a separate unit asserted itself later. In Kālidāsa we notice an exception in so far as he 'occasionally constructs a verse on parallel or contrasted *pādas*', while ordinarily his rhythm is based on the verse as a whole and not on the individual *pādas*. Later poets enthusiastically followed his practice with the result that a *kāvya* epic came to be little more than a collection of miniature poems loosely strung on the thread of the story.

As a pioneer, Āsvaghosa, appears to have faced certain difficulties in building up a poem out of a number of stanzas sharply demarcated from their neighbours. Effective narration was indispensable as an art in his *kāvyas* and as the means of keeping the readers' minds directed to the real issue, especially when he had to convey in the form of poetry a definite message of the religion he ardently professed. The narration of the story was of secondary interest only to the classical writers who had no such mission through poetry beyond the appeal of their art. So the problem to him was—how to maintain the unity vital to his purpose. This he sought apparently to achieve by articulating his poems as clearly as his verse. The procedure adopted led him to (a) calculate with care the proportion of space to be allotted to each episode, and (b) to group together the verses by various devices into units, each dealing with a single topic. The expedients tried were either the simple way of doing this by change of metre, or employing *yamaka* to mark the end of a period, or constructing a whole series of verses on a similar scheme with a refrain or with a parallel set of similes.

The successful handling of comparisons is the main feature of Āsvaghosa's technique. For without comparisons (*upamās*) as the main ingredient of rhetoric it is not possible to communicate the emotional content of facts in long narrative poems such as the *Buddhacarita* and the *Saundarananda*. The reader's imagination is sought to be stimulated ordinarily by the employment of what the *Ālankārikas* call *rakrokti* or indirect expression in which the incompleteness of the parallel is a powerful aid to suggestiveness. In Āsvaghosa's case, the *rakrokti* itself consists of comparison of some kind. He excels other Sanskrit poets in his fondness of similes drawn from a wide range of literature and natural phenomena.¹

Gurner² has collected references from the *Saundarananda* and *Buddhacarita* to establish that the Sanskrit poetry of Āsvaghosa is characterized by the psychological interest evinced in many similes employed by him. It is not uncommon for a poet to draw a simile from natural objects for mental experience, from moving water to indecision, for instance. And the reverse process of using the mental experience as the source of the simile is not unknown even to the Sanskrit epic. The frequency, however, with

¹ In this connection it is interesting to read Mrs Rhys Davids' note on 'Similes from the *Nikāyas*', published in *JPTS*, 1888.

² *The Psychological Simile in Āsvaghosa* by C W Gurner, *JASB*, N.S., Vol. XXVI, 1930, pp. 175-180, S, IV, v 42, B, IX, v 71, S, VIII, v 5, S, X, v 42, S, XII, v 33, S, XIII, v 5, S, XIII, v 6, S, XV, v 66, S, XV, v 67, B, XIII, v 61, B, VIII, v 76.

which it occurs in Āsvaghosa gives quite a special note to his kāvya and one may fairly suggest that it is largely through Āsvaghosa's influence that this type of simile found a place in later kāvya, including of course that of Kālidāsa.

Gurner draws our attention to a fully developed passage in the use of the psychological simile to describe external action¹ Āsvaghosa has sacrificed his descriptive power to his psychological and didactic interest. This is clear from the account of Buddha's attack by Māra and his army. The simile from impotent passion is introduced primarily for its didactic value on a favourite Buddhist theme. A purely descriptive passage in the *Saundarananda* of animal life in the thickets of the Mountain-side has unexpectedly two illustrations (X, 11 and 14) of a more subtle and less didactic psychological significance. However subtle they may be, similes of this kind from psychology to an observation of nature are handicapped in point of literary satisfaction by their inverse character. The cardinal point in Āsvaghosa's psychology, especially in its ethical bearing, lies in that distinction between the self and senses, or between the mind and senses, which is the moral background of kāvya poetry.

It is far from being the case with Āsvaghosa that interest in human affection is absorbed entirely by the theme of passion, but the quieter emotional experiences of ordinary friendship present fewer opportunities for the psychological simile. Ingratitude has been mentioned as a simile for desertion of the home. The self-expression in Āsvaghosa's poetry gave the introspective thought a place in literary Sanskrit.

The similes of allegorical character are also in the writings of Āsvaghosa. The conception of the fire or sea of sorrow, so common in epic literature, has been given a distinctly ethical value by Āsvaghosa when he expounds Buddhist doctrine². For the sea of sorrow compare *Rāmāyana* (II, lix, 27-31) with *Buddhacarita* (I, 75). Other types of similes (e.g. purely picture similes) are also found in the writings of Āsvaghosa, e.g. the white-robed maiden asleep with her flute³. He is nevertheless indebted to the epics for his stock similes and *rūpakas* like the lotus and creeper, sun, moon and the stars, lightning and clouds, etc.⁴. The similes from the domain of consciousness and conduct, which Āsvaghosa uses so frequently, are also scattered in the *Rāmāyana*⁵. The obscure grammatical simile in *Saundarananda* (XII, 9, 10) is imitated by Kālidāsa⁶.

According to the Indian works on poetics, the similes or comparisons are either purely verbal without poetic emotion or substantial with poetic emotion. If merely verbal, their appeal lies to the intellect. Āsvaghosa's comparisons are not generally adapted to the emotional needs. His grammatical similes are laboured and pedantic. Some of them are far-fetched conceits. Those of the psychological type seem to have an academic aura about them⁶. Those drawn from ordinary life and are effectively employed for moral or didactic purposes are the similes to which normally a preacher has recourse. The *rūpaka type*, which is commonly met with in the epics but which became obsolete in later ages, is palpably artificial in spite of its majestic eloquence. The simplest comparisons, drawn from nature, are often the best, even where they are used pedantically, they are not lacking in the freshness of observation.

¹ B, XIII, 48-51.

² Vide *Buddhacarita* IX, 29.

³ *Ibid.*, V, 49.

⁴ Cf. *Rāmāyana*, V, xxviii, 12, V, xxix, 1, VI, lxiii, 3, 6.

⁵ *Raghu*, XV, 9, C. W. Gurner, *JPASB* (N S.), Vol. XXIII (1927), pp. 347-67.

⁶ *JASB*, 1930, pp. 175-180.

As for other rhetorical figures, Āsvaghosa makes much of distributive phrases where one has the zeugma of one verb with two nouns, or that of one verb with two pairs of nouns, or that of two verbs with one noun, or that of one adjective with two dependent nouns. The distributive compounds occur frequently, and rarely the numerical riddles and Kālidāsa's favourite figure, *arthāntaranyāsa*.

His love of recurring sounds is different in its character from that displayed by the later poets who employ *Yamaka* in all its varieties. Either he employs an ordinary form of *Yamaka* where there is the repetition of two syllables at the end of a *pāda*, or where it approaches rhyme, one has the repetition of the same syllables at the end of a *pāda*, either where a verse is repeated without alteration to enforce a comparison, or where, as in a number of cases, the same syllables are repeated in verse, usually with difference of meaning but not in emphatic positions. In repeating sounds, one of his favourite practices is to take the leading word in a sentence and form a vocative compound using this word as the base, e.g. *nihsamāyaya samāyaya me* (S, XVIII, 8). This turn of speech is reserved almost entirely for the Buddha. His leaning to repetitions of sounds led to experiments in rhyme with their several instances in the *Saundarananda*. This poem affords instances where there is a rhyme inside the *pāda*, those where the rhyme covers two *pādas*, and others where we have rhymes at the end of all the *pādas*. The stanza (S, VIII, 32) in which four out of the six words end with *madā* and two with *pradāh*, the recurrent beat of rhyme is little in accord with the mood of epic poetry.

The classical poets of India differ from Āsvaghosa in their sensitiveness to variations of sound and delicate combinations which are a source of never-failing joy. In matching, however, the sense with the sound, some of them have followed a way that is decidedly lacking in subtlety, and sometimes manufactured verses with a limited number of consonants or even only one. The nearest approach to this ingenuous trick is to be found only in a solitary stanza in *Buddhacarita*, XII, 93 —

apārapārasamsārapāram prepsurapārayat

Āsvaghosa's hold on the intricacies of rhythm is amply attested by his success in the employment of *Upajāti* in long stretches without causing tedium to the reader. His verse is generally melodious, and occasional lines are particularly happy in the collocation of consonants. But he seldom hesitates to subordinate the agreeableness of sound to the display of learning. Sometimes he uses a word such as *ajñhladat*, the ill sound of which is disapproved by Bhāmaha.

Āsvaghosa also uses words in more meanings than one sometimes in a recondite fashion to baffle the reader. In the ironical application of this method one has a clear anticipation of the way of Indian drama. I-tsing rightly observed that Āsvaghosa 'clothes manifold ideas in few words, for, besides this habitual use of words in two or more meanings, every single word almost in his poems is pregnant and should be given its full value in translation'.

In Cowell's estimate, Āsvaghosa by his technique was to Kālidāsa what Ennius was to Vergil. Johnston will rather seek Āsvaghosa's European analogy in Milton,¹ equally a scholar and equally fond of displaying his learning, who similarly sought to express his religion within the limits of an epic. His insistence on symmetry, his exposure of the framework and his non-functional decoration are characteristic of early work, not of a time

¹ *Buddhacarita*, II, Intro, xcv

when art excels in the skill of concealing the art. In other words, he is primitive alike in his poetry, religion and philosophy. He reveals himself as a man of artistic temperament and strong passion who is capable of delighting in everything that appeals to the senses but finds no suitable foothold anywhere till he seeks refuge in Buddhism. All his writings are informed by the zeal of the converse. By his intense conviction of the importance of his message he carries away the reader of another faith and alien civilization. The inadequacy of his philosophy is no bar to the persuasiveness of his religious appeal. Admirable is his skill in narration, but the real appeal lies in the spontaneity of his overflowing emotion. There are two sources of this outflow of emotion: (1) his ardent devotion to the person of the Buddha, and (2) his keen sense of the impermanence of all things mundane and the ephemeral character of all ordinary joys of life. Every line of his two poems flows with the urge of his faith, and his religious zeal enlivens the driest passages. The second can account for the passion with which he denounces the ordinary joys of life. This is due not merely to a revulsion of feeling but also to a strong internal conviction of the truth of what he speaks. It is only when he begins to deal with that which lies at the core of his heart, forgetting his learning and his rhetorical and pedantic tricks.

The two sources of poetic emotion, viz. the profound veneration for the person of Buddha and the keen sense of the impermanence of all things and the utter worthlessness of all worldly goods, are in no way peculiar to Aśvaghoṣa. For the same are precisely the sources of the emotion which overflows in the psalms or inspired verses of the early Buddhist brothers and sisters. In Canto XVIII Aśvaghoṣa comes out just as a psalmist when he pays through the mouth of Nanda the following personal tribute to the Master:

Yā drstīśalyo hrdayāvagādhah
prabho bhr̥ṣam māmātudatsutikṣṇah |
tvadvākyasamdāśmukhena me
sa samudhrtah śalyahrteva śalyah || v 7

Katham kathābhāvagato'smi yena
chunnah sa nihsamsāva samśavo me |
tvacchāsanātsatpathamāgato'smi
sudeśikasyeva pathi pranastah || v 8

Kṣyam gatam janma mrastajanman-
saddharmacaryāmuṣito'smi samyak |
kṛtsnam kṛtam me kṛtakārya kāryam
lokesu bhūto'smi na lokadharmā || v 10

Thera Vangīsa, for instance, pays a similar tribute to the Buddha in the stanzas cited below:

Cando yathā vigatavalāhake nabhe
virocati vīṭamalo va bhānumā |
evam pi Aṅgīrasa tvam mahāmuni
atirocasi yāsasā sabbalokam ||

Theragāthā (PTS), v 1252

Ayam añjali pacchumo suppanāmito,
mā mohayi jānam anomapañña |
parovaram ariyadhammam viditvā
mā mohayi jānam anomaṇṇiya ||

vārim yathā ghammanighmatatto
vācābhikankhāmi sutam pavassa |
yadattuyam brahmacariyam acāri
Kappāyano kacce'ssa tam amogham ||

vv 1272 and 1273

The influence of an earlier version of Vālmiki's *Rāmāyana* is to be sought, according to Johnston, in language, ideas, similes and other rhetorical figures. The *kāvya*s of Āsvaghosa and Vālmiki's *Rāmāyana*, IV, 35 7, refer in the same way to the story of the disturbance of Viśvāmitra's austerities by the *apsarā*, Ghṛtācī, while in the *Bālakāṇḍa* which is presumably added later to the epic narrates the story in some detail replacing Ghṛtācī by Menakā. The Chinese work called *Fo-pen-hsing-chi-ching* presupposes a text of the *Buddhacarita* in which Menakā, exactly as in the *Bālakāṇḍa* narration, takes the place of Ghṛtācī. An earlier Buddhist poet composed the story of Vessantara and Maddi in verse meaning to substitute it for the inspiring story of Rāma and Sītā, to offer in other words, the canonical *Vessantara Jātaka* as a substitute for the widely popular *Rāmāyana*. As suggested elsewhere¹ the popularity of the most elegant form of the Anu stubh or Śloka metre as developed in this epic led the earlier Buddhist poets to employ the same in such other later Pali canonical works as the *Buddhavaṃsa*, the *Cariyāpitaka* and the *Apadāna*.

Here a very important question arises—whether or not there was an earlier form of the *Buddhacarita* composed throughout, like the *Rāmāyana*, in the Anustubh metre before Āsvaghosa changed it into its present form, seeking to produce a *kāvya* chiefly in Upajāti? The cantos in Anustubh remain closer to the style of the epic and earlier traditional verses, while those in Upajāti and other metres take the *kāvyas* far away from it. Referring again to the allusion to the story of Viśvāmitra and Ghṛtācī, we cannot fail to find that the *Buddhacarita* verse reads almost like that in the *Rāmāyana*, while the corresponding verse in the *Saundarananda* has altogether a different ring about it.

Buddhacarita, IV, 20

Viśvāmitro maharṣiṣa vigādho pi mahattapāh |
daśavarasāṇyuranvastho Ghṛtācī vāpasasā hṛtaḥ ||

Rāmāyana, IV, xxxv, 7

Ghṛtācīyām kilā saṃsakto daśavarasāni Lakṣmana |
ato'manyata dharmātmā Viśvāmitro mahāmuni ||

Saundarananda, VII, 35

Brahmarṣibhāvārthamapāśya tājyam bheje vanam yo viśayesva-
nāsthaḥ |
sa Gādhijāscāpahrto Ghṛtācīyā samā dasaikam divasam viveda ||

A similar remodelling of the traditional verses in Anustubh is traceable in the *Jātakas*, e.g. the *Samucca*, and the *Surabhanu* as well as in the verses quoted in Kautilya's *Arthasāstra* (I, 6)²

|| Āsvaghosa was a master of simple pathos ||

mahatyā trsanayā dukkhaṃ garbhenāsmi vyaśādhṛtaḥ |
tasyā niṣphalatnāyāḥ kvāham mātuh kva sā mama ||

¹ B. C. Law, *History of Pali Literature*, I p. 290. Law, *The Minor Anthologies of the Pali Canon (SBB)*, Pt. III, p. 91.

² Barua, *The Arthasāstra: A Blend of Old and New in the Bhārata Kaumudī*, I, pp. 93ff.

Aśvaghōṣa's style became obsolete in the classic period of kāvya, especially after Kālidāsa. The change of taste and the preference of other methods of writing are accountable indeed for the waning of his influence on the poets who flourished after Kālidāsa.¹ The closest and most palpable is the historical relationship between Aśvaghōṣa and Kālidāsa, although in all instances the evidence of direct borrowing is not conclusive. A few typical stanzas cited below from the writings of both may suffice to indicate the form in which Kālidāsa expressed the ideas for which he was indebted to his Buddhist predecessor.²

AŚVAGHOṢA

Tam gauravam Buddhagatam
cakarsa
bhārvānūrāgaḥ punarācakarsa |
So'niśca yānnāpi yayau na tasthau
tarams tarangesviva rājaham-ah ||
(S, IV, 42)

Buddhacarita—

Sa hi svagātraprabhavo jvalantī
dīpaprabhām bhāskaravanmu-
mosa |
mahārhaṣa bhūnada cāruvarṇo
vidyotā'āmāsa diśasā sarvāḥ ||
(Canto I, Śl 32)

Tasmāt pramānam na vayo na kālah
kaścit kvacit śraṣṭhyamupaiti loka |
rājñāmsināñca hitāni tāni
kṛtāni putrairakṛtāni pūrvāḥ ||
(Canto I, Śl 51)

Mahātmanī tvayyupapannametāt
priyātīthau tyāgini dharmakāme |
sattvānvaya jñānavayo'nurūpā
smigdhā yadevam mayi te matih
syāt ||
(Canto I, Śl 60)

Śrutvā vacastacca manaśca yuktvā
jñātvā niṣṭhāśca tato'smyupetaḥ |
sūryaḥ sa evābhya dhukam cakāśe
śakradhvajasyeva samucchṛitasya ||
(Canto I, Śl 63)

Vātā vavuh sparśasukhā manojñā
divyāni vāsāmsyavapātayantaḥ |
sūryaḥ sa evābhya dhukam cakāśe
jayvāla saumyārciranirito'gniḥ ||
(Canto I, Śl 41)

KĀLIDĀSA

Mārgācalavyatikarā kuliteva
sindhuh |
śailādhlurājatanayā na yayau na
tasthau ||
(Kumāra S, V, 85.)

Aristaśajyām parito viśārīnā
srujanmana stasya nijena tejasā
niśṭhadīpāḥ sahasā hatatviśo
bahūvurālekhyā samarpitā iva
(Raghuvamśa, Canto III, Śl 15)

Tejasām hi na vavah samikṣate
(Raghuvamśa, Canto XI, Śl 1)

Sarvvaṁ sakhe tvayyupapanna-
metāt
(Kumārasambhava, Canto III,
Śl 12)

Kālidāsa has used the word 'Śakra-
dhvaja' many times in his kāvya

Diśah prasedurmaruto vavuh
sukhāḥ
pradakṣmārecirha virāgnirādade
bahūva sarvvaṁ śubhaśamsi
tatksanam
bhavo hi lokābhyudaya yā tādrśam
(Raghuvamśa, Canto III, Śl. 14)

¹ Johnston, *op cit*, p lxxix ff

² *Saundarananda-kāvya*, Bengali Tr by B. C. Law, Preface (*Anuvādaker kathā*)

Vātāyanebhyastu vniḥertāni
parasparopāsita kundalāni |
strinām virejurmukhapankajāni
saktāni harmyesviva pañcājāni ||
(Canto III, Śl 19)

Kācit tāmrādharesthena
mukhenāsavagandhinā
viniśāśvāsa karne'sya
rahasyam śrūyatāmīti
(Canto IV, Śl 31)

Muhurmuhurmadavyāja-
śrastanilāmsukāparā |
ālaksyārasanā reje
sphuradvidyudiva kṣapā ||
(Canto IV, Śl 33)

Sa rājasūnurmrgarājagāmī
mrgājīram tanmrgavat pravṛstah |
lakṣmiviryukto'pi śarīralakṣmā
cakṣūṃṣi sarvāśraminām jahāra ||
(Canto VII, Śl 2)

Hatatviso'nyāḥ sithulātma bāhavaḥ
striyo viśādena vicetanā iva |
na cukruśurnāśru jahurna śāśvasu-
rna cetanā ulikhitā iva sthitāḥ ||
(Canto VIII, Śl 25)

Ādityapūrvam vipulam kulam te
navam vayo diptamidam vapuṣca |
kasmādiyam te matirakrameṇa
bhaiksāka evābhuratā na rājye ||
(Canto X, Śl 23)

Yo hyarthadharmau paripīdya
kāmaḥ
syāddharmakāmye paribhūya
cārthaḥ |
kāmarthayoścāparamena dharma-
styājyaḥ sa kṛtsno yadi kāṅkṣi-
tārthaḥ ||
(Canto X, Śl 29)

Vacanena haranti valgunā
nīsitena praharanti cetasā |
madhu tisthati vāci yositām
hrdaye halāhalam mahadvīsam ||¹
(Saundarananda kāvya, 8 35)

teṣām mukhairāsavagandha-
garbbhaiḥ
vyāptantarā sārdrakutūhalānām
vilolanetrabhramarargavāksaḥ
sahasrapatrābharanā ivāsan
(Raghuvamśa, Canto VII, Śl 11)

Karne lolah kathayitumabhūd-
ānana sparśalobhāt
(Uttaramegha, 40)

Amum sahasaprahitekṣanāni
vyājārdddhasamdarśita mekhalāni
nālam vikartum janitendra
sankam
surāṅganā vibhrama cestitāni
(Raghuvamśa, Canto XIII, Śl 42)

Sa nyastacihnamāpi rājalakṣmīm
tejoviseśānumitām dadhānāḥ
(Raghuvamśa, Canto II, Śl 7)

Nisithadīpāḥ sahasā hatatviso
bahhūvurālekhyā samarpitā iva
(Raghuvamśa, Canto III, Śl 15)

Ekātapatram jagataḥ prabhutvam
navam varah kāntamidam
vapuṣca |
(Raghuvamśa Canto II, Śl 47)

Nadharmnamartha kāmābhyam
vavādhe na ca tena tau
nārtham kāmena kāmam vā
so'rthena sadrsā strisu
(Raghuvamśa, Canto XI II, Śl 57)

madhu tisthati vāci yositām
hrdi halāhalam eva kevalam
ata eva nupīyate 'dharo
hrdayam mustibhū eva tādyaṭe
(v No 3380, Subhāṣitavalī)

¹ In Sarga VIII, verse 35, we find that the last two lines are known as part of a verse of Bhartṛhari (I, 82) which in the *Subhāṣitavalī* (3380) is attributed to Kālidāsa

Pramadānāmagatirna vidyate (8 44)	Manorathānām agatir na vidyate (<i>Kumārasambhava</i> , Canto V, Śl. 64)
nanrtustathānyāḥ stana- bhinnahārāḥ (10 37)	Cacāla bālā stana-bhūna-valkalā (<i>Kumārasambhava</i> , Canto V, Śl. 84)
babhūva sa hi samvegāḥ śrevasas- tasya vṛddhaye dhāturedhuvākhyāte pathuto 'ksara-cintakauḥ (12 9)	dhātoḥ sthāna ivādeśam sugrīvam samnyaveśayāt (<i>Raghuvamśa</i> , Canto XII, Śl. 58)
Śrūta-mahatā śramanena (9 50)	Sarasvatī śrūta-mahatām mahīya- tām (<i>Abhijñānaśakuntalam</i> , VIII)
vāteritah pallavatāmṛarāgaḥ puspojvalasiriva karnikārāḥ (18 5)	Pracakrame pallavarāgatāmṛā prabhū patangasya muneś ca dhenuh (<i>Raghuvamśa</i> , Canto II, Śl. 15)
Tataḥ smrtumadlusthāya capalām svabhāvataḥ indriyānindriyārthebhyo nivārayi- tumarhasi (13 30)	Tasmād yasya mahābaho nigrhi- tāni sarvaśaḥ indriyānindriyārthebhyas tasya prajāṇā pratisthitā (<i>Bhagavadgītā</i> , 2 68)
Viśayairindriyagrāmo na trptim- adhigacchati ajasram pūryamāno'pi samudraḥ sahalariva (13 40)	Rāga dyoṣavumuktāis tu viṣayān indriyāuścaran ātmavaśyairvidheyātmā prasādam adhigacchati (<i>Bhagavadgītā</i> , 2 64)

Besides the examples given above, some verses have been quoted by H. P. Shāstri in the preface to his edition of the *Saundarananda-kāvya* published in 1910. They are as follows —

Tām sundarīm cenna labheta Nandah
sā vā niseveta na tam natalhṛūḥ |
dvandvam dhruvam tad vikalam na śobhe-
tānyonyahināviva rātri andrau ||

S, IV, 7

parasparena sprhanīya śobham
na cedidam dvandvamayo jasyat |
asmin dvaye rūpavidhānayatnaḥ
patyuh prajānām vitatho'bhaviṣyat ||

Kumārī S, VII, 66

and Māgha jointly. Peterson remarks that the verse recurs in the *Pañcatantra* (ed. Hertel, Harvard Oriental Series, I, 145) and also with the beginning *amṛtam vadanegu yoṣitām* in the *Kuvalayananda*. Aufrecht's indexes refer to *Subhāṣitamuktāvāṭ*, XVI, 2, where the reading is nearly as in the *Kuvalayananda*. Bohtlingk cites (*Indische Sprüche*, 4677) *Subhāṣitārṇava*, 17A and a verse, *samukhena vadanti valguṇā* (*Ind Spr* 7124 = *Pañcatantra*, ed. Kosgarten I, 202.3) in which the two lines are also contained. According to Dr F. W. Thomas who in his note on the *Saundarananda-kāvya*, VIII, 35 (*JRAS*, 1911, pp. 1125-6) is of opinion that as the first half-verse is plainly original in the passage of the *Saundarananda*, we must substitute for Kālidāsa the name of Aśvaghoṣa and perhaps replace Māgha by somebody else (*loc. cit.*)

The following table will clearly indicate how Āsvaghosa repeated his ideas in his own works. It will also show his indebtedness to earlier Buddhist writings and ideas as well as his influence on other writers —

Saundarananda kāvya—

Kṛtāgas'o'pi

(II, 24)

Parāśarah sāpasarastatharsih
kālim siseve jhasagarbhayonim |
Suto'sya yasyām susuve mahātmā
Dvaipāyano vedavibhāgakartā ||
(VII, 29)

Dvaipāyano dharmaparāyanaśca
reme samam kāsisa vasy avadhvā |
Yayā hato'bhūccalanūpurena pādēna
vidyullatayeva meghah ||
(VII, 30)

Hā Catraratha hā vāpi hā
mandāknī hā priye |
Ityārtā vilapanto'pi gām
patanti divaukasah ||
(XI, 50)

Tasmādyāsasamāsābhyām taume
vyākhyātumarhasi |
Yacchrutvā sṛvatām śiṣṭha
paramam prāpnuyām padam ||
(XII, 17)

Antarbhūmigatam hy ambhaḥ
śraddadhātī nara yadā |
Arthitve satī yatnena tadā
khanatī gāmimām ||
(XII, 33)

Karmano hi yathādrstātkāyavāk-
prabhavādapi |
Ājīvaḥ pṛthagevokto duḥśodhat-
vādayam mayā ||
(XIII, 17)

Kṛtāgas'o'pi

(Cf. *Buddhacarita*, II, 42)

Kālim caiva purā kanyām
jalaprabhavasatmbhavām |
Jagāma yamunātīre
jātarāgaḥ parāśarah ||
(*Buddhacarita*, IV, 76)

Purā hi kāsiseṇdeṇyā vesavadhvā
mahānrsih |
Tādito'bhūt padanyāsāddurdhaiso
daivatairapi ||
(*Buddhacarita*, IV, 16)

Hā Mandāknī hā puskimī hā vāpi
hā Catraratha hā Pārasyaka
hā Nandanavana hā Mīrakāvana
iti karunakarunam
paridevase |
(*Divyāvadāna*, p. 194)

Sṛyatāmāyasmākaṁ siddhām-
taḥ sṛvatām vara |
Yathā bhavati samsāro yathā
vai parivartate ||
(*Buddhacarita*, XII, 16)

Kāstham hi mathnan labhate
hutāsam
bhūmim khaṇan vīdati cāpi
toyam |
Nirbandhinah kiñcana nāstyā-
sādhyaṁ
nyāyena yuktam ca kṛtam ca
sarvaṁ ||
(*Buddhacarita*, XIII, 60)

Ājivo nāma bhujjamāno kāyavaci-
dvāresu yeva bhujjati, manodvāre
ājīvabhedo nāma natthi, pūraya-
māno pi tasmim yeva dvāradvaye
pūراتi, manodvāre ājīvapūranam
nāma natthi. Kāyadvāre pana vi-
tikkamo ājīva hetuko pi atthi, na
ājīva hetuko pi tathā vacīdvāre .
Yam pi pana ājīva hetukam catu-
bbidham vacīduccaritam bhāsanti
idam akusalam vacīkammam nāma,
tato virati pi sammāvacā nāma.

Yam pana ājīvaheṭu nesādamā-
 cchabandhādayo pānam hananti
 adunnam ādiyanti micchācaranti
 ayam micchā-ājīvo nāma, tato
 virati sammā-ājīvo nāma Yam pi
 lañcam gahetvā musā bhananti
 pesuññapharusasamphappalāpe
 pavattenti ayam pi micchā-ājīvo
 nāma, tato virati sammā-ājīvo
 nāma

(*Atthasālinī*, p 220, cf
Dhammasaṅgani, p 64)

Nāpaneṇaṃ tataḥ kiñcitprakṣepyaṃ
 nāpi kiñcana |
 drastavyaṃ bhūtato bhūtaṃ
 yādṛśaṃ ca yathā ca yat ||
 (XIII, 44)

Kim pan'ettha pathama-pārājike
 kiñci apānetabbam vā pakkhipi-
 tabbam vā āsi n'asīti? Buddhassa
 Bhagavato bhāsīte apānetabbam
 nāma n'atthi Na hi Tathāgatā
 ekavvañjanam pi niratthakam
 vadanti Sāvakaṇāma pana deva-
 tānaṃ vā bhāsīte apānetabbam pi
 hoti Tam dhammasaṃgāhaka
 thetā apānaṃsu Pakkhipi-
 tabbam pana sabbatthāpi atthi,
 tasmā yaṃ yattha pakkhipitum
 vuttam tam pi pakkhipimsu yeva
 Kim pana taṃ ti? 'Tena samaye-
 nāti' vā, 'Tena kho pana samaye-
 nāti' vā

(*Sumaṅgalavāṇanī*, P.T.S., p 12)

Buddhacarita, Canto XI—

Yatnena labdhāḥ pariraksitāśca ye
 vipralabhiṃ pratiyānti bhūyaḥ |
 teṣvātmavān yācitakopameṣu
 kāmeṣu vidvāṇiḥ ko rameta || 22
 Anvaya cādāya ca yātataṣṭā yānatya-
 jantaḥ pariyaṃti duḥkham |
 loke trolkāśadrśeṣu teṣu kāmeṣu
 kaṣvātmavato ratih syāt || 23
 Anātmavanto hrđi yairvidastā
 vināśamarchanti na yānti śarma |
 kruddhograsarpapratimeṣu teṣu kāmeṣu
 kaṣyātmavato ratih syāt || 24
 Astu kṣudhārtā iva sārameyā
 bhuktāpi
 Yānnaiva bhavanti trptāḥ
 jīrnāsthukankāśameṣu teṣu kāmeṣu
 kaṣyātmavato ratih syāt || 25
 Ye rājacaurodakapāvakebhyaḥ
 sādūraṇatvājjanaṃ anti duḥkham |
 teṣu prabiddhāṃśasamnbheṣu
 kāmeṣu kaṣyātmavato ratih syāt || 26

Therīgāthā—

Asisūlūpamā kāmā kāmā sappasi-
 ropamā |
 ukkopamā anudahanti atthikan-
 kālasannibhā || 488
 aniccā addhuvā kāmā bahudukkhā
 mahāvīsā |
 ayoḡulo va santatto aghamūlā
 dukkhapphalā || 489
 rukkhapphalūpamā kāmā mamsa-
 peṣūpamā dukkhā |
 supinopamā vañcaniyā kāmā
 yācitakūpamā || 490
 sattisūlūpamā kāmā rogo gaṇḍo
 agham ugham |
 angārakāśasadisā aghamūlam
 bhayaṃ vadho || 491

evam bahudukkhā kāmā akkhātā
 antarāyikā |
 gacchatha na me bhavagate viśāso
 atthi attano || 492

(*Anguttara Nikāya*, III, page 97.)

Yatra sthitānāmabhito vipattih
 śatroḥ sakāśādapi bādhavebhyah |
 himsresu tesvāyatanopamesu kāmesu
 kasyātmavato ratiḥ syāt || 27
 Girau vane cāpsu ca sāgare ca
 yadbhūmsamarchamtyabhihangha-
 mānāḥ |
 tesu drumapīṭgraphalopamesu
 kāmesu kasyātmavato ratiḥ
 syāt || 28
 Yānarcayitvāpi na yāmti śarma
 vivardhayitvā paripālayitvā |
 angārakarsapratimesu tesu kāmesu
 kasyātmavato ratiḥ syāt || 29
 Tirthaḥ prayatnairvividhairavāptāḥ
 kṣaṇena ye nāśamiha prayāmti |
 svapnopabhogapratimesu tesu
 kāmesu kasyātmavato ratiḥ syāt || 30
 Vināśamīyuh kuravo yadartham
 Vrsnāyamdhakā marthula danda-
 kāśca |
 sūlāsikāsthapratimesu tesu kāmesu
 kasyātmavato ratiḥ syāt || 31
 Sumdopasumdāvasurau yadarttha-
 manyonyavairprasūtau vinastau |
 sauhārdavislesakaresu tesu kāmesu
 kasyātmavato ratiḥ syāt || 32
 Kāmāmdhasamjñāḥ kṛpāyā va ke ca
 kravystu nātmānamihot-
 sramti |
 sapatnabhūtesaśivesu tesu kāmesu
 kasyātmavato ratiḥ syāt || 33
 Kāmāmdhasamjñāḥ kṛpanam karoti
 prāpnoti duḥkham vadhaban-
 dhanādi |
 Kāmārtthamāśākrpanastapasvī
 mṛtyuśramam cārhati jīvaloke || 34

Saundarananda-kavya—

Bhārasyaodvahanārtham ca
 rathākso'bhyaṅgiate yathā |
 Bhojanam prāṇayātrārtham
 tadvadvidvānūṣevate ||
 (XIV, 12)

Praklehyamadbhūravadanam
 vilokyāḥ sarvato diśah |
 Cāryā dṛṣṭiśca tārāsu
 jṇāgaripuṇā sadā ||
 (XIV, 24)

Appassādā āvuso kāmā vuttā
 Bhagavatā, bahudukkhā bahūpā-
 yāsā, ādinavo ettha bhīyo Atthu-
 sankhalūpamā kāmā vuttā Bhaga-
 vatā, bahudukkhā bahūpāyāsā,
 ādinavo ettha bhīyo Mamsapesū-
 pamā kāmā vuttā Bhagavatā,
 bahudukkhā bahūpāyāsā, ādinavo
 ettha bhīyo Tinukkūpamā kāmā
 vuttā Bhagavatā, bahudukkhā ba-
 hūpāyāsā, ādinavo ettha bhīyo
 Angārakāsūpamā kāmā vuttā
 Bhagavatā, bahudukkhā bahūpā-
 yāsā, ādinavo ettha bhīyo Supi-
 nakūpamā kāmā vuttā Bhagavatā,
 bahudukkhā bahūpāyāsā, ādinavo
 ettha bhīyo Yācitakūpamā kāmā
 vuttā Bhagavatā, bahudukkhā
 bahūpāyāsā, ādinavo ettha bhīyo
 Rukkhaphalūpamā kāmā vuttā
 Bhagavatā, bahudukkhā bahūpā-
 yāsā, ādinavo ettha bhīyo Asisū-
 nūpamā kāmā vuttā Bhagavatā,
 bahudukkhā bahūpāyāsā, ādinavo
 ettha bhīyo Sattisūlūpamā kāmā
 vuttā Bhagavatā, bahudukkhā
 bahūpāyāsā, ādinavo ettha bhīyo
 Sappasirūpamā kāmā vuttā Bha-
 gavatā bahudukkhā bahūpāyāsā,
 ādinavo ettha bhīyo
 (Cf. *Majjhima Nikāya*, I, 130, 364)

yathā vā pana akkham abbañ-
 jeyya yāvad evā bhārassa nittha-
 ranatthāya, yathā vā pana putta-
 mamsa-āhāram āhāreyya yāvad eva
 kantārassa nittharanatthāya, evam
 eva bhikkhu paṭissamkhā yoniso
 āhāram āhāreti n'eva davāya
 (Mahāvuddesa, p. 241)

Addasā kho Bhagavā dibbena
 cakkhunā visuddhena atikkanta-
 mānusakena āyasmantam Mahā-
 moggallānam Magadhesu Kaila-
 vālamuttagāme pacalāyamānam
 nisunnam, disvā, . . . āyasmato

Mahāmoggaḷlānassa pamukhe
pāturahosi Nisajja kho
Bhagavā āyasmantaṃ Mahā-
moggaḷlānaṃ etaḍ avoca, 'paca-
lāyasi no tvam Moggaḷlāna, paca-
lāyasi no tvam Moggaḷlānā' ti?
(*Anguttara*, IV, 85)

Dante'pi dantam pramdhyā
kāmaṃ tālvagratutpīḍya ca
jīhnuyāpi |
Cittena cittaṃ paṇḍitya cāpi
kāryaṃ pravatno na tu ne'nuvittāḥ ||
(XVI, 83)

tena bhikkhave bhikkhunā
danteḥ dantamādhyā jivhāya
tālum āhacca cetasā cittaṃ abhi-
niggaṇhitabbam abhimpīḍetab-
bam abhisantāpetabbam, tassa
danteḥ dantamādhyā jivhāya
tālum āhacca cetasā cittaṃ abhi-
niggaṇhato abhimpīḍayato abhi-
santāpavato ye pāpakā akusalā
vitakkā chandūpasamhitā pi dosū-
pasamhitā pi mohūpasamhitā pi te
pahiyanti te abhhattham gaecchanti
(*Majjhima Nikāya*, I, pp 120-
121)

Atha dvyo vāla ivāptavedaḥ
ksīpram vanik prāpta ivāptā-
bhah |
jivā ca rājanyā ivānsamyaṃ
Nandaḥ krtārtlo gumabhya-
gacchat ||
(XVIII, 1)

Atha Candraprabhā devakanyā
banig iva labdhafābhah samvak-
sampaṇna iva karshakaḥ śura iva
vijitasamrāmah sarvarogapari-
mukta ivāturo yayā vibhūtyā
Bhagavatsakāsam āgatā
(*Dvyāradāna*, p 555)

Aśvaghoṣa has also repeated the same Brahmanical allusion in his two
kāvyas

Soundarānanda—

Bheje śvapākīm muniraksamālām
kāmadvaśisthasa sa sadvaristhaḥ |
Yasām Vivasāmya bhūjalādaḥ
sutah prabhūto'sya Kapīñjalādaḥ ||
(Canto VII, 28)

Buddhacarita—

Mātangyāmaksamālāyām
garhitāyām nramsayā |
Kapīñjalādām tanayam
Vasistho'janayan munih ||
(Canto IV, 77)

If we read carefully the *Buddhacarita* (Canto XI, vv 38 and 39) and the *Ratnāvalī* of Nāgārjuna (vv 46-47 and 49) we may find that Aśvaghoṣa exercises some influence on Nāgārjuna, the author of the *Ratnāvalī*. The *Buddhacarita* has the following passage 'Nidrāvidhātāya tathāva śayyā yānam tathādhvaśramanūśanāya' ¹ which may be compared with the passage 'Śayyā' nnapīnahaśtasyaśvaśtrīnām' in the *Ratnāvalī* (v 49). Again Nāgārjuna has borrowed the idea in verses 46-47, of the *Ratnāvalī* from Aśvaghoṣa's *Buddhacarita*. Cf 'Dukkhapratikāraṇamuttabhūtāstasmātprajānām vṛsayā na bhogyāḥ' ('Therefore the objects of sense are the means for remedying people's suffering and not enjoyment'— *Buddhacarita*, Canto XI, v 39) with 'Dukkhapratikriyāmātram Śarīraṃ Vedanāsukhaṃ' . . . (v 46) and 'Dukkhapratikriyāmātram Kalpanāmātram eva ca' . . . (v. 47).²

¹ A bed is for riddance of drowsiness and a carriage is for avoidance of road-fatigue

² *JRAS*, 1936, p 249.

CHAPTER IV

AŚVAGHOṢA THE TEACHER

In the colophon of the three works that are attributed definitely to Aśvaghosa, he is eulogized, as we have seen, as 'the great eloquent poet, the mendicant and teacher'. In the preceding chapter we have discussed at length his position as a great pioneer in the writing of Sanskrit *kāvya* and drama. Here it remains to carefully consider his position as a senior Buddhist mendicant and gifted exponent of Buddhism. Although Aśvaghosa the mendicant is not separable from Aśvaghosa the teacher, the difference between the two lies in the fact that his career as a mendicant is primarily a personal concern, while his success as a teacher has a public interest, for on that depends the inherent strength of the popular appeal of the religion of which he was an ardent devotee and exponent. His life as a mendicant implies only a change of faith, while his rôle as a teacher means an active advocacy of a new faith with the zeal of a convert. Thus his second capacity is the happy culmination of the first. Whatever might have been the Master's apprehension as to the future of the Good Faith due to the sentimental appeal of poetry in general, going by the definition of poetry he adopted, he felt justified to think that Aśvaghosa the poet was not incompatible with Aśvaghosa the mendicant and teacher. Poetry with its religious appeal developed in Buddhism in spite of the Master's timely warning against its prevalence.

How exactly was his change of faith brought about, particularly through whose instrumentality, we cannot say. The tradition gives the Śthavira Pārśva or a pupil of his the credit for Aśvaghosa's conversion to the new faith. If it be assumed that Aśvaghosa's life is a progressive one with its three successive stages, all comprehended by the continuous evolution of a single personality—Aśvaghosa the man—it cannot fail to be both interesting and instructive to enquire how Aśvaghosa being a Brāhmana became a zealous Buddhist to assume at last the responsible rôle of a teacher.

As a mendicant Aśvaghosa belonged to a particular Buddhist sect and school of thought. Broadly speaking, he adhered to a school of thought within the definition of the Hinayāna or Lesser Vehicle which aims at the attainment of Arhatship as the final goal of religious effort, and not that of Buddhahood as in the Mahāyāna or Greater Vehicle. As for the sect, it is still an unknown factor. Johnston is inclined to connect him with the Kaukūlikas or their offshoot—the Bahuśrutikas. Even if he were an adherent of the Bahuśrutikas, we have sought to show that it does not mean that the sect to which he belonged was of the Mahāsaṅghika line. The Bahuśrutikas themselves, at least according to the *Mahāvīryaputta*, sprang from the Mūla-Sarvāstivāda sect which stood very close to the Theravāda or Pali Buddhism. Whatever the actual name of the sect, its main line is Sarvāstivāda. Amongst the earlier eighteen sects,¹ the Suttavāda or Sautiāntika was the third offshoot of the Sarvāstivāda. The main legends of the Buddha which Aśvaghosa availed himself of in his *kāvyas* were, as we shall see presently, those traceable in the traditions of the

¹ Geiger, *Mahāvamsa*, Ch. 5, B. C. Law, *Debates Commentary* (P.T.S. Tr. Series—English rendering of the *Kathāvatthupakarana-aphakathā*), Intro., pp. 1-7.

Theravāda, the Sarvāstivāda and the Mahāsaṅghika. As regards the history of the First Council, Aśvaghoṣa has followed a distinct tradition, the tradition undoubtedly of his sect. This differs from others in so far as it makes the Indrasūla Cave connected with the Grdhrakūṭa mountain as the venue of the Council instead of the Saptaparni Cave associated in other traditions with the Vebhāra or Vaihāra hill of Rājagṛha. The point of difference which is historically important is that it speaks only of the rehearsal of the Sūtras by Ānanda and the redaction made of the *Sūtra Pitaka*, having nothing to say about the recital of the Vinaya by Upāli and the redaction made of the *Vinaya Pitaka*.¹ The omission is significant. The Prātimokṣa expounded in the *Buddhacarita* is not the Prātimokṣa code of the *Vinaya*, it is the collective name for the guiding moral principles such as those embodied in the *Dhammapadam* and other Sutta texts,—the principles which were behind or the ideals which were before the Vinaya discipline.² In other words, the Prātimokṣa in the *Buddhacarita* was in both matter and form the Prātimokṣa principles that are said to have been mediated by the Buddha in the *Mahāpadāna Suttanta*.³ The *Mahāvastu* presenting a legendary life of the Buddha is introduced as the *ādi* or beginning of the *Vinaya Pitaka* of the Lokottarika branch of the Mahāsaṅghikas.⁴ Here by the word *ādi* is really meant the *nidāna* or historical introduction to the Lokottaravāda Vinaya. There is a similar historical introduction to the *Vinaya Pitaka* of the Theravāda as well as the Sarvāstivāda. This does not mean, therefore, that the Lokottaravāda sect dispensed with the *Vinaya Pitaka*.

According to Vasumitra, the Sarvāstivāda interpretation of Buddhism centred round the four Noble Truths.⁵ The same holds true alike of Theravāda.⁶ The four Truths equally form the main burden of Aśvaghoṣa's interpretation of Buddhism. Disease, decay, and death are the unavoidable accidents of individual life which has its beginning in birth. These contingencies are made the main and only argument by prince Siddhārtha in favour of the life of renunciation which he was led to adopt. Aśvaghoṣa is not tired of repeating it and constantly drumming it into our ears. The finding of the sure way of escape from the above contingencies is said to have been the only aim of the ascetic life of Siddhārtha. There were otherwise no other causes of unhappiness from a worldly man's point of view which impelled him to leave the world. The Discourses of the Buddha on which Aśvaghoṣa's knowledge of Buddhism was based are full of such painful reflections. So far as the phenomenal side of individual life is concerned, the contingencies mentioned above formed the main crux in all forms of asceticism. There was no new reading of them as facts in Buddhism. Aśvaghoṣa's dilatation on the subject cannot but remind us of the reflections in the *Matrāyana Brāhmaṇa Upaniṣad*,⁷ the two Sanskrit epics, the Jātakas, and other Buddhist Canonical texts. The points were equally stressed in Sāṃkhya as known to and represented by Aśvaghoṣa, particularly in his *Buddhacarita*.⁸ The case made out for Buddhism is

¹ Boal, *Fo sho hing tsan king*, Ch. 28, p. 335

² *Ibid.*, Ch. 25, p. 296ff

³ *Digha*, II, p. 49 *Pātimokkham uddisati*

⁴ Senart, *Mahāvastu*, I, p. 2—*āryamañjuśāṃghikānām lokottaravādīnām madhyadeśikānām pāṭhena Vinayapitakasya mahāvastuye ādi*

⁵ *Journal of the Department of Letters*, Calcutta University, Vol. I—Masuda's Article

⁶ *Peṭakopadāsa*, Chap. I—*na kīṛṇi buddhānām bhagavanānām dhammadessanāya Dhammacakkato bahaddhā, tassu sabbaṃ suttāṃ ariyadhammesu pariyesitabbaṃ*

⁷ I, 4

⁸ Book XII, vv. 14 foil

that none among the Indian teachers before the Buddha could find and point out the sure way of escape from the ills attendant on existence. Thus it is the certitude of the way of escape or deliverance that distinguished his new faith from Arāda's Sāmkhya-Yoga method and Rudrārāma's Yogic method. The weak point in all the contemporary and previous systems lay in the inadequacy and dubiousness of the paths prescribed. The Buddha's way of escape suggested, however, a far superior way of truth as well as a far better way of life. The historical or the philosophico-ethical position of Buddhism thus made out by Āsvaghosa was fundamentally the same as that represented in the body of the *Sūtra Pitaka* which served as the only Buddhist scriptural authority for him.

The ills of life needed a satisfactory explanation and the ethical principles required a sound philosophic foundation. The needed explanation did not lie in the theory of creation by God, or by nature, or by fate, or by caprice. In the soul theory was not to be found the sound philosophic foundation of rational ethics. The satisfactory explanation lay in the Buddha's *pratitya-samutpāda* or law of causation¹ and in it alone could be laid a sound philosophic foundation of ethics and morality. Here, too, Āsvaghosa's presentation of Buddhism is in complete agreement with the trend of the Buddha's teachings in the *Sūtra Pitaka*. The same observation applies equally to his interpretation of *nirvāṇa* meaning the complete cessation of the ills attendant on life² and the Noble Eightfold Path pointing to the sure way leading thereto³. His description of *nirvāṇa* of which the essence is tranquillity (*sānti*) is similarly based upon the Sūtra texts. The wiles and guiles by which women entice men, captivate their hearts and keep them enchained in the prison of lust, are precisely those which are described in the Jātakas and other Sūtra works. His ideal king, ideal city, ideal state, ideal government, ideal home, father, mother, brother, wife, son and other relations, ideal religious order, ideal men and ideal religious life are at once epic, traditional, and Buddhist. Similarly his description of the three Refuges, the *Tathāgata* as the most perfect type of man and human and divine character, the *Dharma* as the best of norms ever propounded by any person in history, the personnel of the ideal *Saṅgha* as stalwarts among the disciples and followers of a great teacher and the persons endowed with wisdom, vision, character and spirituality is all in keeping with the Sūtra tradition. *Śraddhā* (faith), *vīrya* (energy) and other moral faculties, the immoral mental states with their unwholesome effects and creating fetters and hindrances are all interpreted by him in consistency with the Sūtra line of development of these psycho-ethical concepts. This very remark holds equally valid in the case of *Māra*⁴ as depicted by him. His Brahmanical learning and heritage, his wide knowledge of the epic and popular legends, his own keen observation of human affairs and natural conditions enabled him to bring out the importance, unfold the significance, and present the beauty, attractiveness and poetic appeal of the religious themes that lay nearest to his heart. But even here, in all these matters, he followed the time-honoured Sūtra tradition of Buddha's teachings.

¹ Cf. B. C. Law, *Formulation of Pratityasamutpāda* JRAS, April, 1937, E. J. Thomas, *History of Buddhist Thought*, Chap. V, B. M. Barua, *Pratityasamutpāda as basic concept of Buddhist Thought*, B. C. Law Volume, Pt. 1, pp. 574ff.

² Cf. E. J. Thomas, *History of Buddhist Thought*, p. 43, B. C. Law, *Concepts of Buddhism*, pp. 28-29.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁴ For a clear conception of *Māra* based on Hinayāna literature, see B. C. Law, *Buddhist Studies*, pp. 257ff.

The literary art employed by Aśvaghoṣa in his *Saundarananda-kāvya* in presenting the subject of salvation through the poetical discourses is evidently the same as followed in the *Bhagavadgītā*. The same is the case with the Kārikā form of the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra*. One may maintain alike that this very art has been extensively used in the *Milinda-Pañho*. This art was being developed in India through such Upanisads as the Katha and such Pali Dialogues as the *Sāmaññaphala* and *Sakkapañña Suttas*. The distinctive trait of the art as employed in the *Bhagavadgītā* and the *Saundarananda-kāvya* is that here the dialogues are represented as those which took place between the *guru* (teacher) and the *śiṣya* (disciple).¹ The art consists in creating a historico-psychological or dramatic situation in order to excite curiosity in the reader's mind to watch with rapt attention the course of events, the trend of the serious conversation, and to keep up the reader's or hearer's interest until the happy end of the drama is seen or known. Here the *śiṣya* is just another word for the *bhakta*, devotee or votary.²

In the *Gurugītā*, the Guru is defined as the Master who opens the eye of the disciple blinded by the darkness of ignorance with the probe and soothing balm of knowledge and by whom the way of salvation is pointed out.

This very definition of the Guru looms large in the following stanza addressed by the Buddha to Nanda.³

Unmilitasyāpi janasya madhye
nmilitasyāpi tathariva cakṣuḥ |
prajñāmayam yasya hi nāsti cakṣuḥ-
cakṣur na tasyāsti sacakṣuso'pi ||

'Similarly a man's eyes may be closed and yet he alone has sight among people, though their eyes are open, for though a man has eyes, yet he has not sight, unless he has the eye of intuitive wisdom.'

S, XVIII, 39-41

stavesu mūdāsu ca nirvyapekṣaḥ
kṛtāñjalirvākyamuvāca Nandaḥ ||
Aho viśeṣena viśeṣadarśistvayānukampā
mayi darśiteyam |
yat kāmāpanke Bhagavanimagnas-
trāto 'smi samsārabhayaśādhakāmah ||
Bhrātṛa tvayā śreyaśa darśikena
pitṛa phalasthena tathariva mātṛa |
hato' bhaviṣyam yadi na vyamokṣam
sārthāt paribhṛasta ivākṛtārthaḥ ||

Bh, XI, 14

Tataḥ sa vismayāvisto hrstato mā Dhanañjayaḥ |
pranāmya śirasā devam kṛtāñjalirabhūṣata ||

Ib, XI, 44

Tasmāt pranāmya pranidhāya kāyam
prasādaye tvāmaha misamīdyaḥ |
piteva putrasya sakheva sakhyuḥ
priyaḥ priyāyārhasi deva sodhum ||

¹ *Saundarananda*, XVIII, 20, 22

² *Ibid*, XVIII, 53

³ *Ibid*, XVIII, 36

S , XVIII, 22

Uttistha dharme sthuta śisyajuste
kim pūdayorme patito'si mūrdhnā |
abhyarcanam me na tathā pranāmo
dharme yathaisā pratipattireva ||

Ib , XVIII, 1

jitvā ca rājanya ivārisamyam
Nandah kṛtārtho gurumabhyagacchat ||

Bh , XI, 33

Tasmātvannuttistha, yaśo labhasya,
jitvā śāstrūn bhunṅksva rājyam samrddham |

For such expressions as *karmayoga* (*S* , XVII, 19), *abhyāsayoga* (*S* , XVI, 20) and *indriyāṇḍriyārthabhyo* (*S* , XIII, 30) Āśvaghoṣa was certainly indebted to the *Bhagavadgītā*. The following account given by Āśvaghoṣa of the practice of *dhyāna* or *yoga* in the *Saundarananda-kārya* is nothing but a replica of Vāsudeva's account of the *abhyāsayoga* in the *Bhagavadgītā*

S , XIV, 1-9

Atha smṛti-kavātena pūhāyendriyaśamvaram |
bhōjane bhava mātṛājño dhyānāyānāmayāva ca ||
Prānāpānu nigrhnāti glānimdre pravacchati |
kṛto hyatyarthamāhāro vihanṭi ca parākramam ||
Yathā cātyarthamāhārah kṛto'narthāya kalpate |
upayuktastathātyalpo na sāmāthyāya kalpate ||
Ācayam dyutimutsāham prayogam balameva ca |
bhōjanam kṛtamatyalpam śāntiśāpākarsati ||
Yathā bhārena namate laghunomnamate tulā |
samā tisthati yuktena bhōjanyeyam tathā tanuh ||
Tasmādabhyavahartavyam svasaktimanupasvatā |
nūtmātram na cātyalpam meyam mūnavasādapi ||
Atyākṛānto hi kāvāgnir gurunānnena sāmyati |
avacchanna ivālpogṇih sahasā mahatendhasā ||
Atyantamapi samāhāro nāhāraśya praśasyate |
anāhāro hi mṛvāti nūmdhana ivānalah ||
Yasmānnāsti vīmāhāt sarvaparānabhrtām sthutih |
tasmāddusyati nūhāro vikalpō'tra tu vāryate ||

Bh , VI, 16-17

Nātyasnatas tu vogo'sti na caikāntamanaśnatah |
na cātisvapnasilasya jāgrato narva cājuna ||
Yuktāhāravihārasya vuktacestasya karmasu |
yuktasvapnāvabodhasya yogo bhavati duḥkhaḥ ||

Such instances of indebtedness of Āśvaghoṣa to the *Bhagavadgītā* and similar other works do not, however, mean that he has presented through his kāvyas any other doctrine or method of salvation than what he found or believed to be consistent with Buddhism. The *upanisad* (doctrine and method) elucidated and advocated by him is the *upanisad* of the Buddha.¹

Moksasyopanisatsaṁnyā vairāgyamutī gṛhyatām |
vairāgyasyāpi samvedah, samvido jñānadāsanam ||
Jñānasyopanisaccaiva samādhirūpadhāyātām |
samādhierapyopanisatsukham śāntimānasam ||

¹ Barua, *Ceylon Lectures*, pp 241ff

Prasrabdhīh kāyamanasaḥ sukhasyopanisatparā |
 prasrabdherapyupanisatpritrāpyavagamyatām ||
 Tathā priterupanisatprāmodyam paramam matam |
 prāmodyasyāpyahrillekhaḥ kukrtesvaktresu vā ||
 Ahrillekhasya manasaḥ śīlam tūpanisacchuci |
 ataḥ śīlam nayatyagryam itī śīlam viśodhaya ||

S, XIII, 22-26. ¹

The popular and institutional religions, based more or less on devotion (*bhakti*), needed the conception of a Deity or perfect type of personality,—the Divine being in a human form (*Purusottama*). This very idea in the name of *Agrapudgala* was shaping itself through the *Nikāyas* and the *Jātaka*s, and naturally the Buddha was held out as the *Agrapudgala* or *Purusottama*.² Whilst the *Great Epic* held out Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva as the *Purusottama* and the *Rāmāyana* Rāma Dāśarathī, Āsvaghosa made use of his two kāvyas to establish that Buddha Gautama was the needed *Purusottama* for the salvation of suffering humanity. The *Guruvāda*, too, was the basic idea of *Hīnayāna* standing as it did for the ideal of discipleship, and not for that of perfect Buddhahood. Johnston rightly observes³ that Āsvaghosa 'divides (*S*, V, 16ff) religious aspirants into two classes, those who obtain salvation of themselves by virtue of the *hetu* working within them, and those who can only act in reliance on others (*parapratyaya*), the Buddha is an instance of the former category (*B*, II, 56), Nanda of the latter'.⁴

The *Buddhacarita* is accordingly devoted to the life of the Buddha, the *Purusottama* and *Guru*, and the *Saundarananda* to that of Nanda, the disciple and *Arahat*, and, one may reasonably suggest, of Āsvaghosa himself in the rôle of Nanda.

If, as emphatically maintained by Waterhouse, the function of religion consists not only in creating the ideals of life but in generating and glorifying faith in their reality as well, the same is equally the function of the religious poetry as developed by Āsvaghosa in his two kāvyas and by Vyāsa and Vālmīki in the two Sanskrit epics. The country, the kingdom, the people, the city, and the rest associated with the life and acts of the best of men assume an ideal character, and we are to see how far our poet succeeded in creating such ideals and by what means at his disposal. As for the means it is easy to anticipate that these were three in all (1) the progressive ideas in the collective Indo-Aryan tradition, (2) the changes brought about in them by the teaching of the Buddha, and (3) the personal conviction and power of description of the poet himself.

¹ Cf. *Vinaya*, V, p. 164.

Vinayo samavaratthāya, samvaro avippatissāratthāya, avippatissāro pāmujaṭṭhāya, pāmujaṇṇam pītathāya, pīti passaddhatthāya, passaddhā sukhathāya, yathābhūtamānānvadassanānam nibbidatthāya, nibbidā virāgaṭṭhāya, virāgo vimuttatthāya, vimutti vimuttānānvadassanānatthāya, vimuttiānānvadassanānam anupādāpari-nibbānatthāya

² *Saddhammapāyana*, 92, 558, *Anguttara*, V, 16, 325ff, *Suttanipāta*, 544, *Dhammapada*, 78, *Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā*, II, 188.

³ *The Buddhacarita*, introd., p. xxxiv.

⁴ *Saundarananda*, V, 16-18.

Śaṅkleśapakso dvividhaśca dṛṣṭastathā
 dvikālpo vyavadānapakṣaḥ |
 ātmāśrayo hotubalādhikasya bāhyāśrayaḥ
 pratyayagauravasya ||
 Ayatnato hotubalādhikastu nirmucyate
 ghaṭṭitamātra eva |

yateṇa tu pratyayaneyabuddhūrvumokṣamāpnoti parāśrayeṇa ||
 Nandaḥ sa ca pratyayaneyacetā yam śīriye tanmeyatāmavāpa |

To the Buddhists in general, the best of the four continents was Jambudvīpa, the best for the reason that all the Buddhas are born here, and not in any other continent ¹ The Buddhist emperor Asoka claimed that he succeeded in creating a sphere of his moral influence in the whole of Jambudvīpa ² Similarly the *Great Epic* and the *Purāṇas* seek to establish the imperium, political and cultural, over all the countries in the known portion of the earth ³ Āsvaghosa accepts and states the Buddhist tradition regarding the continent of Jambudvīpa without comment ⁴

The general Buddhist tradition narrows down the continent by singling out the Middle Country (*Madhyadeśa*) as the central region in Northern India which is destined to be hallowed by the birth of the Buddhas ⁵ With Bauddhāyana and Vāsistha among the Smṛiti-writers the Indo-Aryan customs and usages of the Aryandom alias Middle Country were the standard of approved conduct, whereas with Manu the ideal land was the Brahmarshi-deśa included in the Buddhist Midland The Middle Country corresponding to Bauddhāyana's Aryandom has received only incidentally the following word of praise from Āsvaghosa's powerful pen

Tavoh satputrayormadhye Śākya-rājo rarāja sah |
Madhyadeśa iva vyakto Hmavat-Pāripātrayoh ||

S, II 62

'The king of the Śākyas shone between those two good sons of his (Śudhodana's) like the Middle Country displayed between the Himalayas and the Pāripātra'

So far as the advent of Buddha Gautama is concerned, the ideal kingdom for the Buddhists is the Śākya territory with Kapilavastu as its ideal city or capital, precisely as in the description of Vālmīki the ideal kingdom was Kośala with Ayodhyā as its ideal chief city In both the kingdoms the ruling family was represented by the descendants of king Ikṣvāku of the Solar race of warriors ⁶

Ikṣvākuvamśyāste bhuvī Śākya itī smṛtān

S, I 24

Although Āsvaghosa relies on the current Buddhist tradition about the origin of the Śākyas and the foundation of a new territory and its capital Kapilavastu, he is careful not to offend the refined taste of the Indo-Aryan society of his time by avoiding the reference to the brother and sister marriage which is naively mentioned in the earlier Buddhist tradition in the *Nikāyas* ⁷

Sundarī, the wife of Nanda, too, is not purposely described as his uterine sister ⁸ Vālmīki, who was the ideal poet with Āsvaghosa among his predecessors, skilfully avoided the popular tradition of Rāma's marriage with his sister Sītā as recorded in the *Dasaratha Jātaka* ⁹ by giving Sītā

¹ *Jātaka*, I, p 49—Tato dipam vilokento sapaṇvāro cattāro dīpe oloketvā, tīsu dīpeṣu Buddhā na nibbatanti, Jambudīpe yeva nibbatantīti dipam paṇṇi Cf *Lalitavistara* (Lefmann), p 19

² Barua, *Asoka and his Inscriptions*, I, pp 106ff

³ R C Law, *India as described in early texts of Buddhism and Jainism*, pp 8 foll

⁴ Boal, *Fo-sho-lung-uan-king*, XX, 1674-75, p 241

⁵ *Jātaka*, I, 49, *Lalitavistara*, (Lefmann), p 19

⁶ *Digha*, I, p 87, cf *Sumaṅgalavūlāsini*, I, 239

⁷ *Digha*, I, pp 87 foll—Ambaṭṭha Sutta, cf *Sumaṅgalavūlāsini*, I, pp 258-260, Paramatthajotikā on the *Khuddakapāṭha* (PTS), pp 158-160

⁸ *Therīgāthā* (PTS), 155-156, *Therīgāthā Commentary*, pp 80ff, *Manorathapūraṇi*, pp 217-218

⁹ *Jāt* (Fausbøll), IV, pp 123 foll

a mysterious origin in sītā or the furrow of a land and representing her as a foster-child of king Janaka of Videha.

Kapilavastu became the native land (jātibhūmi) as much to the Śākyaas as the ruling race as to the Śākyaas as Buddhists.¹ Aśvaghosa made it to appear as the ideal Indian city vying in its glory with Vālmiki's Ayodhyā. In some respects it is expressly made to compare with Girivraja, the hill-girt city of Magadha. The implied comparison of the city is really with the Alakā of Kubera and the heavenly city of the Thousand-eyed Indra. One great advantage of its position was that it was located in a valley of the Himalayas.² It derived its religious sanctity and historical importance from the fact that, like Kākandī, Mākandī and Kauśāmbī,³ it was built on the holy site of the hermitage of a renowned sage like Kapila. Here Aśvaghosa faithfully followed and took full advantage of the Buddhist tradition, which adds also the name of Śrāvastī to the list of such cities.⁴

For the description of the ideal city of Kapilavastu we need not make Aśvaghosa particularly indebted to Vālmiki's account of Ayodhyā. It is in substance as well as in detail the traditional description of an Indian city which was to be depicted as well laid, populous and prosperous. But nearer Aśvaghosa's time we find the magniloquent prose description in the *Mūlinda* of the Yona city of Sāgala (Sākala), and the more so, of the purely ideal city of Dhammanagara.⁵

To increase the importance of Kapilavastu, the poet was bound to raise also the importance of Kapila the sage and his hermitage. The elaborate description of Kapila and his hermitage is not to be found in the Pali *Sutta Pitaka*. The same remark holds true of his description of the internal life of the hermitage of Bhārgava. Even for such descriptions of the best of hermitages Aśvaghosa need not wholly be suspected of conscious or unconscious borrowings from the Aranyakāṇḍa of the *Rāmāyana*, it being easy to find a prototype of these in the legend of Śāriputta in the Pali book of *Apadāna*.⁶

One thing is certain, namely, that in Aśvaghosa's description, whether of Kapila's hermitage or of Kapilavastu the city, there is a greater Brahmanical colouring and much less of making it a substitute for the Buddhist ideal, there is hardly any jarring note or tendency to fault-finding. For example, in connection with the Śākya princes who founded the city of Kapilavastu, Aśvaghosa says

Samājairutsavairdāyairi kriyāvīdhubhureva ca |
alam cakruralam viryāste jagaddhāma tatpuram ||

(S, I, 55.)

'Those heroes adorned that city, the wonder of the world,⁷ with assemblies, feasts, gifts and religious ceremonies'

¹ *Mayhima*, I, 145, *Ang.*, III, 366

² *S*, I, 5 *pārśve Himavatah*, I, 43. *kukṛm Himavareh*

³ *S*, I, 57-58.

Kapilasya ca tasyarāsteaśvaminādrāmavāstunī |
Yasmātte tatpuram cakruh, tasmāti kapilavāstu tat ||
Kakandasya Makandasya, Kuśāmbasyeva cābrame |
purjo yathā hi śrīyante tathāva Kapilasya tāt ||

⁴ *Paramatthajōtikā*, I, p 110, cf II, Pt I, p 300. Śāvatthitī Savatthassa isino nāvāsanāṭṭhānabhūtā nagari yathā Kākandī Mākandī. B C Law, *Śrāvastī in Indian Literature*, p 6, D P Guha (*IO*, X, 167) is not justified in constructing the Pali statement as meaning that Kākandī is another name of Mākandī.

⁵ *Mūlinda-Pāṇho* (Trenckner's Ed.), pp 1 foll and 332

⁶ *Apadāna* (P.T.S.), Pt I, pp. 15ff

⁷ The word *jagaddhāma* is not so much 'the wonder of the world' as 'the epitome of the world'. Cf *gāma sampiṇḍite viya* in Buddhagatta's account of Kāveri-paṭṭana. Buddhagatta's *Manual*, Pt. I, Introduction, p. xv.

By his learning and wisdom, knowledge of the Vedas and various sciences, association with the aged and experienced persons, royal descent and noble heritage, many bright personal qualities and rare virtues, heroism and other warrior-like gifts, moral fortitude and benevolence, wise rule and able administration, sovereignty and foresight, devotion to religious duties and love of his subjects, Śuddhodana is made to figure as the ideal king of Āsvaghosa. He is apt to appear at first sight as the Buddhist compeer of Vālmiki's Daśaratha without the latter's drawbacks. The Hindu poet's *Rāma-rājya* without its blemishes may be seen in the happy state of things which is said to have prevailed in the Śākya territory since the birth of Siddhārtha or Sarvārthasiddha¹. The ideal king of Āsvaghosa is substantially the ideal king pictured in the Rājadharmas section of the Śāntiparva of the *Great Epic*, and no less in the Kautiliya *Arthaśāstra*. Śuddhodana is a typical Hindu king who viewed his subjects like his own sons

svābhyah prajābhyo hi yathā
tathāiva sarvaprajābhyah śivamāśaśamse || (B, II, 35)

He is not a Buddhist king in so far as his heavenly prototype is Śakra, the Thousand-eyed king of the gods, and Śakra's wife, Śaci, is the heavenly prototype of his queen Māyā². The conjugal life of a prince and his wife is pictured in the light of the conjugal life of Śakra and Śaci

sārdham tayā Śākyanarendravadhvā
Śacyā sahasrākṣa ivābhureme | (B, II, 27)

He is not a Buddhist king in so far as 'he drank *soma* according to the ritual and continually repeated the Vedas and observed the law laid down in them,'³ 'benignly at the due time with the due ceremony he caused his priests to measure out the *soma*',⁴ or 'caused the sacrificial ground to be laid out and by his protection he enabled the Brāhmanas to meditate without impediment on the Absolute'⁵. In other respects he is the ideal pre-Buddhist Indo-Aryan king as depicted in several *Jātaka*s. The Cakravartī ideal of righteous rule as propounded by the Buddha does not figure very prominently,⁶ although it seems very likely that the *rājadharma*s (royal duties) which he mentions are the ten essential duties of a righteous ruler (*dasa rājadhammā*) according to the Buddha⁷. The moral qualities of *dhṛti* (endurance) and *satya-pratijñā* (adherence at all costs to the word given) are taken by all schools of political thought to be the outstanding qualities of a good king. But Āsvaghosa's statement, *dhṛtyāvāksit pratijñāṃ sa*⁸ cannot but remind us of Aśoka's utterance *dhṛtiḥ patimānā ca mamā ayalā (acalā)*⁹. The conduct of king as a ṛṣi or seer (*rājṛṣi ṛtita*) praised by the Buddhist poet¹⁰ was equally a common Indo-Aryan ideal. The

¹ B, II, 1-10, S, III, 28ff

² *Buddhacarita*, Johnston's tr, I, 2, *Fo-sho hing-tsan-king* (Beal's tr), I, 4

³ S, II, 44 *Tenāpāya yathākalpam somaśca yaśa eva ca |*
ṛedāścāmnāpi satatam Vedito dharmu eva ca ||

⁴ *Ibid*, 36 *Gurubhṛvrdhivat kālē saumyah somamamimāpat |*

⁵ *Ibid*, 35 *Āśrāntah samaye yajvā yajñabhūmimamimāpat |*
pālāncca dvyān Brāhma nṛvudvignānamimāpat ||

⁶ *Ibid*, 32 *Cakravartīva ca parāndharmāyābhyudāsasahat ||*

Cf *Cakkavattī-sūhanāda Sutta*, *Lakkhaṇa Sutta* in *Dīgha*, III

⁷ *Ibid*, 31 *rājadharmasthitarat*

⁸ *Ibid*, 13

⁹ *SRE*, II

¹⁰ S, II, 29

pride of belonging to a family of royal seers (*rājaraṣi-kula*) is prominent in the following description of Śuddhodana

‘Kulam rājarsivṛttena yaśogandhamavivapat ||’¹

In the Kautilya *Arthasāstra* (I, 9), the person fit for appointment as councillor or officer (*amātyas*) is expected to be endowed with the qualities of friendliness and firm devotion (*maistro dṛḍhabhaktiḥ*). This is echoed in the following qualities with which Aśvaghosa endows his ideal king *śukhārda-dṛḍhabhaktivān maistreṣu*,² ‘friendship and firm devotion to allies’³. As a parallel to Aśvaghosa’s description according to which the ideal king is to carry on the administration of the kingdom as a solemn pledge (*lit.*, dedication) *rāḥyam dīkṣām va vahan*, one may aptly cite from the Kautilya *vacana* the dictum *dīkṣā tasyābhīṣecanam*,⁴ ‘the solemn pledge (self-dedication) is his consecration’.

If the ideal king is expected to think of the welfare of his subjects just as a loving father does of his sons, the ideal queen matching with him must be one who behaves like a loving mother to them. The ideal queen to the Buddhist poet is Māyā just as Kauśalyā is to Vālmiki. So we read

Prajāsu māteva hutapravṛttā⁵

In the Sutasoma Jātaka, the ideal king is expected to figure like a compassionate father or mother to his subjects, desirous of their welfare

Yathā pitā athavāpi mātā
anukampakā atthakāmā pajānam.⁶

Both Daśaratha and Śuddhodana were scions of the Ikṣvāku family of warriors. Both were kings, one of Avodhyā, the other of Kapilavastu. One had three queens and four sons, while the other had two queens and two sons. The sons of the former were to their loving father like four arms of Viṣṇu, the four-armed god, while the two sons of the latter stood on two sides of their father like the Himalaya, the highest mountain, and the Pāri-pātra, the southern range of hills. Daśaratha and Śuddhodana were both loving and dutiful fathers, and both felt deeply grieved when their sons walked out of the royal cities and kingdoms, one being banished for a period of fourteen years and joyfully accepting the punishment as if it were a self-inflicted one in order to enable his father to redeem his promise, the other renouncing the world for good in order to find out the way of escape from the grip of birth, decay, disease and death and to set an example to others. Rāma had to suffer for his father’s sins whereas in the case of Siddhārtha the renunciation was the self-chosen course of life and the attainment to which it led, was just in fulfilment of the prediction made by the Buddhas of the past. Although both Kaikeyī and Mahāprajāpati Gautamī were step-mothers, one to Rāma and the other to Sarvārthasiddha, the latter had no crooked maid like Mantharā to poison her mind, she was throughout the same loving aunt and foster-mother, and in the end a gifted female disciple. The Buddhist counterpart of Vālmiki’s Lakṣmana is Nanda, both of whom are emotional creatures with firm personal devotion

¹ *Ibid.*, 29. Cf. Hāthigumphā Inscription in which Khāravela is eulogistically introduced as *rāḥya-vamsa-kula-vinsito*—Barua, *Old Brāhmī Inscriptions in the Udayagiri and Khandagiri Caves*, p. 29.

² *Saundarananda*, II, 18.

³ Johnston translates it by ‘out of firm devotion to amity with those who were his allies’.

⁴ *Arthasāstra*, I, 19.

⁵ *Buddhacarita* (Cowell’s Ed.), I, 16.

⁶ *Jātaka*, V, p. 504. Cf. Aśoka’s *SRE*, II.

to the elder brother who to each of them was the *guru*. Both Lakṣmana and Nanda were separated from their wives. In Lakṣmana we find a younger brother noted for the spirit of self-abnegation, while Nanda represents a most handsome man of passionate nature, full of human weakness. Ūrmilā, the wife of the former, passes as a guileless woman who ungrudgingly bore the pain of separation from her husband, whereas Sundarī, the wife of the latter and the most handsome woman was the beauty of the age with a passionate longing for the company of her husband. Nanda followed his elder brother and *guru* inwardly oppressed by the torments of sexual passion. But Lakṣmana followed Rāma to fall at last a victim at the hands of Kālā (Death), while Nanda followed the Buddha, his elder brother and *guru*, only to escape from the bondage of sin and the clutches of decay and death. Although one may feel that some earlier form of the love-story of Vidyā-Sundara was in the historical background of the love-story of Sundara-Nanda, the redeeming features of the latter are that there is nothing to offend the moral taste and that its culmination is not the physical union of the two lovers. Yaśodharā, the beloved and devoted wife of Siddhārtha, stands pre-eminently as the Buddhist match for Jānakī, the wife of Rāma, even she is more than a match. Sitā, whose Buddhist counterpart is really Mādri, the wife of Viśvantara (Pālī Vessantara), the Bodhisattva, followed her husband and lord like a shadow. She was the cause of the destruction of Pālī and Rāvana and the ruin of Lankā and Ayodhyā and she was banished at last and engulfed by the Mother Earth. Yaśodharā, the wife of Siddhārtha, joined the religious order founded by her husband and lord only to find herself at the head of the Buddhist sisters.

Let us pursue further the lines of comparison and contrast as between the life of the Buddha on the one hand and the life of Rāma as depicted in Vālmiki's epic and that of Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva as depicted in Dvāpāna's *Great Epic* and *Harivaṃśa* on the other, for without it we shall miss the whole trend of Āśvaghoṣa's poetic delineation of things, events, characters, attainments, thoughts, ideas, principles, acts and teachings with their practical effects on humanity and the course of civilization. We need not bring in for comparison the life of Mahāvīra, the founder of Jainism, for the simple reason that it forms no part of the picture held before us by the Buddhist poet.

The life of the Buddha prior and posterior to the attainment of Buddhahood forms two distinct episodes precisely like the life of Rāma before and after his consecration. The life of the Buddha prior to Buddhahood is the career of Sarvārthasiddha as a highly gifted Śākya prince and heir-apparent to the throne occupied by his worthy father Śuddhodana, his life after Buddhahood is the career of the Tathāgata as the saviour of gods and men, while the intermediate period of six years is occupied by the career of Siddhārtha the ascetic who went out of the world in quest of the truth and also by his activities as a great hero whose exploits were crowned with victory at the most difficult battle with Māra. This victory led to the attainment of Buddhahood which in its turn was followed by the foundation of the kingdom of righteousness. In the case of Rāma, his life before the *abhiṣeka* is his career as a nobly gifted Ikṣvāku prince, his life after the *abhiṣeka* is his career as an ideal Hīndu king while the intermediate period of fourteen years is covered by his career as a prince in exile wandering from hermitage to hermitage, from forest to forest, with his wife Sitā and step-brother Lakṣmana and as a great hero whose exploits were crowned with victory at the arduous battle with Rāvana. This victory led to the attainment of the coveted position as a Divinity or God incarnate which

in its turn was followed by his installation as the full-fledged ruler of Ayodhyā.

As regards Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva, although a similar historical outline may be made out of the legendary account in the *Great Epic* and its supplement, his life has no appeal to Āsvaghosa except as God incarnate in the rôle of the *Guru* and teacher in the *Bhagavadgītā*. The Buddhist ethical ideal was deadly against recognizing him even as a *Bodhisattva* or previous personal form of the Buddha.¹ But the case was otherwise with Rāma. So far as the creation of ideal human characters is concerned, Āsvaghosa emulated his poetic fame with Vālmīki whom alone he freely acknowledged, as we saw, as *ādikavi*.

If Rāmarājya of Ayodhyā was the ideal state in the delineation of Vālmīki, the Śākyaarājya was equally so in the account given of it by Āsvaghosa. But the picture of the Śākyaarājya as an ideal state is held twice before us by the far-famed Buddhist poet, once immediately after the birth of Siddhārtha the prince² and subsequently after the first visit paid to Kapilavastu by Siddhārtha the Tathāgata.³ In the first instance, the picture is one of a kingdom, aglow with all the signs of security, prosperity, contentment, lawful conduct, happiness and piety, in short, all that makes for a popular heaven on earth (*pratyakṣataḥ svargamvopalabhya*),⁴ while in the second instance, it is the changed picture of the life of the people prepared to risk everything for the sake of salvation or leading a more determined and conscious life of moral rectitude and religious fervour from the inner conviction about the truth and the path. The difference between the two lies in that between the kingdom of piety, which can, according to the Buddha, be founded by a virtuous and gifted king overlord (*cakravartin*), and the kingdom of righteousness which is brought into existence by an enlightened teacher of gods and men—a supreme Buddha.⁵

The study of Buddhism has now reached a stage when we are called upon to distinguish between Buddhism from the Buddha's standpoint and that from the standpoint of his disciples and lay-worshippers. If the search for truth and the sure way of salvation be, as suggested, the distinctive feature of the first, the *śaranāgati* is undoubtedly the distinctive feature of the second. The whole career of Siddhārtha the ascetic, as depicted by Āsvaghosa and others, makes indeed an inspiring and instructive history of the search for truth and its epoch-making result, namely, the attainment of Buddhahood, while the subsequent career of the Buddha Tathāgata is occupied by the vigorous and effective teaching of the Noble Eightfold Path. The latter gave rise to a new *śaranāgati* by ardently following which one might be sure of escaping from the rounds of birth and death with the attendant ills and realizing *Nirvāṇa*.

According to the *Bhagavadgītā* (VII, 16) the *śaranāgati* is resorted to by the four kinds of persons: one afflicted with a malady, one seeking after truth, one desirous of worldly advantage, and one guided by knowledge and wisdom:

Caturvidhā bhajante mām janāḥ sukṛtino'ṛjuna |
ārtto nijnāsurarthārthi jñāni ca Bharatarabha ||

The fourth man is ranked the best for the reason that he is led through many births by the noblest of desires and purposes and fully endowed with faith and other moral qualities and faculties, and thus endowed he rightly directs his mind to reach the godhead the essence of whose being is the

¹ Cf. *Ghata Jātaka*, No. 355.

² *Saundarananda*, III, 25-42.

³ *Dīgha*, III, pp. 73 foll. and 76.

⁴ *Buddhacarita*, II, 1-19.

⁵ *Buddhacarita*, II, 12.

supreme state of tranquillity (*parā śānti*). One realizes *Brahma-nirvāna* by obtaining this state

But as defined in the Theravāda or Hīnayāna form of Buddhism of which Āsvaghōṣa is a powerful exponent, the very word *śarana* implies that a person searching for it is inwardly driven by the fear of an impending danger as well as that the refuge sought for is one which is the most secure and safest, hence the very best that is available

Bahum ve saranam yanti pabbatāni vanāni ca |
 ārāma-rukka-cetyāni manussā bhayatajjitā ||
 N'etam kho saranam khemam, n'etam saranam uttamam |
 n'etam saranam āgama sabbadukkhā pamuccati ||
 Yo ca Buddhañ ca Dhammañ ca Sanghañ ca saranamgato |
 cattāri Ariya-saccāni sammapaññāya passati ||
 Dukkham dukkhasamuppādam dukkhassa ca atikkamam |
 ariyañ c'atthangikam maggam dukkhūpasamagāminam ||
 Etam kho saranam khemam, etam saranam uttamam |
 etam saranam āgama sabbadukkhā pamuccati ||¹

'Frightened by fear they betake themselves to many a refuge, to sacred hills, woodlands, pleasantries and tree-shrines But this is the safe refuge, the refuge which is the best, none betaking oneself to such a refuge escapes entirely from all suffering He who (however) is gone to the Buddha, the Doctrine and the Order as his refuge (and) perceives through the right understanding (the nature of) the Four Noble Truths—the Ill, its rise, its overcoming, and the Noble Eightfold Path leading to the relief from the ill,—this is verily the safe refuge, the refuge which is the best having come to this refuge, one escapes entirely from all suffering'

Thus in the Buddhist idea of *śaranāgati* the seeker of the refuge is primarily the *ārtta* or 'one who is upset' and in the course of seeking he becomes the inquirer, eager to know the things as they are, desirous of attaining to the best goods that are attainable, and becomes the wise, replete with knowledge, emancipated and living with the satisfaction that all that had to be done has been done The two typical historical examples of such a *śaranāgati* chosen by Āsvaghōṣa for delineation are those of Nanda, the half brother of Siddhārtha, and Śāriputra, who figured as the chief disciple of the Buddha.

If the *śaranāgati* and *śarana* be relative ideas, one implying the other, the best kind of *śaranāgati* must have for its refuge the best of the *śaranas* The *Bhagavadgītā* represents Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva as the best and only *śarana* for all the four classes of devotees, for He is the alpha and the omega of everything, the omniform, omnipresent and omnipotent personal God,—the Supreme Being All kinds of offering, all modes of worship are ultimately meant for Him alone, and all are exhorted to leave everything else for His sake The Sātvata or Bhāgavatic *śaranāgati* signifies the devotion to Him alone, only His worship with a single heart and accepting Him as the ultimate goal.

Manmanā bhava madbhakto madyaṅī mām namaskuru |
*māmevaṅgṇaḥ yuktavimānānāḥ matparāyanāḥ ||*²

In the Pali commentaries, the *śaranāgati* is psychologically defined as 'the birth of a religious impulse, whether due to reliance on others or not, in the form of the tendency to accept that as the ultimate, with the consciousness of the sins being utterly destroyed through one's serene faith

¹ *Dhammapada* (PTS), vv 188–192.

² *Bhagavadgītā*, IX, 34.

in that, having that for the *guru*, which impels a person to believe, thinking, "this is my refuge", "this is my ideal" ¹

We have already discussed the difference and distinction between *parapratyaya* and *aparapratyaya* in *śaranāgati* as interpreted by Aśvaghosa ²

The three Refuges usually offered for *śaranāgati* in Hīnayāna to the afflicted world are, as we saw, the Buddha, the Doctrine, and the Order. In the Mahāparinibbāna Suttanta, the Buddha suggests *kamma* as the refuge of men (*kamma-patisaranā*) ³ and in another context, exhorts his disciples to make themselves their own refuge, not others,—to be attasaranā, anaññasaranā ⁴ The Dhamma embodying all the tenets of the Master was to take the place of the Master in his absence. After the death of the Buddha one of his disciples declared 'Mayam dhammapatisaranā' (the doctrine is indeed our refuge now) ⁵ So there is no wonder that Aśvaghosa should speak of the sila (moral behaviour according to the prescribed rules of conduct) as being the *śarana* or *āśraya* for a religious aspirant

Sīlam hi śaranam saumya kāntāra va darśikāḥ ⁶

As Buddhaghosa points out, the ultimate refuge for all beings is *nirvāna* ⁷ In commenting on the predicate, *sabbatopabbham* ⁸ as applied to *nirvāna*, Buddhaghosa takes it also to mean that whatever the nature of the effort or the mode of approach, all are directed to the attainment of *nirvāna* which is the ultimate goal ⁹ Thus significant explanation of the predicate goes at once to make *nirvāna* the impersonal counterpart of Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva, the godhead of the *Bhagavadgītā*. Although the Brahma-*nirvāna* attainable within the bosom of such a godhead and the Buddhist *nirvāna* not attainable in the heart of such a Supreme Being are almost characterized alike, Aśvaghosa's depiction of *nirvāna* is faithful to the delineation which was shaping itself through the texts of the *Sūtra Piṭaka*. The extinguishing of a burning lamp when its oil is exhausted is the familiar simile suggested by Pāṇini ¹⁰ and met with alike in the Sūtra texts ¹¹ and the *Bhagavadgītā* ¹² But behind the following description of *nirvāna* by the Buddhist poet was certainly a Buddhist text such as one contained in the *Aggi-vacchagotta Sutta*

Dipo yathā nirvṛtimabhyupeto naivāvanim gacchati nāutariksam |
disam na kāmeyvidisam na kāmicit snehaksayāt kevalaneti śāntim || ¹³

¹ Paramatthayotikā on the *Khuddakapāṭha* (PTS), p. 16. *Tappavādataggurukāṭhā vihatavaddhimsitukilesa tapparāyanaṭāḷāra ppaṇatto paraṃceyyo vā aparapaccayo vā cūṭuppadō śarananugamanam* (yena) cūṭuppadena 'esa me śaranam' 'esa me parāyanan' ti. B. C. Law, *Concepts of Buddhism*, Chapter I, cf. *Sumangalavilasini*, I, p. 231.

² *Saundarananda*, V, 16–18, XVII, 15.

³ *Jāt.* VI, p. 102, *Majjhima*, III, p. 203.

⁴ *Dīgha*, III, pp. 58, 77, cf. *Bhagavadgītā*, VI, 5—uddharedātmanātmānam.

⁵ *Majjhima*, III, p. 9.

⁶ *Saundarananda*, XIII, 28, cf. XVI, 30.

⁷ *Sumangalavilasini*, I, p. 231.

⁸ *Majjhima*, I, p. 329. *Vāññānam anidassanam unanlam sabbato pabbham*.

⁹ *Papañca-sūdanī*, II, p. 413. *Pabbham ti tithassa nānam. Sabbato pabbham aseā ti sabbatopabbham. Nibbānassa kira yathā mahāsamuddassa yato yato otaritukāmā honti tam tad eva titham, atittham nāma n'atthi. Evam eva aṭṭhatipāyā kammaṭṭhānesu yena yena mukkena nibbānam osaritukāmā honti, tam tad eva tithaṃ nibbānassa.*

¹⁰ Pāṇini, VI, 2, 8, VIII, 2, 50. *nivāte vātatṛāṇe, nirvāno 'vāle*.

¹¹ *Ratana Sutta*. *nibbanti dhṛā yathāyaṃ padīpo*.

¹² *Bhagavadgītā*, VI, 19. *Yathā dipo nivātasṭho nengate sopamā smṛtī*.

¹³ *Saundarananda*, XVI, 28, cf. *Majjhima*, I, p. 487. *ayaṃ me purato aggi nibbuto ti yo te ayam purato aggi nibbuto so aggi so katamam dīnam gato, puratthimaṃ vā paccettham vā uttarāṃ vā dakkhiṇaṃ vāti. Na upeti dho Gotama. Yam hi so bho Gotama aggi imakkatthupādānaṃ paṭicca ayaṃ, tassa ca pariyādānā aññassa ca anupahārā anādhāro nibbuto.*

Although Āsvaghoṣa is most eloquent in his praise of the Master's Doctrine and the Order represented by the great Disciples of old, he is nowhere found expressly mentioning the Buddha, the Doctrine and the Order as the Three Refuges. So far as the life of Nanda is concerned, the whole stress is laid on his personal devotion to the Master. The Śākyaś are said to have 'devoutly made obeisance to the Great Sage'

mahāmunaḥ bhaktivaśāt pranemuh ¹

It is said of Nanda

Atha samrādhito Nandaḥ śraddhām prati maharsinā |
parisikto'mrteneva yuyuje parayā mudā ||
Kṛtārthamiva tam mene Sambuddhaḥ śraddhayā tayā |
mene prāptamiva śreyasā sa ca Buddhena samskṛtaḥ || ²

'So on being confirmed in the direction of faith by the Great Seer, Nanda was filled with the highest joy, as if bathed in ambrosia. The Enlightened One deemed that Nanda had, as it were, attained his goal through that faith and he too deemed that by the Buddha's initiation he had, as it were, already reached the highest good.'

But such emphasis on the importance of personal devotion to the Buddha and following him as the *guru* laid by Āsvaghoṣa in the case of Nanda does not mean that he made a wide departure from the Hīnayāna tradition. It cannot be mistaken that his intention throughout is to establish the superior worth of the Three Refuges, namely, the *Tathāgata*, the *Mokṣadharmā*, and the *Ārya Saṅgha* from the viewpoint of the *śāraṅgata* which he himself adopted in preference to the one advocated in the Brahmanical tradition.

The first Refuge is the historical founder of Buddhism. As a man, he was most favourably situated. He got the best of fathers, the best of mothers, the best of foster-mothers, the best of wives, the best of brothers, the best of peoples, the best of racial heritages, and was born in the best of continents, the best of countries, the best of nationalities, the best of natural environs. As a person, he was highly gifted, best endowed with qualities, and possessed of the best bodily form and stature. As a personality, he proved himself to be the *Tathāgata*, the *Sugata* or well-gone, the *Jina* or conqueror, and the *Dharmacakra-pravartaka* or founder of a kingdom of righteousness on a solid and stable foundation. From the point of view of the disciples, such as Nanda and Śāriputra, he was the *vināyaka* or expert trainer, the *sārathi* or driver, the *maharṣi* or great seer, the *mahāmuni* or great contemplative, the *vardehamuni*, the *hitaṁśi* or benefactor, the *mahākāruṇika* or *paramakāruṇika*, compassionate like father, mother or brother, the *śāstā* or teacher, the *mārga-korīda* or knower of the path, the *sudaiśika* or excellent guide, the *śalyoddhārakartā* or puller of the dirt, the *śokasya hartā* *śāraṅgātānam* or stealer of sorrow from the seekers of the refuge, the *śokasya kartā* *pratyagvṛtānām* or causer of sorrow to the proud and conceited, and the like. The bodily marks of great men, the divine arrangements, the predilections, the supernormal faculties and other traditional methods of dedications are availed of in establishing his divinity and divine mission. But just as in Vālmiki's *Rāmāyaṇa* the human character of Rāma is sought to be presented, so in the kāvyas of Āsvaghoṣa, the human side of the Buddha's personality is sought to be maintained and emphasized. Although the poetical dialogues in the *Bhagavadgītā* immensely influenced those in the *Śaundarananda-kāvya*, the incongruities of thoughts are not

¹ *Saundarananda*, V, 1.

² *Ibid*, XIII, 1-2

sought to be harmonized in the bold declarations and claims of an omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent Supreme Being in the rôle of a teacher, guide, eye-opener and bringer of salvation. There is nowhere the attempt to overwhelm and overawe with an omniform. The predicates applied to the Master or the glowing compliments gratefully paid to him by Nanda, that is to say, by Āśvaghoṣa, are all in harmony and in keeping with those met with in the Sūtra literature and the traditions and words of the great disciples of the past—the *Theras* and the *Therīs* ¹ The definition of the Master as in the Mirror of Faith (*Dharmādarśa*) and the Lineage of Faith (*Dharmāwaya*) guided the Buddhist poet and teacher in this and other matters.

The third Refuge is the Sangha, better the Āryasangha or Ideal Order. Āśvaghoṣa gives us a list of the great disciples of the past, which is almost in complete agreement with that of those placed foremost in different capacities and special gifts in the *Etadaggavagga* of the *Anguttara Nikāya* ² Āśvaghoṣa's list contains the names of such notable examples in the past in the practice of yoga as Kaundinya, Nanda, Kṛmīla, Anuruddha, Tīśya, Upasena, Vimala, Rādhā, Vāspa, Uttara, Dhautaki, Moharāja, Kātyāyana, Dravya, Pīṇḍavatsa, Bhaddālī, Bhadrāyana, Śarpadāsa, Subhūti, Godatta, Sujāta, Vatsa, Saṃgrāmaññit, Bhadrakṣi, Āśvajit, Śrona, Śona, Kōṭikarna, Ajita, Upālī, Vāgīsa, Yaśas, Yaśoda, Mahābhavya, Valkalin, Rāstrapāla, Sudarśana, Svāgata, Meghika, Kappluna, Kāśvapa of Uruvilvā, Mahāmahākāśyapa, Tīśya, Nanda, Pūrṇa, Pūrṇaka, Pūrṇa Śonāparānta, Śāradvatīputra, Subāhu, Cunda, Kondeya, Kāpya, Bhṛgu, Kunthadhāna, Saivala, Revata, Kausthila, Maudgalyāyana and Gavāmpatī among the *Theras*, and Ksemā and mothers of Nandaka and Nanda among the *Therīs* ³ They are obviously pitted against the *Rsis* of old, many of whom acquired notoriety for their moral pitfalls. The *Rsis* mentioned by name are Vaśiṣṭha, Parāśara, Dvaipāyana, Aṅgiras, Kāśyapa, Aṅgada, Rṣyaśṛṅga, and Śthūlasiras ⁴ It was not the intention of Āśvaghoṣa to make such an invidious distinction, it resulted incidentally from the description. The pitfalls of the sages and seers are stated just by way of illustration of the captivating powers and wily arts of women

Bhāvena garvena gatena lakṣmyā
smitena kopena madena vāghbhuḥ |
jahnubh striyo devanrparsasamghān

.5

'By their guiles, display, gait, grace, smiles, feigning of anger, intonation and pleasant voices women captivated the body of divine and royal seers' If Nanda among the Buddha's disciples were taken as typical of those with a passionate heart for the fair sex, he was taken by the hand by the great Guru, made to see things with his own eyes and understand the truth, with the happy result that he attained to Arhatship which is a saintly state above all moral pitfalls.

In the same skilful way the superiority of the Doctrine of Buddhism is suggested and sought to be established. The Doctrine consists of the main philosophy, the fundamental tenets, the prescribed methods and efforts, the ethical principles of conduct, the precepts, the ideal and the

¹ The predicates to be applied to the Buddha in the rôle of a Teacher are summed up in the *Paramatthajotikā*, I, pp. 21ff, *Sam*, I, 47, III, 84, *Mūlaka*, 70, *Sam*, I, 50, 132, 206, 301, *Anguttara*, I, 142, II, 33, III, 65, *Suttanipāṭa*, 157 foll, *Sam*, I, 186, *Dhammapadamahākathā*, I, 233, *P.T.S. Dictionary*, s.v. *Buddha*.

² B.C. Law, *Early Buddhist Brothers and Sisters*, *JRASB*, XI, 1945, No. I, pp. 39ff.

³ *Saundarananda kāvya*, XVI, 87-91.

⁴ *Ibid.*, VII, 28-36.

⁵ *Ibid.*, VII, 24.

summum bonum. If it be the task of philosophy to offer a rational and satisfactory explanation for pleasure and pain in the world, in individual lives, this explanation is to be found in the Buddha's doctrine of causation or dependent origination,¹ and not in God, not in the primordial matter, not in time, not in nature, not in fate, not in chance, not even in the Sāṃkhya doctrine of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* :

Pravṛtti-duḥkhasya ca tasya loke
trsnādayo doṣaganā nimittam |
naiveśvaro na prakṛtiṃ kālō
nāpi svabhāvo na vidhīyadrecchā ||²

'(Craving and such other flaws are the cause of suffering in the common run of the world, but neither a creator, nor primordial matter, neither time nor the nature of things, neither fate nor chance.'

And again

Yataśca saṃskāragatam vivikṭam
na kāraḥ kaścāna vedako vā |
sāmagryataḥ sambhavatī pravṛtṭiḥ
śūnyam tato lokamīdam dadarśa ||
Yasmānnirīham jagadaśvatantṛam
naivāryamekaḥ kurute kriyāsu |
tattat pratītya prabhavanti bhāvā
nirātmaḥ tena viveda lokam ||³

'Since the individual is a mere creature of the saṃskāras, there is neither the agent nor the internal percipient. The common run (of the world) follows from the conjuncture of circumstances, he saw that the world is devoid of any abiding entity.' 'Since the world has no motive force of its own and is not self-dependent, and since there is no one being who exercises paramountcy over actions, and since states of being arise from dependence on other states, he understood the world to be without soul.'

Āsvaghoṣa has here faithfully represented the scholastic Hinayāna definition of cause as meaning a combination of circumstances (*paccaya-sāmaggi*) sufficient in itself to account for the happening of events and refutation of all theories seeking to account for such happenings by any single cause or agent.⁴

A longer discussion of the issues raised is offered in the *Buddhacarita*,⁵ and the longest in the Indian original of the Chinese *Fo-sho-hing-tsan-king*.⁶ These discussions may be regarded as mere later elaborations of the three pairs of extreme positions in thought that were meant to be avoided⁷ as well as of the canonical criticisms of the theory of creation by God, the doctrine of fate, and the doctrine of chance.⁸

The dialectics employed by Āsvaghoṣa in refuting the theistic idea of God clearly foreshadow the later treatise called *Īśvarabhaṅgakārikā*.

As to the Sāṃkhya-Yoga method of salvation advocated by Arāda Kālāma, we must observe that nowhere else in earlier Buddhist literature

¹ *Fo-sho-hing-tsan-king* (Beal's tr.), p. 194: 'Whatever things exist all spring from cause, the principles (cause) of birth and death (may be) destroyed, the way is by the means he has declared.' This is but a free Chinese rendering of the familiar Buddhist creed formula—*ye dharmāḥ hetuprabhavāḥ*, etc.

² *Saundarananda*, XVI, 17.

³ Cf. *Atthasālinī*, pp. 59ff.

⁴ IX, 63-69.

⁵ *Ibid.*, XVII, 20-21.

⁶ XVIII, 15-65.

⁷ Barua, *A History of pre-Buddhist Indian Philosophy*, pp. 406ff.

⁸ *Āṅguttara*, III, p. 440. *sabbam ahetu-appaccayā, adhvacasamuppannā; Āṅguttara*, I, pp. 173ff.—*pubbekāhetu, uccaranammānāhetu, ahetuappaccayā, Mahābodhi Jātaku* (Fausbøll), V, pp. 237ff.

is the Sāmkhya or philosophic aspect of Kālāma's doctrine described. It may be taken, however, for granted that the Yoga practice was inseparably linked up with Sāmkhya or Adhyātmavidyā¹ standing for the ascertainment of the true and ultimate nature of the soul within each of us. It is rightly said in the *Bhagavadgītā*, V, 4-5.

Sāmkhya-yogau prthagbālāb pravadanti na panditāḥ |
Yat Sāmkhyaḥ prāpyate sthānam tad yogairapi gamyate
ekam Sāmkhyam ca Yogam ca yāḥ paśyati sa paśyati ||

In the *Katha Upaniṣad* the Sāmkhya terms are employed to denote the gradation in the upward course of the Yogī from one stage of realization to another, the highest stage being reached when he gets to the *puruṣa*, and *puruṣa* alone, above the stage of the *avyakta* or unmanifest or unmodified state of the primordial matter. It is claimed that there is no stage to be reached higher than this.

puruṣān na param kimcit, sā kāsthā sā parā gatīḥ |

This is in substance the Sāmkhya-Yoga position as represented by Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva in the *Bhagavadgītā* and by Arāda Kālāma in the *Buddhacarita*². The highest stage of trance reached by Arāda Kālāma, called *ākimcanya* or 'nothingness'³ really means the stage in which there is awareness of the existence of nothing but the *puruṣa* or soul, the knower of the entire field of consciousness (*kṣetrājñāḥ*).

What is particularly important here to note is that the arguments put into the mouth of the ascetic Siddhārtha by way of criticism of Arāda's Sāmkhya-Yoga method are all in the form of subtle dialectics reminding us at once of those employed extensively in the *Mādhyaṃika Kārikā* of Nāgārjuna (B.T.S. Ed., Chap 24, verse 10, p 180). The following three *ślokas* may suffice to indicate what they are or stand for

Guṇino hi guṇānām ca vyatireko na vidyate |
rūpośnābhyām virahito na hyagnirupalabhyate ||
Prāgdehān na bhaveddehī prāggunebhyastathā guṇī |
tasmādādau vimuktaḥ san śarīrī badhyate punaḥ ||
Kṣetrājño viśāriraśca jño vā syādajña eva vā |
yadi jño jñeyamasyāsti jñeye satī na mucyate ||⁴

'For no distinction exists between the attributes and the possessor of the attributes, for instance, fire is not perceived, when devoid of outward appearance and heat. Before a conglomerate mass exists, there cannot be a possessor of the mass, so, before attributes exist, there cannot be a possessor of the attributes. Therefore the soul, as possessor of the body, being first released, is subsequently bound to it again.'

'And the knower of the field, when without a body, must be either knowing or unknowing. If it is knowing, there is something for it to know, and if there is something for it to know, it is not liberated.'

The upshot of the criticism offered is that the subject-object relation is not really transcended in the *ākimcanya* state of trance, it is just fancied that it is transcended. The *kleśas* remain latent. But this is the main point in the traditional Buddhist criticism of Arāda's, as also of Rudra

¹ *Katha Up.*, II, 18

labdhvā vidyām etāṃ yogavidim ca kṛtanam |

Brahmaprāpto virajo'bhūddu mṛtyur anyo-pyevam yo vid adhyātmam
eva |

² XII, 17-65.

³ *Ibid.*, XII, 63

⁴ *Buddhacarita*, XII, 76-78

Rāmaputra's position. Āsvaghōṣa just made explicit what is implicit in the Sūtra texts.¹

Āsvaghōṣa's representation of the Buddhist way of salvation as the Middle Path meaning the Noble Eightfold Path is thoroughly in keeping with the *Sūtras* and *Śāstras* which were authorities for him. The Tathāgata is said to have pointed out to his first five disciples.

'The emaciated devotee by suffering produces in himself confused and sickly thoughts, not conducive even to worldly knowledge, how much less to triumph over sense! . . . In seeking wisdom then it is not by these austerities a man may reach the law of life. But (likewise) to indulge in pleasure is opposed to right, this is the fool's barrier against wisdom's light. The sensualist cannot comprehend the *Sūtras* or the *Śāstras*, how much less the way of overcoming all desire! . . . I, then, reject both these extremes, my heart keeps in the middle way.'²

Although the best of hermit-life in calm, sombre, and peaceful sylvan surroundings was to be seen in the hermitage of Kapila, Āsvaghōṣa does not omit to mention that the path of asceticism could not lead to release from rebirth. With regard to the inmates of this hermitage, the Buddhist poet characteristically maintains

Samdigdhe'pyapunarbhāve viruddhesvāgameṣvapi |
pratyakṣina ivākurvamstapo yatra tapodhanāḥ ||
Yatra sma miyate Brahma kaścit kaścīna miyate |
Kāle nimiyaṭe soma na cākāle pramiyaṭe ||
Nirapekṣāḥ sarīreṣu dharme yatra svabuddhayaḥ |
samhrstā iva yatnena tāpasāstepire tapaḥ ||
Śrāmyanto munayo yatra svargādyuktacetasaḥ |
taporāgeṇa dharmasya vilopamiva cakrire ||³

'Though their release from rebirth was open to doubt and their scriptures were contradictory, yet the ascetics there practised asceticism as if possessed of supernormal perception (of its result). There some contemplated the Absolute, no one at all did hurt, *soma* was measured out at the proper time, and no one died untimely. There the ascetics, following their own opinions in the matter of religion and regardless of their bodies, practised austerities as if overjoyed with their toil. There the sages, with minds aspiring to Paradise, strove so hard that they seemed by their very passion for austerities to destroy religion (which consists in passionlessness).'

The other extreme course of life is made to be typified by the princely life led by Siddhārtha, and in a more accentuated form, by his half-brother Nanda. The life of a householder, especially in a royal house or aristocratic family, was taken to be typical of the life given up to the five varieties of sensual pleasure. For the description of the ugly, revolting and sensual scenes in a royal or aristocratic bed-chamber of the dancing girls sleeping pell-mell on the floor, the Buddhist poet need not be a borrower from Vālmīki's epic giving a vivid description of the scene Hanuman saw when he stealthily entered into Rāvana's bed-chamber at night. All that we find in Āsvaghōṣa's kāvyas may be regarded just also as a later poetical elaboration of the short description contained in the *Vinaya Mahāvagga*,⁴ the *Jātaka Nidāna-kathā*, and the like.

¹ Of Ariyapariyesana Sutta, *Majjhima*, I, pp 161ff.

² *Fo-sho-hing tsan-king* (Beal's tr.), pp 174-5

³ *Saundarananda*, I, 14-17

⁴ *Vinaya*, I, p 15. Tena kho pana samayena Bārāṇasīyaṃ Yaso nāma kulaputto seṭṭhiputto vasseke pāsāde cattāro māsā nippurusehi suriyehi paracārīyamāno na

Āsvaghōṣa's delineation of the diverse ways in which women try to captivate men's heart may similarly be viewed as an elaboration of the significant Jātaka expression, *utthi-kutthi-hāvabhāva-vilāsa*¹ meaning 'womanly wiles and guiles, gestures and postures'. But the Kunāla Jātaka enumerates the forty different signs by which a woman may seek to captivate a man.² These are certainly the artifices of lust that fall within the scope of the Indian science of erotic with which Āsvaghōṣa was intimately acquainted.

The aversion to or animadversion upon the fair sex (*strī-jugupsā*) in which Āsvaghōṣa has indulged *ad nauseam* is typically ascetic as well as Buddhistic, although, as it seems, the torments of sexual passion described by him have a personal note in them. In Āsvaghōṣa's *strī-jugupsā*, one has a clear anticipation of the reflections contained in the *strī-jugupsā* group of verses in the *Dharmasamuccaya* compiled in Nepal as the latest Sanskrit recension of the *Dhammapada*.³

The five *indriyas*, the five *balas*, the four noble truths, the seven *bodhyāṅgas*, the Noble Eightfold Path, and the remaining principal terms of Buddhism as a system of thought (*bodhipakṣikadharmāḥ*) are appropriately employed and authoritatively explained. Their opposites too, are fittingly set out in the traditional manner. The importance of *śīla*, *samādhi* and *prajñā* is sufficiently emphasized. The practice of *indriya-samvara* and *kāyagatā smṛti* and the obedience to the ethical principles receive their due importance. The successive stages of *śrāmaṇya* are set out and vividly described in the traditional manner of the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta*.⁴ Āsvaghōṣa's presentation of Buddhism is saturated with Buddhist technical terms and ideas, phrases and idioms, similes and metaphors, maxims and many *obiter dicta*. If it appears that here and there are found conscious or unconscious borrowings of expressions and ideas from Brahmanical works, these are rather fruitful heritages from his previous study.

Let us, consider, for instance, Āsvaghōṣa's description of *śīla*. He declares

Śīlanāsthāya vartante sarvā hi śreyasī kriyāḥ |
sthānādyanīva kāryāni pratisthāya vasundharām ||⁵
ataḥ śīlam nayatyagryamitī śīlam viśodhaya ||⁶
Śīlanācchīlamityuktam śīlanam sevanādapi |
sevanam tannideśācca nideśāśca tadāśrayāt ||
Śīlam hi śaranam saumya kāntāra iva daśīkaḥ |
mitram bandhuśca rakṣā ca dhanam ca balameva ca ||⁷

Here the first stanza crystallizes the ideas contained in the following words of the Buddha

Śīle patitthāya naro sapaṇṇo uttam paṇṇāṇica bhāvayam.⁸

hetthā pāsāḍām orohati. Atha kho Yasassa kulaputtassa pañcahi lāmaganehi samappi tassa samangubhūtasassa paricariyamānassa paṭigacce'eva niddā okkumi, pariyānassāya paṭigacce'eva niddā okkumi, sabbarattīyo ca telappapīpo jhāyati. Atha kho Yaso kulaputto paṭigacce'eva paṭibujjhitvā addasa sakam pariyānaṃ supantaṃ, aññissā kacce vinnā, aññissā kacce mudūgaṃ, aññissā ure ālambaram, aññam vikesakaṃ, aññaṃ vikheḷikaṃ aññā vippalapsantiyo hatthapattāṃ evaṇaṃ maññe.

¹ Jātaka (Faustböll), II, p. 128 f n 15.

² Jātaka, V, pp. 433-34, B C Law, *Women in Buddhist Literature*, p. 51.

³ *Indian Culture*, Vol. III, p. 366.

⁴ *Saundarananda*, XVII; *Dīgha*, I.

⁵ *Ibid.*, XIII, 21.

⁶ *Ibid.*, XIII, 26.

⁷ *Ibid.*, XIII, 27-28.

⁸ *Saṃyutta*, I, pp. 13 and 165.

The characterization of *śīla* and the exposition of the subject as a whole cannot but remind us of what is significantly brought out in the *Mūlinda* (p. 34).

‘ayam patitthā dharanī va pāṇinam,
idañca mūlam kusalābhivuddhiyā,
mukhañ c’idam sabbajamānusāsane
yo śīlakhandho varapāṭimokkhiyoti’

‘This is the foundation—like the earth to human beings—this is the root of increase in goodness, this is the beginning of the teaching of all conquerors (Buddhas), this is the moral precept as laid down in the excellent Pāṭimokkha’

In the *Visuddhimagga* (P T S, I, pp 8ff) too, *śīlana* is mentioned as the distinctive characteristic of *śīla*

It is undeniable that the *Bhagavadgītā*¹ lays much stress on the need of *śraddhā* (faith) for a devotee. But that does not mean that the Buddhist poet was much influenced by it. Āsvaghosa’s *śraddhā* is the first of the five *indriyas* and *balas* of Buddhism. The representation of *śraddhā* as the seed (*bījam*) of higher life² is thoroughly Buddhist. With the canonical dictum, *saddhā bījam*,³ it was easy for Āsvaghosa to elaborate the idea as follows

Punaśca bījamityuktā nimitam śreyasotpadā |
pāvanārthena pāpasya nadityabhihitā punaḥ ||
Yasmāddharmasya cōtpattau śraddhā kāranamuttamam |
mayoktā kāryatastasmāt tatra tatra tathā tathā ||
Śiddhāṅkuraṃ māmam tasmāt samvardhayitumarhasi |
tad vṛddhau vardhate dharmo mūlavṛddhau yathā drumah ||⁴

The same remark applies with equal force to the Buddhist poet’s delineation of *virya* (energy) and other faculties and powers

One may naturally be inclined to trace the influence of the then known Sāmkhya doctrine in Āsvaghosa’s definition of *duḥkha* (suffering), according to which the essence of suffering is the impediment to free will (*bādhātmakam duḥkhamidam*)⁵. The mention of fluidity as the essential quality of the element of water and hardness as that of earth (*apām dravatvam kathanatvamurvyāḥ*),⁶ and representation of the purposes of religious efforts (*samyak pradhānāḥ*) in such negative terms as *alabdhasyālābho nityatamupulabdhasya vṛgamah*⁷ also bear testimony to his previous study of the Brahmanical system of thought. The four terms, *sāma*, *dāna*, *bheda* and *danda*, connoting the fourfold policy of the state⁸ may similarly point to Brahmanical works on polity as their source. But these are commonplaces for a learned and intelligent man like Āsvaghosa born and brought up in Brahmanical tradition. The main trend of his thought is Buddhist, nothing but Buddhist. If other ideas came along with it, they did so as they were found not incompatible with the Buddhist mode of thinking

¹ IV, 39-40, VI, 47, VII, 21-22, XVII, 2-3

² *Saundarananda*, XII, 39

³ ‘Saddhā bījam, tapo vuttu, paññā me yuganāṅgalam’—*Sutta Nipāta* (P T S), p. 13

⁴ *Saundarananda*, XII, 39-41

⁵ *Ibid.*, XVI, 4

⁶ *Ibid.*, XVI, 12

⁷ *Ibid.*, XVI, 95, cf. Kauṭilya’s *Arthaśāstra*, I, 4, *alabdhalābhārthā, labdhaparivṛkṣant*

⁸ *Saundarananda*, XV, 61.

*Sāmnā dānena bhedenā dandena nīyamena vā |
prāpto hi rābhāso mṛtyuḥ prāśhantun na śakyate ||*

CHAPTER V

ĀSVAGHOSA'S DELINEATIONS

The effectiveness of Āsvaghosa's narration is freely admitted as a distinctive feature of the kāvyas of Āsvaghosa. In the preceding chapter we have tried to show how the great Buddhist poet sought to exhibit his art of delineation through an easy-flowing narration of episodes. In other words, how men and things as depicted by him were to assume an ideal character of their own. His art of narration has so far been sufficiently emphasized but not his art of delineation of characters. The two kāvyas of Āsvaghosa may be shown to differ from each other in these respects. In the *Buddhacarita* the art of delineation is subordinated to that of narration, while in the *Saundarananda* the latter is subordinated to the former. The reasons for this difference are not, perhaps, far to seek.

A connected life of the Buddha was being developed by his disciples within the Vinaya framework of the Buddhist ecclesiastical history. In the two Pali or Theravāda Vinaya Books called *Mahāvagga* and *Cullavagga*, the narration of historical episodes commences from the attainment of Buddhahood and closes with the account of the second Buddhist council. The earlier life of the Buddha covered by the careers of Siddhārtha as a Śākya prince and as an ascetic is left there altogether out of account. The earlier life which was gradually developed in the Vinaya texts of other sects may be shown to have its framework in the Pali *Mahāpadāna Suttanta*¹ in which the term *Pāṭimokkha-uddesa*² is employed to mean the declaration of the higher ethical principles such as those contained in the *Dhammapāda*, and not that of the sections and rules of the Vinaya code of *Pāṭimokkha*. The *Mahāpadāna Suttanta* gives a clear hint at the growing tendency of the Buddhist mind to attach greater importance to the imitation of the Master's life or to the ethical and spiritual side of Buddhism rather than to follow a legal or formal code of conduct. Through the successive rise of the Buddhist sects and schools of thought one may watch with interest how the history of the church was gradually outweighed by the life-history of the Buddha. There was a backward move from the Buddhahood to the birth of Siddhārtha, and therefrom by further and further extension into the past to the commencement of the life of the Bodhisattva in the *pranidhāna* or mental resolve of the hermit Sumedha to become a Buddha. Āsvaghosa in his *Buddhacarita*, starts the history from the birth of Siddhārtha and closes it with the redistribution and enshrinement of the bodily remains of the Buddha by king Aśoka. It is just the First Buddhist Council that finds mention in his kāvya.

The case is quite different with his later kāvya called *Saundarananda*. The Nanda episode which is used as the main theme of narration formed also one of the many episodes of the great career of the Buddha as the teacher of gods and men. The same holds true of the Śāriputra episode which is made the main theme of Āsvaghosa's drama, the *Śāriputraprakaraṇa*. Thus the Nanda episode is relevantly fitted into the frame of the life of the Buddha. But here the Buddhist poet appears to have a free hand to consciously devote himself to the task of poetic delineation of men

¹ *Dīgha*, II, pp. 1-54.

² *Ibid*, p. 46—*pāṭimokkhuḍḍesāyāsi*.

and things in their ideal forms. The dramatic art employed in the *Śāri-putraprakaraṇa* is essentially the one and the same art of delineation of characters. Here we shall take up for consideration some typical delineations.

To raise the importance of the Śākya territory and to increase the significance of the cultural heritage of the Śākya race it was felt necessary to describe eulogistically the life and attainment of Rāi Kapila and the beauty and glory of his abode or hermitage after which the Śākya royal city was named. Āśvaghoṣa is careful, however, not to openly represent Rāi Kapila as the propounder of the Sāṃkhya system of philosophy, although he speaks of him as being a *Siddha*. In the Chinese version of the *Buddhacarita* (XXI, 24), one Rāi Kapila is said to have been converted by the Buddha to his new faith during his visit to Mahivati (Māhismati¹). Evidently this Kapila was a different individual.

The virtuous sage Kapila belonging to the family of Gautama had his abode in the Himalayan region. He practised asceticism like Kāśyapa and attained the highest proficiency in it. He used to instruct his disciple in religion like Vāśiṣṭha. The place where he fixed his abode was adorned with fruits and flowers, lotus ponds, and beautiful forests. It was full of peacocks and antelopes. Here several hermits used to observe religious practices and perform religious sacrifices with *soma* juice. They looked upon *dharma* as their only wealth. Some princes of the Ikāvāku family came to this abode to lead a forest life. Their body was like a golden pillar and their breast was like that of a lion. They had strong arms but they were endowed with grace and humbleness. Sage Kapila became their teacher. The princes became known as Śākyas, because they built a city here and lived in it surrounded by the Śāka trees. After Kapila went to heaven they killed elephants and tigers. The hermits seeing their nature left the forest and took shelter in the Himalayan mountain. The princes became sorrowful knowing that the hermits left the place. They got many wealth buried in the earth and afterwards built a beautiful city surrounded by a wide moat, having large roads and high walls like Girivraja, the capital of Magadha. This city also contained beautiful mansions and well-built houses.¹ They appointed capable, wealthy and honest relatives as royal officers, and ministers. They also built many beautiful gardens, ponds, and mote-halls with wells on all sides. This city was full of elephants, horses, and chariots. Nobody was proud of his wisdom and strength. There was no hidden treasure. It was an abode of learning and affluence. Here lived the virtuous and the learned. People were not oppressed by unlawful taxes and this was the reason why it became very populous. The city became known as Kapilavāstu because it was built in the hermitage of the sage Kapila, just as the city of Kākandī was built in the hermitage of Kakanda, and Mākandī in that of Makanda, and Kauśāmbī in that of Kuśāmba. Here the princes became famous on account of their absence of pride and strength befitting an Aryan. They were very much attached to their eldest brother who began to rule righteously like an overlord being surrounded by his brothers.

King Suddhodana, father of Sarvārthasiddha and Nanda, was the most illustrious scion of the Śākya race to whom the Śākya realm passed by lineal succession. He was unattached to worldly passions, the accession to sovereignty did not make him insolent, nor did prosperity make him despise others. He was strong and resolute, learned in the sacred lore, wise and brave, invincible before the foe, skilled in counsel, steadfast and

¹ Cf. *Jinacarita*, vv. 66-67.

gracious.¹ He was handsome yet unpretentious, courteous yet straightforward, courageous yet forbearing, masterly yet without arrogance. He was backward neither in bravery nor in liberality. He eagerly trod the traditional path of righteousness, earnestly dedicating himself to his kingly duties. Owing to his wise rule, excellent administration and efficient protection, his subjects lived peacefully and without fear. He stood as a living example of virtue and piety to the people. When he made a promise he meant to keep it and from the path of truth he never swerved but adhered to it even at the cost of life. Resplendent with self-control, glowing with virtue, and pleasing he was to the cultured. As a typical Indo-Aryan king, he regularly studied the Vedas, drank *soma* according to ritual and befittingly guarded his fame. As he was the invincible king of the Śākyaas, the vassal princes were all submissive to him. He was fully possessed of all kingly might and majesty, virtues and powers. By his conduct as a royal seer he increased the fame of his family and spread abroad his ancestors' good name. He had for his advisers the best of the ministers, and his selection of the officers was always a happy one. Himself an unwearied worshipper in due season, he caused the sacrificial ground to be laid out, and he enabled the Brahmins to meditate on Brahman without any hindrance.

The god-like king had for his chief queen Māyā, a veritable Śacī, who was in beauty like Padmā (lotus, according to the Chinese version), in steadiness like the earth, and incomparable like the goddess Māyā. She was of a pure nature, and free from anger, illusion and pride. According to Cowell's edition of the *Buddhacarita*, she behaved as a mother to the subjects. She was faithful in her duties to the superiors, and stood like the goddess of Luck in the Royal House. She kept the religious vows and the lovely forest suited to trance had a special fascination for her. It was in the womb of such a mother that the Bodhisattva, destined to be the Buddha and the saviour of mankind, took his birth. But the king had another queen, the younger one, Gautamī by name of whom was born prince Nanda. The king who was a loving and dutiful father stood between his two sons like the Middle Country placed between the Himalayas and the Pāripātra mountains.²

Thus the difference aptly suggested between the dispositions and attainments of two brothers, sons of the same father, is one between the highest mountain range of the Himalaya and the much lesser range of the Pāripātra. The elder brother, prince Sarvārthasiddha, was destined to attain Buddhahood, to found the kingdom of righteousness, and to lead gods and men along the right path to salvation, while the younger brother was destined to attain Arhatship under the training and guidance and instruction of his brother, teacher and loving *guru*. The elder brother was by his nature averse to the enjoyment of worldly pleasures, while the younger brother was passionately fond of them and inordinately attached to his wife.

Before, at and after his birth, prince Sarvārthasiddha had all things extraordinary about him. He agreed to descend on the earth from the Tuṣita heaven in response to an earnest supplication of the gods and angels. From his birth his father, king Buddhodana, gradually grew mightier in the

¹ Cf. *Jinacarita*, v. 68.

² The range of Āsvaghosa's movements seems to have confined to the Middle Country placed between the Himavat and the Pāripātra (*Saundarananda*, II, 62), the Himavat on the north, the Vindhyaśaṭha (*Buddhacarita*, VII, 54), Vindhya-pādas (B, XIII, 38) and the Pāripātra on the west and the Girivraja on the east.

possession of riches, strength of the army and allies. The royal city had richly decked horses, the kingdom came to have many excellent cows in abundant milk, the king's enemies became neutrals, the heaven rained in due time and place, the plenty of crops was harvested, all were free from want, none was poverty-stricken save and except the ascetics whose mortification of the flesh was a self-inflicted penance. Just as in the kingdom of Yayāti, son of Nahisa, so in the Śākya territory none was disrespectful to the elders, irreligious, deceitful or hurting. Here none was lacking in generosity. All signs of aggression, invasion, lawlessness and immorality disappeared. At the prince's birth in the kingdom of Suddhodana, as in that of Manu Vairasvata, joy prevailed, evil perished, piety blazed forth and sin was quenched. The immensity of the power of his newly born son, like that of a divine seer, was such that queen Māyā was unable to bear the joy it caused her, she thereupon went to Heaven to dwell there, not to say, she died.

The gentleness and outspokenness of nature is the common trait of the two brothers. Nevertheless, one of them could in no way be persuaded to keep entreaties of others and the other could be easily persuaded to do so. Thus from the worldly point of view one was disobliging and the other obliging. Prince Siddhārtha was in the pleasure-garden with his companion, Udayin, son of his father's chaplain, who was well versed in the science of erotics and politics. There the youthful damsels and opera girls made open overtures of sexual passion and advances of love. They were skilled in all the arts, adepts at captivating the feelings, possessed of beauty and charm, and pre-eminent in their endowments. With these gifts they might even grace the northern Kurus and the pleasure of Vaiśravaṇa Kubera. They could shake even lust-free seers and captivate the gods. The bodily form of the royal prince was so perfect, the glory of the brilliant signs of his person was so dazzling, benignity and gravity in his looks were such that these damsels approached him with their eyes wide open in wonder, welcoming him respectfully, with hands folded like lotus-buds. They stood around him with their minds absorbed in love, deeming him to be the god of love in bodily form, or the moon down on earth with the rays veiled. They made gestures to cause rapture with brows, looks and blandishments, with laughter, frolicking and movements. Udayin pleaded on behalf of the women, saying, 'courtesy is the balm of women, courtesy is the best of ornaments, beauty without courtesy is like a grove without flowers. What is the good of courtesy only? Accept them with genuine feeling.'¹ Udayin's pleadings were not without reproach for the prince's coldness and callousness. The prince listened to his words, supported by scriptural tradition, and replied to him, saying, 'It is not that I despise the objects of sense and I know that the world is devoted to them, but my mind does not delight in them, because I hold them to be transitory. If the triad of old age, disease and death did not exist, I too should take my pleasure in the ravishing objects of sense.'²

When Siddhārtha after renunciation saw the hermitage of Bhārgava with the deer sleeping in perfect trust and the birds sitting at peace, he alighted from his horse to show honour to asceticism and in accordance with his politeness. With the gait of a lion he entered that arena of a deer, himself like a deer. At the sight of him, the lamp of the Ikṣvāku race, shining like the rising sun, the inmates of the hermitage felt amazed as it seemed to them as if the Eighth Vasu or one of the Āśvins came down to earth. When the chief of the ascetics requested him to dwell there and

¹ *Buddhacarita*, IV, 70-71.

² *Ibid*, IV, 85-86

his disciples left nothing to be desired as regards hospitality, the princely ascetic spoke these words, gracious and significant, very gentle yet determined and dignified. 'When I reflect that I am about to go away, leaving you thus engaged, who are so hospitable and have shown me such very great kindness, I feel indeed as much grief as I did when quitting my kinsfolk. But your *dharma* aims at Paradise, while my desire is for release from rebirth and leads me not to wish to dwell in this grove. For the *dharma* of cessation from activity is apart from the continuance of active being. It is not for dissatisfaction on my part or for an offence committed by anyone else that I am going forth from this grove, for you are all like the great seers, in that you take your stand on a *dharma* that conforms with the primeval ages.'¹

The chief minister and chaplain of king Śuddhodana set out for the forest in search of the Śākya prince. They saw him sitting on the road at the foot of a tree blazing with his form like the sun when it is in the midst of a circle of cloud. They paid him due honour, as Śukra and Angrasa did to the mighty Indra in heaven, which was duly reciprocated. They sat down with his permission on either side of the banner of the Śākya race and close to him, resembling the twin stars of Punarvasu in conjunction with the moon. They persuaded him, though in vain, to return to Kapilavāstu, making their entreaties on the strength of the arguments based on worldly wisdom and the pangs of separation felt by his father, foster-mother, wife and son, other members of the royal household and the citizens of the royal capital. He listened to their words, and made an excellent and courteous reply in these words: 'I am fully aware of the feelings fathers have for their sons, more especially that which the king has for me, but though I know it, I am afraid of disease, old age and death and have no alternative but to quit my kindred. For, if in the end there were not parting from one's dear ones, who would not wish to see his dear kinsfolk?'²

The firmness of his resolve is significantly expressed in the following terms: 'I may not have seen yet the final truth, the reality of good and evil may be in dispute, and yet my decision is to follow the good. For better is the toil, though vainly, of the man who pursues the good. The scriptural tradition is uncertain. The instances of Rāma and others, quoted to justify my return, do not prove your case. Such being the case, the sun may fall to the earth, Mount Himavat may lose its firmness, but I will not return as a worldly man who has not beheld the final truth and whose senses are attracted by the objects of pleasure. I would rather enter a blazing fire than return home with the goal unattained.'³

The self-same traits of Siddhārtha's nature and character are set out and emphasized in and through his interesting conversation with king Bimbisāra.⁴ The king of Magadha is introduced as one who was 'in heroism the peer of Pāndu's son, in stature like a mountain, a lion-man with the gait of a lion'. The Bodhisattva appeared to him to be 'as it were a peak of the mountain and shining like the moon rising out of a bower of clouds,' seated 'in the majesty of his beauty and in holy tranquillity, like some being magically projected by *Dharma*'. When Bimbisāra spoke to him with a friendly face and in most cordial terms, the son of Śuddhodana paid all the compliments due to a noble scion of the Haryanka family, but he did not fail to conclude his effective reply with these pregnant words expressive of the same resoluteness of his will: 'I have not entered the forest because of any anger nor have I cast aside my diadem because of enemy arrows,

¹ *Buddhacarita*, VII, 47-49.

² *Ibid.*, IX, 76-79.

³ *Buddhacarita kāvya*, IX, 31-32.

⁴ Cf. *Suttantapīṭa*, *Pabbajjā Sutta*.

nor have I set my ambitions on loftier enjoyments, that I decline this proposal of yours. But I deem the highest goal of a man to be the stage in which there is neither old age, nor fear, nor disease, nor birth, nor death, nor anxieties, and in which there is not continuous renewal of activity'

Although the germ of sainthood was in prince Nanda, he was weak-minded and lacking in determination. But he was naturally so polite and courteous that when his elder brother, now the Buddha, asked him to come along carrying his bowl, he could not say no. The Buddha appeared at his door for alms when Nanda was spending his days merrily with his beautiful wife in a seven-storied house. A young maid saw the Blessed One going away without alms and told Nanda about it. Nanda had to leave his wife to go to the Buddha. But he and his wife were so much attached to each other—like a Kinnara couple, that it was difficult for him to remain away from her, his mind was occupied all along with the thoughts of her. He was ordained, nevertheless, as a mendicant. When asked, he did not conceal the fact about his inner longing to return to his wife. When he was shown the ravishing youth and soul-captivating beauty of the heavenly damsels (the *Apsarās*) in the Nandana grove, his interest was shifted from his wife to them. He began to lead the religious life and practise virtue for the sake of the heavenly nymphs. When Ānanda enquired of him if this was true, Nanda was shocked at heart. He heaved a deep sigh with downcast looks and a change of countenance betraying the emotions of his mind. 'From your demeanour I understand', said Ānanda, upbraiding him, 'why you follow the Law and knowing that, I am moved to laughter and compassion at the same time. You are striving to assume self-control for the sake of passion; it is as if a man were to carry about a heavy stone on his shoulder to sit down on. Just as a savage ram draws back in order to charge, so you are following the holy life for an object which is contrary to it'. Nanda felt highly ashamed when he was thus upbraided by his first cousin Ānanda for following the Law to get the nymphs. Though the passion of love predominated in him, he was not used to such ridicule. A great change for the better was brought about in him, his longings were diverted from Paradise. Seeing the nymphs he forgot his wife, and now he gave up the nymphs knowing them to be transitory as objects of pleasure.

Gautamī,¹ the aunt and step-and-foster mother of prince Siddhārtha, Yaśodharā, his wife, Sundarī, the wife of his younger step-brother, the maids of honour, the courtezans and opera-girls, the heavenly courtezans, and dancing girls are delineated by Āsvaghosa all in their purely womanly character. They are all loving and tender-hearted, sentimental and emotional. The lamentation is with them the natural mode of expression of their feelings, whether of affection, sorrow or separation.

At the departure of the prince to embrace the ascetic life and to wander alone, Gautamī's eyes became restless with despair. Unable to maintain self-control, she wailed aloud, like an osprey that has lost its nestlings. She swooned and her exclamations were all with a bestrewn face. She dwelt on the delicate forms of the prince's body and keenly felt for his physical discomforts, privations and pains. She touched his virtues as a man, the nobility of his race, his goodness, strength, beauty, learning, majesty and youth. The tears were contagious and sympathetic. Her piteous ravings drew tears in the eyes of other women in the palace who clasped one another with their arms, letting fall tears from their eyes, like shaken creepers that drop honey from their flowers.

¹ Cf. *Therīgāthā—Commentary*, pp 140-147

Then came the turn of Yaśodharā who fell disconsolate on the ground ¹ like a Brahmy duck without its mate. In her distress she uttered all sorts of lamentation with a voice choked up by sobs. 'If he wishes to carry out *dharma*', she complained, 'and yet casts me off, his lawful partner in the duties of religion and now husbandless, in what respect is there *dharma* for him who wishes to follow austerities separated from his lawful partner?' ² The true sentiment of a loving and dutiful wife was expressed when she wailed, saying, 'My heart too is certainly exceeding hard, made of stone or even of iron, in that it does not break in its orphaned state, when my lord, accustomed to all pleasures, has departed to the forests, without his royal glory' ³ Thus she fainted with grief for her husband, wept and brooded and lamented repeatedly. Thereupon other women around her mourned all aloud with tears on their faces. When Siddhārtha as a completely changed religious personality, as a perfect Buddha, revisited the Śākya royal city and Śuddhodana's royal palace, she did not enquire of her father-in-law if he had seen his son or not. But as she saw his beauteous person, she was much struck by his altered form which was then that of a hermit, and gracefully described to her child, Rāhula, the divine beauty and majesty of all the attractive marks that adorned his person, the marks of a 'great man' which would have gone to make him a universal monarch, had he chosen to remain in the world.

Sundarī was peerless among women as Nanda among men for their entrancing beauty. It seemed as if the creator had made them to surprise mortals. She stood like a divinity wandering in the Nandana grove, while Nanda was the cause of joy to his family. Three names she bore. Sundarī for her majesty and handsomeness, Mānini for her obstinacy and pride, and Bhāmini for her extreme beauty in love and for her spirit. She was like a lotus-pond in her womanly form with her laughter for the swans. She became restless as her dear husband did not come in time and she herself said thus: 'Oh lord, you are always afraid of me, you are very much attached to me. How is it that you have become so very indifferent to me? You may have fallen in love with another beautiful woman.' While she was thus lamenting, a lady entered into her room with fear, and with tears in her eyes spoke thus: 'As a cakravāka bird knows only its darling cakravāki, so he does not know any woman except you. He likes household life only for your sake and just to please you he desires to live. His brother, the Blessed Tathāgata, has ordained him.' Sundarī on hearing these words stood up and began to tremble. She cried in loud voice lifting up both her arms. Her eyes became red due to excessive crying. She threw away her ornaments and became very much restless. She could not find peace. She became tired, remained silent, and lamented much. The ladies who used to live near her palace became much grieved seeing her crying. An elderly lady embraced her and removed tears from her eyes; she then said thus: 'It is not fair to lament for the reason that the husband has taken shelter in *Dharma*. Asceticism is the ancestral property of the Ikṣvāku kings, it is not unknown to you that many wives of Śākya sages gave up their worldly life for the sake of salvation.'⁴

The Nandana is the pleasure grove of Indra, the bearer of the thunder-bolt. The Pārijāta tree shines there with all its majesty. Of other trees, some put forth blossoms in their season, some in all seasons, some bear sweet-smelling garlands and wreaths of various kinds, some look like candelabra adorned with red lotuses. All the trees provide enjoyment for

¹ Cf. *Lalitavistara*, Chap. 15.

³ *Ibid.*, VIII, 69.

² *Buddhacarita*, VIII, 61.

⁴ *Saundarananda*, Canto VI, 39-40.

the dwellers in heaven. Of the birds, some have beaks of the hue of red arsenic, crystal-like eyes, dark brown wings, and feet of the colour of red madder and half white. There are other varieties of wonderful birds. The amorous nymphs are full of joy and ravishing beauty. The grove is ever joyful, free from sorrow and grief, and all are youthful there. It appears to be a world which is in perpetual feast and free from exhaustion, drowsiness, disgust, disease or grief. Compared with it, the world of men looks no better than a cemetery, it being subject to disease, decay and death, affliction and grief.

The Śākya city of Kapilavāstu became joyful at the arrival of Siddhārtha as the Enlightened One. It became free from epidemic or disaster, like the city of Kuru, or of Raghu, or of Puru. No one experienced any danger from himself or from others or from fate. All rejoiced there as in the golden age of Manu, in happiness, plenty and virtue. King Śuddhodana obtained the first fruit of holy life. Many Śākya nobles renounced the world, those who were unable to do so owing to their affection for their children or parents, undertook to observe the precepts of conduct. The poor and the indigent abstained from coveting the wealth of others and stealing the goods of others. The rich lived a life free from lust and other passions. All were compassionate to all, never thinking of hurting anybody. They grasped the sound doctrine, all became free from questionings and held the highest and purest views.

Māra¹ is the supreme ruler of the world where passions have their free play, and beings are all subject to disease, decay and death. He is the flower-arrowed god of love (*Kāmadeva*) who is the sworn enemy of the good law and liberation. Caprice (*Vibhrama*), gaiety (*Harsa*) and wantonness (*Darpa*) are his three sons, and discontent (*Arati*), delight (*Rati*) and thirst (*Tṛṇā*) are his three daughters.² His army consists of his followers who appear in many ghastly forms and carry various weapons. Some have the faces of boars, fishes, horses, asses, and camels or the countenances of tigers, lions, and elephants, some are one-eyed, many-mouthed, three-headed with pendulous and speckled bellies. Some are without knees or thighs, or with pot-sized knees, or armed with tusks or talons, with skulls for faces, with many bodies or mutilated faces. All conceivable ugly, horrible and terrific shapes, forms and countenances are given to them. All grimaces, frownings, frightenings, hurlings, brandishings, wild orgies are described as their characteristic actions. Māra is a stubborn fighter and artful at the same time. All means he tries from the hurling of rocks and mountains down to coaxing and cajoling, enticing and softening to keep all under his sway. His daughters are the bewitchers of hearts of men, his sons are generators of violent passions in them, while his forces are suckers of the vital essence and of the mind. His exhortation to the Śākya prince whose mind was bent on the immortal state of *nirvāṇa* was 'Follow your own (traditional path of) *dharma*, give up the *dharma* of liberation. Subdue the world both with arrows and with sacrifices, and from the world obtain the world of Vāsava.'³

The world (*jagat*) is without substance or certainty. It goes to an evil end. Since it is transitory, strength is not durable. One may cynically ask where is the strength of Kārtavīrya, the thousand-armed Arjuna?² Where is the strength of Kṛṣṇa, the slayer of Kamsa?² Where is the

¹ Vide B. C. Law, The Buddhist Conception of Māra, *Buddhist Studies*, Chapter X, pp. 257 foll.

² *Buddhist Studies* (Ed. B. C. Law), p. 259, *Niddesa*, I, 96, *Suttanipāta*—*Padhāna Sutta*.

³ *Buddhacarita*, XIII, 9.

strength of Namuci, the son of Diti, or of the Kurus, or of those mighty ones who boasted of their heroism and strength? Here what holds true of strength holds equally true of the beauty of bodily form, wealth, possession, prosperity, and happiness. Both in this world and hereafter passion is the cause of suffering only and does not stand for anyone's advantage. Here inevitably all phenomena come into being from not-being and pass away again from being into not-being and since they all have a cause and that is a transitory one, the world is impermanent (*anityam*). Since the union with *karman* of whatever is born is continually operative, and it is the cause of bondage and destruction, the mundane existence is suffering (*dukkham*). Since the individual is a mere creature of the *samskāras*¹ and there is neither agent nor knower, and gliding in the cycle of painful existence follows from the conjuncture of circumstances, the world is devoid of entity (*śūnyam*). Since the world has no motive force of its own, nor is it dependent on itself, since there is no single being who has paramountcy over actions, and states of being follow from other states, the world is without soul (*nirātmakam*). *Samsāra*² means the gliding of individuals in the cycle of repeated births and deaths led by craving which is rooted in ignorance. As long as this gliding continues, calamities of many sorts, old age and the rest are produced. The existence of the body is attended with disease, decay and death, hunger and thirst, heat and cold, while the existence of mind with its concomitants involves suffering such as grief, dejection, anger, fear and the like. Suffering and nothing but suffering is the fate of corporeality. It is *Nirvāna* that stands in contrast to the world. *Nirodha*,³ *nirmoksa*,⁴ *nirvṛti*,⁵ and *nirveda*⁶ are its different synonyms. The end of suffering follows from the exhaustion of the cause of it. *Nirvāna*⁷ is the blissful, peaceful element,—the refuge which is free from the passion of craving. It makes all *bhavas* leading to pain subside. It is the salvation which is eternal, unassailable, and noble. It means the cessation of the whole of suffering. It is that supreme state in which there is neither birth, nor decay, nor disease, nor death, nor contact with what is disagreeable, neither disappointment nor separation from what is agreeable. It is that state which is tranquil, final and imperishable.⁸ Just a lamp extinguishes for ever from the exhaustion of the oil and does not depart to the earth or the sky or any of the quarters, so the saint who has reached *nirvāṇa*, does not come back to the earth.⁹ In his case the salvation means the exhaustion of corrupting factors, it is tranquility only. By extinguishing the blazing fire of the passions with the water of steadfastness, the saint comes to the highest happiness, like a man descending into a cool pool in the hot weather. There is no more for him anything which is agreeable or disagreeable, liking or disliking, he feels joy because of their absence. Like one who has obtained safety after a great danger, or deliverance from great oppression, or light in darkness, or the safe shore, or like one who has gained in health after an unbearable illness, or release from a great debt, or escape from the face of a chasing enemy, or plenty after scarcity, the saint comes to supreme state of peace.

¹ *Saṅkhāras* of Pali Buddhism. Cf. *Kathāvatthu*, 395, *Vissuddhimagga*, 530ff, *Maṅgala*, III, 99, *Dīgha*, II, 157, II, 193, etc., etc.

² B. C. Law, *Concepts of Buddhism*, pp. 82-83.

³ *S.* XVI, 26. *Nirodha* is that of the self in which consciousness transcends the sphere of senses and their objects. B. C. Law, *Concepts of Buddhism*, p. 29.

⁴ *S.* V, 15, VIII, 62; XVIII, 16.

⁵ *S.* XVI, 29.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁷ For a detailed exposition, vide B. C. Law, *Concepts of Buddhism*, pp. 76ff.

⁸ *Saundarananda*, XVI, 27.

⁹ *Ibid.*, XVI, 28-29.

In the Noble Eightfold Path as propounded by the Buddha lies the sure way to *nirvāṇa* or salvation. It is just another name for the Middle Path which discards the two extreme courses of life, one consisting in the practice of self-mortification and the other in a free indulgence in sensual pleasures. Neither of them affords us the way to the highest wisdom, nor do they bring us to true release. The first is violent and destructive of its own purpose by its extreme rigour. The second is like the way of a sickly man who eats food, not fit to eat. Of the eight factors that constitute the Noble Eightfold Path,¹ right speech, right action and right livelihood are to be practised in the sphere of conduct for the mastery of the actions (*śīlāśrayam karmaparigrahāya*), right view, right resolve and right effort are to be practised in the sphere of knowledge for the destruction of passions causing affliction (*prajñāśrayam kleśaparikṣayāya*), and right mindfulness and right concentration are to be practised in the sphere of tranquillity for the control of mind (*śamāśrayam cittaaparigrahāya*). Thus the Noble Eightfold Path involves, on the whole, the threefold practice of *śīla*, *śama* (i.e. *samādhi*) and *prajñā*. Broadly speaking it is the development of the five controlling faculties and powers called *śraddhā* (faith), *vīrya* (energy), *smṛti* (mindfulness), *samādhi* (concentration),² and *prajñā*³ (knowledge). The central idea behind all these is the practice of *Yoga* or meditation without which neither the highest happiness nor the highest knowledge is attainable.

*Śīla*⁴ is good behaviour or conduct of a person in accordance with the precepts laid down. In the absence of such behaviour or conduct there can be no proper life either for a mendicant or for a householder. It is therefore meet to live the holy life which is attended with good conduct, keeping firmly to one's vows and perceiving the danger in the smallest of faults. It is by taking one's stand on good conduct that all actions in the sphere of the supreme good are possible. It is the moral foundation of the higher life. Salvation is possible through freedom from passion, this freedom through right understanding, right understanding through intuition, and vision, these through concentration, concentration through mental and bodily ease, ease through stillness, stillness through joy, joy through joyousness, joyousness through a clear conscience in the matter of deeds, and this through the purity of morals. Good behaviour or moral conduct implies moral discipline which comes from habitual practice, habitual practice from keen desire for a thing and this from dependence on it. Moral conduct is the refuge, the guide as it were in the wilderness, the friend, the kinsman, the protector, wealth and strength.

If good behaviour or moral conduct is the outer expression of an interval state of mind centred in self-control, this control is possible through *Yoga* which enables us to hold back the senses from their objects and to reach tranquillity through concentration, while *prajñā* enables us to grasp the true nature of things and that of the way of escape from all that bind us.

¹ B C Law, *Concepts of Buddhism* (Kern Institute Monograph), pp. 34-36.

² In *samādhi* all thoughts are simultaneously and rightly centred on a particular subject. Its characteristic is absence of distraction, its immediate cause is firmness and its remote cause is happiness. Regarding purity and impurity of *samādhi*, vide B C Law, *Concepts of Buddhism*, pp. 35ff.

³ It is *paññā* of Pali Buddhism, which may also be translated as wisdom. According to Mahāyāna Buddhism, the nature of *Dharma* is the perfection of wisdom. Being free from darkness of ignorance one should practice *prajñā pāramitā*—Suzuki, *Outline of Mahāyāna Buddhism*, p. 69; of *Dhammasaṅgani*, 16, *Dīgha*, I, 62ff, *Suttanipāṭa*, 77, 329, etc., etc.

⁴ *Vinaya*, II, 162, *Samyutta*, IV, 342; *Samyutta*, II, 68; *Mūlinda*, 333, *Anguttara*, IV, 248ff.

to the world. The real urge to the higher and progressive life comes from *śraddhā*¹ meaning faith, belief, confidence as well as aspiration. Just as a man begins to dig the earth only when he believes that there is water underneath and he has need of it, or rubs the fire-stick only when he has need of fire and believes in its existence in the firestick, or sows seed in the soil only when he believes in the growth of corn there and feels need of it, so he begins to cherish the longing for the Law only when he sincerely believes in the growth of higher life through it and feels its need. Faith may be called the Hand since it grasps the Good Doctrine of itself, as a hand receives a gift. It is described as the faculty because of its paramountcy in control, as strength because of its steadfastness, and as wealth since it places us above the want of virtue. It is to be called the Reed-arrow because of its power of protecting the Law and the Jewel. It is indeed the seed from which the highest good originates and the river which cleanses us from sins. With the growth of faith grows the Law, as a tree grows with the growth of its root. But as long as the truth is not seen or heard, so long faith does not become strong and firm. When along with self-control the real truth is seen, the tree of faith bears fruit and becomes the vehicle of progress.

Energy (*vīrya*) which is released after the seed of faith is sown in the proper soil is of the greatest import. It is the means by which one may proceed to accomplish what is to be done. Without energy nothing can be accomplished, all success in the world is due to energy. Where there is no energy, there is no acquisition of what has not been acquired, and there is, on the other hand, the loss of what has been acquired. Indolence or lethargy is the cause of man's degradation. It leads him to a lower plane of existence. Indolence is the hindrance to a man's progress in life. A man gets water if he digs the earth with incessant energy. He produces fire from the fire-sticks by continuous friction. It is by ploughing the soil, and by guarding the field with great pain that a man harvests a splendid crop. By diving strenuously into the ocean the diver collects splendid jewels to rejoice over. Energy must, therefore, be displayed for the sake of tranquility which is the ultimate goal of the holy life.²

The term *smṛti* stands for the practice of mindfulness or mental awareness by a Yogin. It requires the aspirant to be fully conscious of all his actions, experiences, feelings, thoughts and the like. It requires him to fix his attention on all his bodily movements, deportments and postures. He is to guard his thoughts in all circumstances. Loss of attention makes us off the guard. It is attention that enables a person to go after all the virtues, moral discipline, and the like. The everlasting good is lost to a person if his attention is distracted. A man without attention proceeds aimlessly. Concentration (*saṃādhi*) and knowledge (*prajñā*) result both from the practice of Yoga. Concentration leads to the tranquility of mind and through knowledge the Yogin has the true apprehension of the nature of the four noble truths. Here one is auxiliary to the other. A passionate man, who has not attained tranquility of feelings, fails to find the Path. An enquiring man who has not perceived the truth and is obsessed with the presentation of sensual objects, cannot easily restrain his mind.

With the heart appeased and serene, a yogin reaches discrimination. The surest way of salvation lies through a thorough grasp of the four

¹ *Dīgha*, I, 63, III, 164 foll., *Saṃyutta*, I, 172, *Anguttara*, I, 150, 210; *Mūlinda*, 34ff; *Anguttara*, II, 149.

² *Saundarananda*, XVI, 94-98.

noble truths There is suffering which is continuous and whose essence is affliction, there is the cause of suffering whose essence is origination, there is the destruction of suffering whose essence is escape, and there is the path to tranquillity whose essence is rescuing ¹ A man attains tranquillity and is not born again by understanding with his intellect the four noble truths, and penetrating to their core, he overcomes all the infections by the cultivation of meditation ² Birth is the cause of suffering It is the root of the afflictions, old age, etc., for as the earth is the place where all plants grow, so birth is the place where all calamities grow As food, whether good or bad in itself, tends to destruction, not to the support of life, when mixed with poison, so all birth in this world, whether among animals or above or below, tends to suffering, not to pleasure ³ As wind has its birthplace in the air, as fire lies in the womb of the *śamī* wood, as water lies inside the earth, so suffering has its birthplace in the mind and body ⁴ The existence of the body involves suffering such as disease, old age, etc., and hunger, thirst, rain, heat and cold, etc., and the existence of the mind with its concomitants, when incorporated in matter, involves suffering such as grief, dejection, anger, fear, etc ⁵ The cause of this suffering from active being (*bhava*) in this world is to be found in the category of the vices such as craving and the rest, not in a Creator or Primordial Matter or Time or the Nature of Things or Fate or Chance ⁶ And for this reason it is to be known that the active being (*bhava*) of the world proceeds from the vices, so that those who are subject to passion and to mental darkness are subject to death and he who is devoid of them is not born again ⁷ Therefore the causes of birth in its many forms are desire, etc., and so they must be eradicated in order to ensure freedom from suffering The cessation of suffering proceeds from exhaustion of the cause One should, therefore, render present for himself the holy, peaceful element, the refuge which is free from the passion of desire and brings suppression, the salvation which is eternal, unassailable, and holy The means to attain salvation is the Path with its threefold wisdom and double tranquillity It should be duly cultivated by the prudent man, governing himself by the pure threefold discipline

By entering on this straight, noble, incorruptible Path with its three divisions and eight members, one eliminates the faults which are the causes of suffering and reaches the supremely blessed stage In following it are required steadfastness, simple-mindedness, self-respect, heedfulness, and discrimination, desire for little, contentment and lack of attachment, patience and dislike of mundane activity. He who perceives suffering as it really is, its origin and its destruction, attains peace by the Noble Path and associates himself with the Aryans One should, therefore, in the first instance, think of suffering as disease, in the second instance, of the faults as the cause of disease, thirdly of the destruction of suffering as good health, and fourthly of the Path as the medicine.

¹ *Saundarananda*, XVI, 4, cf. *Vissuddhimagga* (P T S.), 495-496

² *Ibid.*, canto XVI, 4-5

³ *Ibid.*, XVI, 7, 9

⁴ *Ibid.*, II

⁵ *Ibid.*, XVI, 11, 13

⁶ *Ibid.*, XVI, 17

⁷ *Ibid.*, 17-18

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