Brill's Encyclopedia of Buddhism

Volume II:
Lives

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Asaṅga/Maitreya(nātha)

Asaṅga (Chn. Wuzhuo [無著], Tib. Thogs med) was an Indian scholar-monk and author of influential treatises. Early sources have it that he hailed from Gandhara, and most modern scholars place him in the 4th or 5th century CE. Both tradition and modern scholarship regard him as a key figure in the establishment of the Yogācāra or Vijñānavāda school of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Like Asaṅga, his teacher Maitreya or Maitreyanātha (Chn. Cizun [慈尊], Tib. Byams pa, Byams pa mgon po) – who should not be confused with the 11th-century tantric master Maitreyanātha, also known as (→)Advayavajra – is credited with the authorship of several important treatises, of which the majority are Yogācāra works, but the identity and even the very existence of Maitreya are subject to much scholarly debate. Traditional Buddhist sources agree in identifying Maitreya with the high-ranking heavenly bodhisattva and future buddha of this name (Chn. Mile [彌勒], Tib. Byams pa). Since fairly early times, the Buddhist tradition was also more or less unanimous in ascribing the production and promulgation of all the early treatises associated with the Yogācāra school to the activities and cooperation of these two figures, although historical sources often disagree regarding the authorship of the individual works. Moreover, in the traditional legends and attributions of authorship, the third great Yogācāra master, →Vasubandhu, repeatedly comes into play as well. Leaving aside the already mentioned debates over Maitreya's identity, historical-minded modern scholarship tends to deviate from the traditional perspective with regard to the bulky and fundamental *Yogācārabhūmi*(*śāstra*) (Treatise on the Levels of Those who Engage in Spiritual Practice).

Traditional Accounts and Ascriptions of Authorship

The oldest source that contains details about both Asaṅga's biography and his encounter with the heavenly bodhisattva Maitreya is found in Chinese, namely, the *Posoupandou fashi zhuan* (婆藪槃豆法師傳, T. 2049; Biography of the Dharma Teacher Vasubandhu; trans. in Dalia, 2002) credited to *Paramārtha (Zhendi [眞諦]; 499–569 CE), an Indian Yogācāra scholar and translator who spent the last decades of his life in South China. According to this source, Asaṅga was born in Puruṣapura (present-day Peshawar) as the eldest son of a brahmin, and one of his younger brothers was Vasubandhu. His nature was that of a bodhisattva, but he started his religious career in the Sarvāstivāda school and practiced and mastered meditation as taught in the "Small Vehicle," that is, conservative Buddhism, but was discontented with it. Therefore, by means of his newly acquired supernatural powers, he went to the heaven of the Tuṣita gods and received instructions from Maitreya on Mahāyāna meditation. During later visits to the celestial bodhisattva, Asaṅga gained information about the meaning of all the Mahāyāna scriptures. Furthermore, Maitreya himself descended to Earth to recite and explain the "Sūtra on the Seventeen Levels," that is, the (Basic Section of the?) *Yogācārabhūmi*, at night, whereas Asaṅga again explained its meaning to the rest of the assembly of listeners during the day. Finally, the text mentions that Asaṅga also wrote commentaries on Mahāyāna *sūtra*s (T. 2049 [L] 188a8–c27). Later in Vasubandhu's biography it is related that in his old age Asaṅga summoned Vasubandhu, who was now living in Ayodhyā, back to Puruṣapura and converted him to the Mahāyāna doctrine (T. 2049 [L] 190c14–191a6). This 6th-century source already contains all the basic components of the legends surrounding Maitreya and Asaṅga, including visits to Heaven, transmissions of Mahāyāna teachings and at least one text, with emphasis on the role of meditation in this process, and the appearance of Vasubandhu on the scene.

An old source from India, namely the *Madhyāntavibhāgaṭīkā* written by →Sthiramati, who is supposed to have been →Paramārtha's (younger) contemporary, explicitly ascribes another Yogācāra text, namely, the basic verses of the *Madhyāntavibhāga* (Distinguishing the Middle from the Extremes) to the future buddha Maitreya as author, and identifies Asaṅga as the proclaimer of this text to Vasubandhu and other people (Yamaguchi, 1934, 2). Rather than explicitly describing the transmission of the text from Maitreya to Asaṅga in terms of an ascent to,

or descent from, Heaven, Sthiramati explains that "this treatise was disclosed and elucidated to him [i.e. Asaṅga] through the [meditative concentration] named 'stream of *dharma*s' [**dharmasrotas*], due to the Noble Maitreya's miraculous power" (Stanley, 1988, 5; see Yamaguchi, 1934, 4:19f.). It is also noteworthy that Sthiramati places emphasis on the fact that Maitreya's abilities come very close to those of a buddha (Yamaguchi, 1934, 2:4–7, 4:8–16; see also Stanley, 1988, 2, 5). Another old source is the Yogācāra text *Xianyang shengjiao lun* (顯揚聖教論, T. 1602; Treatise of Making Known the Holy Teaching). The ascription of the whole work to Asaṅga may very well be accurate, and is widely accepted as such in the present day, although some scholars still consider only the basic verses to be Asaṅga's work and believe that the accompanying prose should be credited to Vasubandhu (Hayashima, 1997, 23, 26f., 33n2; Choi, 2001, 6–10; Schmithausen, 1987, 261–262, n99). Unfortunately, it is – with the exception of a few citations – only extant in →Xuanzang's (玄奘; 602–664) Chinese translation. In the beginning of this text, the transmission of the *Yogācārabhūmi* from the celestial bodhisattva Maitreya to Asaṅga is also explicitly mentioned (T. 1602 [XXXI] 480b18–22; Demiéville, 1954, 384; Choi, 2001, 11). Mainly on the basis of this old source, Suguro opines that it was Asaṅga who started to ascribe the foundation of the Yogācāra school to Maitreya, possibly under the influence of a mystical experience of meeting Maitreya in person (Suguro, 1989, Eng. summary, 8). The authenticity of these introductory verses has been disputed (e.g. Davidson, 1985, 34, references in Choi, 2001, 6n37), but not conclusively (Hayashima, 1997, 27).

The 5th-century Chinese translation of the **Mahāyānāvatāra* (*Rudasheng lun* [入大乘論], T. 1634, Entry into the Mahāyāna) seemingly mentions yet another Yogācāra text, namely the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* (Ornament of the *Mahāyāna-sūtra*s; often simply called *Sūtrālaṃkāra*) and ascribes it to Maitreya (T. 1634 [XXXII] 49b12f.; Ui, 1928, 218; Davidson, 1985, 24f.). However, there is no mention of Maitreya's celestial character, nor of Asaṅga. In the closing section of the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkārabhāṣya*, the *Sūtrālaṃkāra* is said to have been spoken by the "Great Bodhisattva Suvyavadātasamaya" (Suguro, 1989, 66, 69). This is perhaps an elsewhere unknown epithet of the future buddha Maitreya. The introductory verses of several hitherto unmentioned commentaries and supercommentaries of the Indian Yogācāras refer to Maitreya's role in early Yogācāra text production as well, though sometimes in an implicit manner, or at least in a way that causes some scholarly dissent regarding their interpretation (studied extensively in Suguro, 1989). Vasubandhu's commentary on yet another Yogācāra work, namely the *Dharmadharmatā*(*pra*)*vibhāga* (Discrimination of the *dharma*s from their True Nature), for instance, identifies *Ajita (Tib. Ma pham), which should be understood at this time as a mere epithet of Maitreya, as author of the root text, and in the 11th or 12th century Vairocanarakṣita confirms this equation and adds that another expression in the same verse refers to Asaṅga as transmitter of the text (Mathes, 1996, 69, 115; Kanō, 2008, 359–361).

The next major hagiographical source after Paramārtha's biography of Vasubandhu is Xuanzang's 7th-century travelogue *Datang xiyu ji* (大唐西域記, T. 2087; Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions; trans. Li, 1996). Here Asaṅga is depicted again as a native of Gandhara (T. 2087 [LI] 879c1, 896b26f.), but his main place of activity has been shifted to Ayodhyā. In contrast to the earlier biography, Asaṅga is said to have originally belonged to the Mahīśāsakas rather than to the Sarvāstivādins, before he became an adherent of Mahāyāna teachings. Both hagiographies are somewhat ambiguous as to whether they refer to the original affiliation in the sense of the monastic ordination lineage, the doctrinal school of conservative Buddhism, or both. There is extensive research on this complex matter (Kritzer, 1999, 7–13; also Bayer, 2010, 27n65; Schmithausen, 1987, 255n68 and 256n69; Hakamaya, 2013, 312). When speaking about the revelation of the *Yogācārabhūmi* by Maitreya to Asaṅga, Xuanzang adds that other texts, namely "the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*, the *Madhyāntavibhāga* etc." have been transmitted in the same fashion (T. 2087 [LI] 896b20–29). The mention of the latter two texts is, in view of what has been said above about other fairly early sources, not very astonishing.

Regarding the authorship of works of the "Maitreya-Asaṅga complex," however, one encounters, particularly in Chinese sources, several roughly contemporary instances of conflicting evidence, for instance, the ascription of the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* to Asaṅga rather than to Maitreya (e.g. Ui, 1928; Davidson, 1985, 32, 34f.). In India, Āryavimuktisena (6th cent. [?]; Nakamura, 2014, 23f.), the composer of the oldest extant commentary on the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*, attributes

a long quotation that obviously derives from the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkārabhāṣya* to Asaṅga rather than to Vasubandhu, who is now widely considered to be the author of this commentary (Wayman, 1997, 92; Tsukamoto *et al.*, 1990, 329f., 330n64). A later commentator on the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*, namely →Haribhadra, who can be placed in the late 8th century because of his association with King Dharmapāla, assigns the origin of the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* itself to the interaction between Maitreya and Asaṅga. According to him, Maitreya has composed the text in order to help Asaṅga, who worried about his inability to extract the meaning of the Perfection of Wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*) scriptures. Haribhadra also ascribes the composition of a commentary to Asaṅga, but it is not extant (*Abhisamayālaṃkārālokā* 1.15f. and 75.17–21; see Wogihara, 1932). Finally, in 11th- and 12th-century India, the *Ratnagotravibhāga* (Explanation of the Vein of [the Three] Jewels; also known as *Mahāyānottaratantra* or *Uttaratantra*) is ascribed to Maitreya as well, including, as it seems, even the accompanying prose commentary (Kanō, 2016, 27f.). There is an isolated ascription of the *Ratnagotravibhāga* – or rather, of its first verse – to the bodhisattva Maitreya in a Central Asian manuscript from Khotan written between the second half of the 9th century and the beginning of the 11th century (Kanō, 2016, 24–27; Silk, 2015, 149). However, the earliest Chinese-language sources transmitted the text anonymously and, soon afterwards, it became associated with *Sāramati or, as some scholars prefer to reconstruct the name, *Sthiramati. Even if the latter reconstruction should be correct, this person is almost certainly different from the famous Yogācāra scholar Sthiramati (Silk 2015, 149–157; Kanō, 2016, 22–24). The *Yogācārabhūmi* was assigned to Asaṅga not only in the Tibetan tradition, but also in some Indian sources as well (Delhey, 2013, 502).

To summarize: seemingly five works were ascribed to Maitreya as their author in late Indian Buddhism. However, it seems to be unclear whether and at which point in time this group of texts was first regarded as a fixed corpus in India (Kanō, 2016, 250f.). In Tibet, however, the notion of "Five Treatises of Maitreya" soon made its appearance (Turenne, 2015). A pentad of works by Maitreya had already been established in much earlier Chinese sources, but it differed from the Tibetan list, save for the appearance of the *Madhyāntavibhāga* and the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* in both cases (Tsukamoto *et al.*, 1990, 317f.; Sakuma, 2013, 334). The Tibetan canon of Maitreya works is acknowledged by Bu ston (1290–1364; Obermiller, 1931–1932, vol. I, 53f., vol. II, 139f.). Accordingly, he also ascribes the *Yogācārabhūmi* to Asaṅga rather than to Maitreya. However, he also mentions that Asaṅga listened to Maitreya's instructions on the "Great *Yogācārabhūmi*" (*Rnal 'byor spyod pa'i sa chen po*) in the Tuṣita heaven (Obermiller, 1931–1932, vol. II, 139f.). This shows that even in Tibet, the old idea that Maitreya was in one way or another directly involved in the coming into being of the *Yogācārabhūmi* had not entirely fallen in oblivion. Bu ston's hagiographical account also contains an interesting discussion concerning whether Asaṅga was a bodhisattva in the conventional rather than strict sense of the word (Obermiller, 1931–1932, vol. II, 140–142). According to the lengthy narrative in Tāranātha's (1575–1634) *History of Buddhism in India* (Schiefner, 1868, 83–94; Chattopadhyaya, 1970, 154–170), Asaṅga listened to the five works of Maitreya in Tuṣita heaven, and later committed them to writing. In contrast, the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* (The Compendium of Abhidharma), the **Mahāyānasaṃgraha* (The Summary of the Great Vehicle), the *Yogācārabhūmi*, and the already mentioned commentary on the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* are adduced by Tāranātha as examples for Asaṅga's own works (Schiefner, 1868, 87:9–12; 88:5–8; see also Kritzer, 1999, 14f.). Moreover, in this source – and similarly already in Bu ston's account – many of Asaṅga's activities have moved even further to the east than they appeared in Xuanzang's travelogue, namely, to present-day Bihar. This is easily explainable, if one considers that this was the main center of Indian Buddhist activity at the time during which the Tibetans adopted Buddhism.

Modern Scholarly Views

In modern scholarship, the legendary accounts of Asaṅga's meetings with the celestial bodhisattva Maitreya, as well as the often irreconcilable traditional ascriptions of authorship, have for a long time been a central focus of discussion, although the examination of text-internal criteria for determining the character, authorship, and chronology of Maitreya-Asaṅga works has gradually gained more ground. Schmithausen laid special emphasis on the latter approach (Schmithausen, 1967, 109–11). Recently, Sakuma (2013) has stressed its importance

as well, whilst simultaneously arguing for reconsideration of the very concept of an author in the strict sense of the word in these circles of Yogic practitioners. Basically, two major topics of modern scholarly debates on Asaṅga and Maitreyanātha can be singled out, although it is often not possible to draw a clear line between them. One controversy concerns the question of the identity of Maitreya, which directly affects the authorship question of a great number of texts. The other controversy concerns one single text, but is by no means less important for the understanding of the early history of the Yogācāra school.

It has been shown above that – at least judging from the extant historical sources – the *Yogācārabhūmi* was the first text that was associated with the legend of Asaṅga's ascent to the celestial abode of Maitreya. Nevertheless, early on, a certain number of scholars tended to regard this text as a special case among the works ascribed to Maitreya or Asaṅga. Seemingly, this view, according to which the bulky *Yogācārabhūmi* may be a compilation rather than the work of a single author, was first expressed in Japanese scholarship (references in Deleanu, 2006, vol. I, 154). In the West, Frauwallner (1956) first voiced the opinion that the *Yogācārabhūmi* is a work of the school rather than of an individual Yogācāra master, and that its formation extended over several generations. Referring to Frauwallner, Seyfort Ruegg also emphasized that the *Yogācārabhūmi* has a special character that sets it apart from all other works attributed to Asaṅga and Maitreya (Seyfort Ruegg, 1969, 68). Roughly simultaneously, Schmithausen voiced a similar opinion, and was one of the first scholars to adduce reasons for the compilation hypothesis (Schmithausen, 1969). Gradually, scholars increasingly have adopted a similar position. Nowadays, the *Yogācārabhūmi* is widely regarded as a compilation of heterogeneous materials, rather than as the work of one or several authors in the strict sense of the word (Deleanu, 2006, vol. I, 154; Delhey, 2013, 502; Hakamaya, 2013, 312; Sakuma, 2013, 331f.; See, 2010, 1; Hayashima, 1997, 34n8; Nōnin, 2009, 21). Some scholars tend to assign the role of compiler to Asaṅga (e.g. Hakamaya, 2013, 312). Moreover, it is usually supposed that most, if not all, materials contained in this compilation predate not only the works authored by Asaṅga, but also those that may be labeled as Maitreya texts, and even the *Saṃdhinirmocana-sūtra* seems to postdate many of the materials contained in the *Yogācārabhūmi* (Schmithausen, 1969; Delhey, 2013, 502f. [with further references]; Sakuma, 2013, 335n11).

The other controversy, the debate on the identity of Maitreya, started when some scholars assumed that Asaṅga had a historical person called Maitreya or Maitreyanātha as a teacher, who was replaced by his celestial namesake (early) in the later tradition (Ui, 1928, 1929; Frauwallner, 1956). Both Maitreya and Maitreyanātha are not only designations of the celestial bodhisattva, but are also conceivable as names of historical Buddhist persons (May, 1971, 291). There is clear evidence for the existence of an Indian master bearing the name Maitreyanātha (also known as Advayavajra or Maitrīpa) in a later period of Indian Buddhism. This 11th-century author of tantric works possibly received this name because certain works ascribed to the celestial bodhisattva Maitreya played a major role in his biography (Isaacson & Sferra, 2014, 59n2). For some, it was and still is problematic to simply dismiss the unanimous belief of the tradition that Asaṅga was in direct communication with the future buddha Maitreya. The methodological problem here, and also in the *Yogācārabhūmi* debate dealt with above, is the question of whether, or to what extent, Buddhist tradition can or may be falsified by the results of modern historical-minded scholarship, or even be ignored right from the start (see Schmithausen, 1987, 183–187).

There is yet another nontraditional interpretation of the legend that rejects the identification of Maitreya(nātha) as a historical person. Demiéville was one of the most influential advocates of this position, suggesting that it is far from rare in the history of religions that single persons find divine inspiration for their ideas and writings, and in the case of the Yogācāras, it is especially their meditative practice that led them to believe that they obtained access to Maitreya as a source of knowledge (Demiéville, 1954, 381n4). Moreover, Demiéville was able to show that Asaṅga was not the only Buddhist master with legendary connections to the celestial future buddha. Conceivably, the ascription of treatises to the bodhisattva Maitreya may additionally be regarded as an attempt to lend greater authority to the new teachings of the Yogācāras (Delhey, 2009, 3n3). One may, for instance, consider Sthiramati's insistence on the high status of Maitreya (see above), and the formation of the *Saṃdhinirmocana-sūtra* in the early history of the Yogācāra school, as possible hints to such an inclination (Demiéville, 1954, 380n8). However, there seem to be major

doctrinal differences between Yogācāra works usually ascribed to Maitreya and those that are generally attributed to Asaṅga (Frauwallner, 1951, 154–158; Schmithausen, 1973, 126). Therefore, it seems that at least two composers of treatises have been at work early in this tradition. In contrast, Demiéville seems to regard it as sufficient to view the differences as developments in Asaṅga's religious and scholarly career by distinguishing between an early inspired phase of activity and a later phase during which the author systematized the views expressed in his earlier works (Demiéville, 1954, 381n4).

According to another view, which – in spite of being clearly indebted to Demiéville – to a certain extent represents a middle way between the two extreme positions, the main difference may consist in works that are hardly more than Asaṅga's compilations of older materials on the one hand, and his own original treatises on the other (Seyfort Ruegg, 1969, 55). Schmithausen objected that especially treatises unanimously ascribed to Maitreya, namely, the *Madhyāntavibhāga* and the *Dharmadharmatā*(*pra*)*vibhāga*, are, unlike typical compilations such as the *Yogācārabhūmi*, fairly consistent in terms of form and contents (Schmithausen, 1973, 126). The tendency to regard such Maitreya texts as compilations or as anonymous multiple-author works is, however, still quite common (Suguro, 1989; Sakuma, 2013, 357; Hayashima, 1983, 39f.). The common conviction of Ui and Frauwallner that Asaṅga had a historical teacher called Maitreya(nātha) has certainly become the minority position. Very often, however, both a denial of Maitreya(nātha)'s historicity and an agnostic approach to this problem are combined with the view that there must have been (a) teacher(s) or materials before the works that are most usually recognized as Asaṅga's genuine compositions (Tsukamoto *et al.*, 1990, 327; Sakuma, 2013, 333n6). Therefore, many scholars would probably subscribe to the view that it is at least heuristically useful to draw a clear line between Asaṅga's texts and those that are usually attributed to Maitreya and, for pragmatic reasons, we will continue to use the latter name for the author(s) of treatises that can be placed between the *Yogācārabhūmi* and Asaṅga's works.

In view of their age, contents, character, and historical ascriptions, the verse treatises *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* and *Madhyāntavibhāga* can certainly be labeled as Yogācāra works of Maitreya. The same has for a long time been supposed by most scholars for the *Dharmadharmatā*(*pra*)*vibhāga*, although it is extant not only in a versified version, but also as a prose text. Recently, however, major doubts have been raised regarding its antiquity (Sakuma, 2013, 334). The *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* is again a verse treatise and has been consistently ascribed to Maitreya since Haribhadra's times. However, it is generally supposed that this, in contrast to the aforementioned works, is not a Yogācāra text. Therefore, it is somewhat problematic to attribute it to the same person, except, perhaps, if one regards it as a very early work of Maitreya (Schmithausen, 1969, 821n48). The same is true for the *Ratnagotravibhāga*. In this case, there is also the problem that it consists of root verses and a set of commentarial verses. Moreover, the ascription to Maitreya is late, and earlier sources rather point to an author called *Sāramati (Silk, 2015, 149–157). Two verses from a text called **Yogavibhāga* (*Rnal 'byor gyi rnam par dbye ba*; 分別瑜伽論) and attributed to Maitreya in the Chinese tradition (Tsukamoto *et al.*, 1990, 318) are cited in the **Mahāyānasaṃgraha* (§ III.17, Lamotte, 1973). The Sanskrit text can largely be reconstructed from the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* (Pradhan, 1950, 82:18–23) and its commentary, the *Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya* (Tatia, 1976, 100:12–20 and esp. 100:21). In this commentary, as well as in the root text, the quotation is introduced as a saying of the "Exalted One" (*bhagavat*; Tatia, 1976, 100:21, preferable to Pradhan, 1950, 82:18f.). This epithet should refer to Buddha Śākyamuni rather than to the buddha-to-be Maitreya in early Yogācāra literature. Apart from these quotations, the **Yogavibhāga* is lost (Tsukamoto *et al.*, 1990, 318).

Judging from the almost unanimous traditional sources, there is good reason to believe that the attribution of the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* and the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* to Asaṅga is correct (for their traditional ascriptions, see Tsukamoto *et al.*, 1990, 349, 353n185, respectively; for a few noteworthy exceptions regarding the aforementioned text, see Bayer, 2010, 37n102; 38). Arguably, they are also his main works. Regarding the authorship of the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, there are now some scholars who take a more skeptical stance (Kritzer, 1999, 5–7; Bayer, 2010, 37–39). In any case, both these texts, of which the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* is only preserved in Tibetan and Chinese, had an enormous impact on the later Yogācāra tradition and beyond. Whereas the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* exhibits a strong tendency to compromise between Mahāyāna and conservative positions and is also not free from certain compilatory features (Schmithausen, 1987,

190–193, 189, respectively), the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* is a major contribution to the systematization of the Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda doctrine as an original Mahāyāna school of thought. The *Xianyang shengjiao lun* (T. 1602; the verses are also transmitted separately in T. 1603) has already been dealt with above. It suffices to add here that it can be largely regarded as an abridged and rearranged presentation of *Yogācārabhūmi* teachings provided with a collection of partly very long excerpts from the latter work, although it contains original sections and doctrinal elements as well.

In addition to these three important texts, there are many more works that are ascribed to Asaṅga in the Tibetan or Chinese tradition (for a comprehensive list with some further references, see Watanabe, 2000, 7–15). A short commentary on the *Saṃdhinirmocana-sūtra*, extant in Tibetan, is attributed to him (Delhey, 2013, 537). The ascription of the **Ratnagotravibhāgavyākhyā*, the prose commentary accompanying the verses of the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, to Asaṅga in the Tibetan tradition and secondary sources (Kanō, 2016, 29) is not much more likely than the ascription of the root text to Maitreya. There are attestations for the attribution of the *Triśatikāyāḥ Prajñāpāramitāyāḥ Kārikāsaptatiḥ* (Seventy Stanzas on the Perfection of Wisdom in Three Hundred Stanzas) to Asaṅga, but the problems surrounding this and closely related exegetical works on the *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā* in terms of their interrelation and differences of authorship ascription are enormous (trilingual edition, translation, and discussion in Tucci, 1956, 5–128; see also Tsukamoto *et al.*, 1990, 351–353). Regarding its doctrinal affiliation, Seyfort Ruegg sees possible links to the *Ratnagotravibhāgavyākhyā* rather than to Yogācāra texts (Seyfort Ruegg, 1969, 69f., but see also Tsukamoto *et al.*, 1990, 352n178).

Two works on meditation associated with Asaṅga are the **Dhyānadīpanāmopadeśa* (D 4073/ P 5574) and the *Liu men jiaoshou xi ding lun* (六門教授習定論, T. 1607; Treatise of Six Aspects of Meditation Instruction; see also *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*), which are only extant in Tibetan and Chinese, respectively. They have not yet been extensively studied, making it difficult to say anything definitive about their authorship (Tsukamoto *et al.*, 1990, 355f.; regarding the Tibetan meditation text, see also the preliminary remarks in Gōda, 1994). Only the verses of the *Liu men jiaoshou xi ding lun* are attributed to Asaṅga; the prose passages are ascribed to Vasubandhu. One of these verses is quoted in Sthiramati's *Triṃśikābhāṣya* and thereby preserved in Sanskrit (Tsukamoto *et al.*, 1990, 356n199; Schmithausen, 2014, 329n1508). Moreover, it is very probable that this text was composed before the 6th century, in which Sthiramati is supposed to have been active, although the latter master labels his quotation simply as a "verse" (*gāthā*). Both treatises on meditation are regarded as Yogācāra works in their respective traditions. In the case of the treatise extant in Chinese, the verse quoted in the *Triṃśikābhāṣya* affirms this classification (Buescher, 2007, *52:18f. = Lévi, 1925, 44:15f.). Asaṅga is also credited with the composition of a commentary on (the introductory verses of) Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (Seyfort Ruegg, 1981, 49; Keenan, 1989). Although this text, only extant in a poor Chinese translation (順中論, T. 1565), seems to show no traces of Yogācāra doctrines, many scholars accept the traditional authorship attribution (Keenan, 1989, 94f.). It is certainly difficult, if not impossible, to falsify the hypothesis of Asaṅga's authorship, in particular, if one regards it as a pre-Yogācāra work of Asaṅga, although the legendary accounts, as well as his *Abhidharmasamuccaya,* point to an intensive preoccupation with conservative Buddhism rather than with Madhyamaka thought.

Among further texts attributed to Asaṅga, brief exegetical works on the recollection of the Buddha, his teaching (*dharma*), and the community (*saṃgha*) are preserved in the Tibetan Buddhist canon (D 3982–3984/ P 5482–5484), but they have not received much scholarly attention. According to Gōda, the first of these three, the **Buddhānusmṛtivṛtti,* bears many similarities with a pertinent section of the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* (Gōda, 1995). Okada Eisaku points out that the text mentions a plurality of different soteriological dispositions or potentials for attaining awakening (*gotra*) believed to divide sentient beings since beginningless time, a typical Yogācāra doctrine (Okada, 2016). The Tanjur also contains a hymn on the qualities of the buddha's *dharma* body (*dharmakāya*) attributed to Asaṅga (D 1115/ P 2007). However, this has not only been transmitted as a separate work but also in the final chapters of both Maitreya's *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* and Asaṅga's *Mahāyānasaṃgraha*. It may have been extracted from the latter text in Tibet, but even if not, the ascription to Asaṅga can probably only be accepted by those who attribute the

Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra or its compilation to this author as well (Hakamaya, 1983; Griffiths *et al.*, 1989, 128–169). Finally, it is certainly safe to reject the view that Asaṅga has also composed esoteric-ritualistic meditation manuals (*sādhana*). The tantric variety of Buddhism in the narrower sense, to which these works clearly belong, arose at least several centuries after Asaṅga's lifetime.

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