

The Chapter on Right Conduct in the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*

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Introduction

The tenth chapter of the Sanskrit text of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, the *Śīlapāṭala* (*Chapter on Right Conduct*), is still lacking a comprehensive and detailed study. Mark TATZ, in the 1980s, had the whole chapter translated into English with the Tibetan translation serving as the main point of reference, while also looking into the editions of Nalinaksha DUTT and Unrai WOGIHARA for the Sanskrit (TATZ, 1986). He did, however, not consider the existing Chinese translations of the chapter, of which there are several, and thus had to restrict his approach to the "late" text as it stands today represented by its Indo-Tibetan versions. For his project such an approach was perfectly fitting, given the main focus of his study was directed to the question of how the *Chapter on Right Conduct* had been received by the Tibetan tradition and, in particular, directed to Tsong kha pa's *Byang chub sems dpa'i tshul khriims kyi rnam bshad byang chub gzhung lam*, which functions as a kind of commentary on the *Śīlapāṭala* itself and represents one of its important Indo-Tibetan exegetic traditions. Already in the first half of the 20th century, some central parts of the *Chapter on Right Conduct* had been translated into German by Ernst LEUMANN (1933-1936). His interest, however, was less on the exact content and the comprehensive structure of the chapter than rather on the parallels he had identified in what he called "Das nordarische (sakische) Lehrgedicht des Buddhismus,"¹ a text in the Khotanese language that in parts runs parallel to the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*. There is also a translation of the *Chapter on Right Conduct* into modern Japanese published in three fascicles between 1989 and 1991 by FUJITA Kōkan (1989; 1990; 1991). Both of these latter two translations are based on Sanskrit manuscripts of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*.² Extremely useful for the study of the chapter on *śīla* has further proven the excellent multilingual edition of the text by HADANO Hakuyū (1993), wherein each sentence has been arranged synoptically with the Sanskrit, the Tibetan and several of the Chinese translations.

The Position and Structure of the *Śīlapāṭala*

The tenth chapter on *śīla* (right conduct), as a part of the Sanskrit *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, is found between the chapters on generosity (*dāna*, 9th) and patience (*kṣānti*, 11th), which with effort (*vīrya*, 12th), meditation (*dhyāna*, 13th), and wisdom (*prajñā*, 14th) form the set of the six well-known perfections (*pāramitā*), all of them discussed individually in their respective chapter. It is easily understandable why

¹ Meaning, "The North-Āryan (Sakan) Didactic Poem of Buddhism."

² For the Sanskrit manuscripts, see the article by DELHEY in this volume.

the *Chapter on Right Conduct* drew particular interest among Buddhist thinkers and practitioners in later centuries. One of the reasons for that is, most likely, the overall practical content of the chapter and its importance as a kind of manual of conduct that specifies, sometimes in surprising detail, what kind of behavior the bodhisattva should avoid and what he is encouraged to do. Another reason, however, grows out of the fact that the chapter is seen as a manifestation of the new spirit of ethics that underlies and even constitutes much of what is at the very heart of Mahāyāna Buddhism in India. When the compiler(s) of the chapter state(s) (at the end of 2.4.3; see below) that they have tried to put together from diverse Buddhist scriptures formulations regarding the moral training (*śikṣāpadāni*) for the bodhisattva, being at the center of this new Mahāyānist spirit, in order to create a condensed and comprehensive set of rules (*bodhisattvapiṭakamāṭṛkā*) on which he could base himself, they reveal what they had in mind for their project.³ This proclamation, however, is an understatement. We will soon see that the *Śīlapaṭala* is more than a simple collection of moral rules. While it is certainly one of the chapter's most prominent features to draw from a range of Buddhist scriptures and to excerpt from them what seemed to be relevant for a new canon of Mahāyāna moral tenets, I think it was just as much the compiler's intention to present these points in a structurally innovative form.

As far as I can see, the threefold division of *śīla* into "the right conduct of self-discipline" (*saṃvaraśīla*), "the right conduct of accumulating beneficial actions" (*kuśaladharmasaṃgrāhakaśīla*), and "the right conduct of acting for the benefit of sentient beings" (*sattvārthakriyāśīla*; or: "the right conduct of caring for sentient beings," *sattvānugrāhakaṃ śīlam*), as it is put forward in the chapter, is a new creation of the compiler(s) – at least, I have not been able to find hints that such a structure has its origin in an earlier work, provided that such a work has come down to us at all. The arrangement of the material thus illustrates the compilers' new vision of categories of moral behavior. It soon became a rather common division, which, as it seems, henceforth could not be ignored when reflecting on the demands of the bodhisattva's right conduct.

Let me now, based on the Sanskrit text, proceed to summarize the main structure of the chapter before heading into a more detailed discussion of some specific issues.

Structure of the *Chapter on Right Conduct (śīlapaṭala)*

0. Introduction (95₁₋₉)

Ninefold *śīla* of the bodhisattva: (1) right conduct with respect to its essence (*svabhāvaśīla*), (2) right conduct in all its aspects (*sarvaśīla*), (3) right conduct of difficult acts (*duṣkaraśīla*), (4) right conduct in all directions (*sarvatomukhaṃ śīlam*), (5) right conduct of the good person (*satpuruṣaśīla*), (6) right conduct in all different aspects (*sarvākāraṃ śīlam*), (7) right conduct directed to petitioners in distress (*vighātārthikaśīla*), (8) right conduct leading to happiness here and in the afterlife (*ihāmutra-sukhaṃ śīlam*), (9) purified right conduct (*visuddhaṃ śīlam*)

1. Right conduct with respect to its essence (*svabhāvaśīla*) (95_{10-96₅})

Comprises: correctly receiving the codes of right conduct from some other person (*parataḥ samyaksamādānataḥ*); a very purified motivation (*suvisuddhāśayatayā*);

³ See 124₅₋₈. All references to the Sanskrit text of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* are with respect to the edition by DUTT (1978).

correcting transgressions (*vyatīkrāntau*⁴ *pratyāpattā*); being mindful with full attention that transgressions may not occur (*avyatikramāya ādarajātasyopasthitasmṛitayā*)

2. Right conduct in all its aspects (*sarvaśīla*) (96₆-126₁₀):

Comprises both kinds of *śīla* for the bodhisattva: being a householder (*gṛhipakṣagata*) or having gone forth (*pravrajītapakṣagata*); is threefold: right conduct of self-discipline (*saṃvaraśīla*) (2.1.1), right conduct of accumulating beneficial actions (*kuśaladharmasaṃgrāhakaśīla*) (2.1.2), right conduct of acting for the benefit of sentient beings (*sattvārthakriyāśīla*) (or: right conduct of caring for sentient beings (*sattvānugrāhakaṃ śīlam*)) (2.1.3)

2.1 Definition of the three categories of *sarvaśīla* (96₈-97₂₅)

- 2.1.1 *saṃvaraśīla*: taking upon oneself the self-discipline consisting in formal disciplinary rules (*prātimokṣasaṃvarasamādāna*)
- 2.1.2 *kuśaladharmasaṃgrāhakaśīla*: after having taken the vow, the bodhisattva strives for anything beneficial (*kuśala*); directs it to the great awakening (*mahābodhi*)
- 2.1.3 *sattvānugrāhakaṃ śīlam*: has eleven manifestations (*ākāra*); for details see below

2.2 Accomplishing the three *śīlas* (97₂₆-105₆)

- 2.2.1 Based on *saṃvaraśīla*, the bodhisattva trains and realizes it structured into ten parts (*aṅga*)
- 2.2.2 Based on *kuśaladharmasaṃgrāhakaśīla*, the bodhisattva trains and realizes it in its ten manifestations (*ākāra*): *dāna*, *śīla*, *kṣānti*, *vīrya*, *dhyāna*, and *pañcākārāḥ prajñāḥ*
- 2.2.3 Based on *sattvārthakriyāśīla*, the bodhisattva trains and realizes it in its eleven manifestations (*ākāra*)

2.3 How ceremonially to take the bodhisattva vow (*bodhisattvaśīlasaṃvara*) (105₇-108₁₁)

2.4 Specifying aspects of training and potential transgressions (108₁₂-124₁₀)

To be proclaimed before the ceremony

- 2.4.1 Four major transgressions of the bodhisattva (*pārājayikasthānīyadharmā*)
 - (1) to praise oneself and belittle others
 - (2) to refuse to give goods to the needy and not to teach those who have asked for teaching
 - (3) not to control one's anger towards others
 - (4) to reject the teachings for the bodhisattva (*bodhisattvapiṭaka*) and to adopt and enjoy other teachings
- 2.4.2 Circumstances under which the bodhisattva ruins his bodhisattva vow: a major transgression is committed (1) in case it is done repeatedly and with excessive involvement (*adhimātraparyavasthānasamucāra*), or (2) if the bodhisattva gives up the aspiration for complete awakening (*samyaksambodhi*)
- 2.4.3 Discussion of more than 40 transgressions (*āpatti*) in detail; discussion of the circumstances which mark each transgression as defiled (*kliṣṭa*) or undefiled (*akliṣṭa*)

⁴ DUTT's edition reads *vyatīkrāntaiḥ*. The manuscript has *vyatīkrāntau*.

2.5 Confession of transgressions (124₁₀-125₈)

Formula and circumstances

2.6 Summary (125₉₋₁₄)

Nothing counts as a transgression *per se*; transgressions more likely grow out of aversion (*dveṣa*) than out of desire (*rāga*); whenever the bodhisattva acts based on affection (*anunaya*) and love (*prema*), there can be no transgression

2.7 Reference to the *Vastusaṃgrahaṇī* (125₁₅₋₁₆)

Referring to a differentiation of transgressions into weak, medium and excessive

2.8 The three perfections (*sampatti*) (125₁₇-126₇)

The bodhisattva who keeps his disciplinary code realizes three perfections: the perfection of practice (*prayogaṣampatti*), the perfection of motivation (*āśayasampatti*), the perfection of beneficial results from former causes (*pūrvahetusampatti*)

2.9 Other forms of *śīla* (126₈₋₁₀)

All other forms of *śīla* treated here should be seen as parts (*pravibhāga*) of *sarvaśīla*

3. Right conduct of difficult acts (*duṣkaraśīla*) (126₁₁₋₂₀)

is threefold: (1) the bodhisattva gives up material wealth and power to take the vow; (2) he does not let go of the vow even under very difficult circumstances; (3) he is mindful and conscientious so that no transgression can take place

4. Right conduct in all directions (*sarvatomukhaṃ śīlam*) (126₂₁-127₆)

is fourfold: right conduct taken upon oneself (*samāntaṃ śīlam*), right conduct possessed inherently (*prakṛtiśīla*), repeatedly trained right conduct (*abhyastaṃ śīlam*), right conduct which makes use of strategies (*upāyayuktaṃ śīlam*)

5. Right conduct of the good person (*satpuruṣaśīla*) (127₇₋₁₀)

is fivefold

6. Right conduct in all different aspects (*sarvākāraṃ śīlam*) (127₁₁₋₂₀)

is sixfold, sevenfold, or thirteenfold

7. Right conduct directed to petitioners in distress (*vighātārthikaśīla*) (127₂₁-128₅)

is eightfold: formulation of the Golden Rule

8. Right conduct leading to happiness here and in the afterlife (*ihāmutrasukhaṃ śīlam*)

(128₆₋₁₃)

is ninefold

9. Purified right conduct (*viśuddhaṃ śīlam*) (128₁₄₋₂₆)

is tenfold

10. Results (128₂₇-129₇)

The practice of *śīla* leads to awakening; before awakening the bodhisattva will attain five benefits

11. Praise (129₈₋₁₉)

All nine categories of *śīla* (1.–9.) are included in the three categories of *sarvaśīla* (2.1.1.–2.1.3) that accomplish the three fields of activity of the bodhisattva: pacification of the mind (*cittasthiti*), maturation of the Buddha qualities (*buddhadharmaparipāka*), maturation of sentient beings (*sattvapariṣkā*)

As is evident from the length the various sections of the chapter have, *sarvaśīla* holds the most prominent position. It covers 31 of the 34 pages in DUTT'S edition – 90% of the section. Its importance is confirmed by the final section in chapter (11.), which states that all nine categories of *śīla* are contained in *sarvaśīla*, so it is beyond doubt that the author thought of this section as the core of the chapter. The other sections of the chapter, based on the classification of *śīla* in nine categories (just as is the case with the surrounding six chapters on the other five *pāramitās* and the *Samgrahavastuṣaṭa*), are arranged by the principle of the rising numbers of their subcategories. They carry little new information and evoke the impression of artificiality and "empty" scholasticism.

The Eleven Manifestations of *sattvānugrāhakaṃ śīlam*

Turning our attention now to this core section on *sarvaśīla*, a more detailed analysis of the compositional structure of the section reveals a surprising fact: the group of the eleven manifestations that constitute *sattvānugrāhakaṃ śīlam* listed in 2.1.3 (=A), appears later on in the chapter a second and a third time. They are mentioned under 2.2.3 (=B) in the discussion of how to realize this third main kind of right conduct, and they appear again, at that point negatively formulated, as a set (but not marked as such) in the last part of the discussion of more than 40 transgressions to be proclaimed during the bodhisattva-vow ceremony in 2.4.3 (=C). It is with these lists of eleven points I would like to deal for much of the remaining part of this paper.

Let me first give a short overview of the eleven manifestations of the *sattvānugrāhakaṃ śīlam* as they appear in the Sanskrit text of A (97₉₋₂₅), the first of the three passages in our text where they occur (DUTT, 1978: 97₁₀₋₂₅):

1. Helping sentient beings in beneficial matters; taking care of them in situations of suffering, such as illness (*sattvakṛtyeṣv arthopasaṃhiteṣu [vicitreṣu] sahāyibhāvaḥ / sattvānām utpannotpanneṣu vyādhyādīduḥkheṣu glānopasthānādikaḥ sahāyibhāvaḥ /*)
2. Showing the rules pertaining to worldly and otherworldly matters by explaining the appropriate means and teaching the dharma (*tathā laukikalokottareṣv artheṣu dharmadeśanāpūrvaka upāyopadeśapūrvakaś ca nyāyopadeśaḥ /*)
3. Returning assistance to those from whom the bodhisattva has experienced help by being grateful and supporting them (*upakāriṣu ca sattveṣu kṛtjñātām anurakṣato 'nurūpa [pratyupakāra-] pratyupasthānam /*)
4. Protecting sentient beings from manifold dangers such as lions, tigers, kings, robbers, water, and fire (*vividhebhyaś ca śiṃhavyāghrarājacaurodakāgnyādikebhyo vicitrebhyo bhayasthānebhyo sattvānām ārakṣā /*)
5. Dispelling worries about property and relatives (*bhogajñātīvyasaneṣu śokavinodanā /*)
6. Providing those with all commodities who are bereft of them (*upakaraṇavighātīṣu sattveṣu sarvopakaraṇopasaṃhāraḥ /*)
7. Attracting followers with the *dharma* by offering oneself as a right refuge (*nyāyapatitaḥ (?) samyāñiśrayadānato dharmeṇa gaṇaparikaṛṣaṇā /*)

8. Serving the wishes (of others) by approaching them in the course of time with greetings and conversations, by accepting food, drink, etc., by regularly operating worldly business, by coming and going when called for; summed up: (serving them but) avoiding all forms of conduct that are not beneficial or unpleasant (*ālapanasamlapanapratissammodanaiḥ kālenopasaṃkramaṇatayā parato bhojanapānādi [prati]grahato laukikārthānuvyavahārataḥ* (sic.) *āhūtasyāgamanagamanataḥ samāsataḥ sarvānarthopasaṃhitāmanāpasamudācāraparivarjanaiś cittānuvartanāt* /)
9. Delighting (others) by proclaiming their real virtues, be it secretly or openly (*bhūtaiś ca guṇaiḥ saṃprahaṛṣaṇatā / rahaḥ prakāśaṃ vodbhāvanatām upādāya* /)
10. With affection, a mental disposition which aims at the benefit (of others), and a mind turned inwards, (the bodhisattva performs) acts of coercion, rebukes, punishes, and banishes, just as much as it is (necessary) in order to turn (others) away from a state which is baneful (*akuśala*) and to direct (them) to a state which is beneficial (*kuśala*) (*snigdhenā hitādhyāśayānugate nāntargatamānasena nīgrahakriyā avasādanā vā daṇḍakarmānu-pradānaṃ vā pravāsanā vā yāvad evākuśalasthānāt vyutthāpya kuśale sthāne sannīyojanārtham* /)
11. And with the display of hells and other (shocking) realms of existences right in front of their eyes (created) by his supernatural power, he intimidates them (and) thereby (makes them move away) from baneful (modes of behaviors); in order to have them accept the teachings of the buddhas, he bends (their will), appeases them, and causes their amazement (*rddhibalena ca narakādīgatipratyakṣaṃ sandarśanatayā 'kuśalād udvejanā buddhaśāsanāvātārāya cāvarjanā toṣaṇā vismāpanā* /)

It is not absolutely clear whether I have set the divisions between the eleven points as they were intended. The Sanskrit version here leaves room for interpretation. As can be seen in the synoptic edition (HADANO, 1993), some of the Chinese translations partly subsume under the same point what appear to be two different issues in the Sanskrit; at other occasions, the Chinese versions split into two points what goes as one point in the Sanskrit. The Tibetan translation usually accords closely with the Sanskrit. What also seems to be clearly discernible is the tendency of the eleven points to become more Mahāyānist towards the end of the enumeration. Here particularly the last two items would hardly find a place in the more traditional moral precepts for the non-Mahāyānist practitioner.

However that may be, a kind of commentary on this listing under A is – as was mentioned above – found under 2.2.3 (= B). Each of the eleven items there is illustrated in some more detail, in some instances rather shortly such as in the case of 4., where the Sanskrit simply explains in B that the bodhisattva protects frightened sentient beings from fears and dangers in respect to wild animals, the king, thieves, enemies, overlords, [loss of] one's means of livelihood, defamation, and demons (101₁₆₋₁₉), whereas for example in the case of 8., i.e., "serving the wishes of others," the explanations are excessively long (102₁₅-103₂₇). These explanations not only describe how the bodhisattva has to behave according to rules of respect and politeness but also include a long treatment of the need to violate these rules whenever the bodhisattva can thereby improve another being's situation, even at the cost of causing (temporary) pain and unhappiness. The main call in the description here is for the "relocation" of the individual towards whom the bodhisattva's activity is directed from a situation which is termed *akuśala*, i.e., 'baneful' for his moral and spiritual development, to a situation that is *kuśala*, i.e., good or beneficial, an important aspect which links it closely to point 10. in our list A.

It is far from clear how these two listings (A and B) of the eleven manifestations are related. The division of the content into eleven topics does not always seem to be the same; some of the comments in B refer to very particular aspects of the items in A; others mention ideas, which are not expressed at all in A. It is, in my opinion, hardly imaginable that B was created as a systematic commentary on A by the same author. I would rather guess that the two sets have been imported from two different sources which both deal with a very similar group of eleven items without, however, being directly related to each other. Given that this List of Eleven seems to have been available in quite different lengths and styles, I assume that it should be found somewhere in the sources from which the compiler(s) of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* drew parts of their material. So far, I have, however, not been able to locate any list which could be termed a prototype.⁵

The whole situation becomes even more puzzling once we realize that in the long discussion of the more than 40 transgressions in 2.4.3 we again find our set of eleven manifestations of *sattvānugrāhakaṃ śīlam* (=C). This time, they appear at the end of 2.4.3, negatively formulated as transgressions. The whole approach in this section is rather casuistic and aims at providing the bodhisattva with specific details for the question of under which circumstances the violation of the code of behavior can or cannot be classified a "transgression" (*āpatti*), leading to a differentiation between "defiled transgression" (*kliṣṭāpattiḥ*), "undefiled transgression" (*akliṣṭāpattiḥ*), and "non-transgression" (*anāpatti*). To give an example of the way the issue is handled: On the topic of gratitude (3.), it is stated (122₁₋₆) that if the bodhisattva is not grateful towards those sentient beings from whom he has received help, and with a malicious intention (*āghātacitta*) does not return their favor, then this will constitute a serious transgression (*kliṣṭāpattiḥ*), whereas supposed the bodhisattva does not return it due to sloth and laziness, that will only count as a light transgression (*akliṣṭāpattiḥ*). Does he, however, make an effort and still cannot repay his gratitude because it is beyond his abilities, this will be a non-transgression. The same will hold true if the bodhisattva by not returning the favor wants to teach the other person a (beneficial) lesson or in case the other side refuses his assistance.

Without going into a detailed discussion of how exactly the Group of Eleven in C differs in its content from how the items are presented in A and B, it is quite obvious that, once again, we have to do with a reworking of the same basic eleven points, arranged in the same sequence as above,⁶ however with some major inconsistencies in the understanding of what the prohibitions are about and with some subtopics of the single points mentioned in the previous sections conspicuously missing. The differences among the various Chinese translations here are rather confusing. I have yet to find a convincing model that could explain this

⁵ In, e.g., T1534, the *Sān jùzú jīng yōubō tíshě* (三具足經憂波提舍, 1 fasc.), a translation of a text attributed to Vasubandhu and rendered into Chinese by Pímùzhixiān (毘目智仙) in 541 CE, we find the list of the eleven *ākāras* of the third category of *śīla* (菩薩攝眾生戒 *púsà shè zhòngshēng jiè*, **sattvānugrāhakaṃ śīlam*), which in its sequence differs from what we have in the *Śīlapāṭala* (T1534.363a₂₁-b₉). However, I think that this list ultimately derives from the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* given that it is embedded in the threefold structure of *śīla* just as it is in the *Śīlapāṭala* itself. It is more likely that, in this case, we have to deal with irregularities in the transmission of the list, possibly diverse oral traditions on which the lists are respectively based.

⁶ Again, not all the Chinese versions follow the same sequence.

diversity. As above, I would tend to assume that this formulation of the eleven prohibitions based on the *sattvānugrāhakaṃ śīlam* is not what one would expect to find in the same text if it were supposed that it was an author's aim to strive for consistency with respect to the repeated illustration of the same categories. I would therefore guess that the compiler has taken this formulation of the Set of Eleven from a source which more or less refers to the same eleven points seen in A and B but without *directly* resulting from these two lists, or – approaching the issue from the opposite direction – without a strong likelihood that this very list of transgressions served as a model based on which the passages in A and B could have been composed in direct dependency.

The position of this Set of Eleven at the end of the enumeration of the transgressions in C, however, makes perfect sense, given that that category of *śīla* to which the eleven members belong, ranges as the last of the three *śīla*-categories. It is nonetheless not evident that the first two thirds of the list of transgressions can be allotted clearly to the first two categories respectively, i.e., under *saṃvaraśīla* and *kuśaladharmasaṃgrāhakaśīla*. While some of the elements of these two categories (mentioned in sections 2.1.1 and 2.2.2 above) appear sporadically (and of course negatively) formulated in the list of transgressions, all in all there seems to be no consistency, and the kind of strong link between A, B, and C in the category *sattvānugrāhakaṃ śīlam*, which would suggest that the Group of Eleven functioned as a more established set, is clearly missing in case of the other two categories. This actually strengthens my suggestion that 2.1, 2.2, and 2.4.3 did not come into existence at the hands of a single author, but that their origins have to be found in separate textual, possibly oral, transmissions.

In terms of its compositional history, the picture that emerges for the *Chapter on Right Conduct* is thus quite representative for the whole of the *Bodhisattva-bhūmi*: for a large part, the compiler has combined elements from diverse scriptural traditions. And it is not always that he has given the needed scrutiny and care to adjust the individual elements to their parallels in other passages of his text. At the same time, however, these passages have been rearranged in a creative manner giving way to a new look at things which, at the time, was truly innovative.

The Three Main Categories of *sarvaśīla*

If we now turn to the question of what agenda the compiler of the *Śīlapaṭala* might have had, I think it is safe to say that his understanding of the term *śīla* went beyond traditional definitions that limit it primarily to aspects of self-discipline. The *Śīlapaṭala* is based on a much broader field of what *śīla* signifies and includes both spiritual and emotional training as well as the appeal to actively engage in the welfare of other living beings. The elements of the three basic categories of *śīla* as they appear in the chapter are, of course, not mutually exclusive and one can easily find aspects that would be expected to be part of *sattvārthakriyāśīla* found under the topic of *kuśaladharmasaṃgrāhakaśīla*. This probably depends on whether one is to focus one's attention on the beneficial result for the individual to whom the act is directed (= *sattvārthakriyāśīla*) or on oneself to whom results accrue through the given activity, whereby one's own progress along the spiritual path is nourished (= *kuśaladharmasaṃgrāhakaśīla*).

Why then has the author decided to structure his moral universe according to these three distinct categories of *śīla*? To be sure, the last two categories follow the differentiation between one's own benefit (*svārtha*) and the benefit of others (*parārtha*), and as such – differing from what we find in the regulations of the

Vinaya – they follow a different model of (ethical) rating, a model whose main focus is not the compliance with societal norms for religious communities or other regulations primarily in place to keep the appearance of the Buddhist order pure in the eyes of the public. In the *Chapter on Right Conduct*, we have to do with a dominantly soteriologically oriented evaluation of activities and practices which, with its category of *sattvārthakriyāśīla*, grants clear priority to their beneficial effect on other living beings.

The first category, *saṃvaraśīla*, corresponds in this scheme to the traditional *prātimokṣa* rules, a central and old part of the Vinaya regulations (though different in its content from the traditional set). A possible assumption is that the introduction of *saṃvaraśīla* as a main category of *śīla* reveals that one of the author's aims was to create a kind of *comprehensive* manual for those followers who did not want to undergo ordination as monks or nuns, and thus would not have to be acquainted with the rules of the Vinaya itself. In contrast to the monks and nuns whose status would anyway be constituted and determined by one or the other of the Vinaya sets, for the lay followers the *saṃvaraśīla* category with its specifications would function similarly but with the difference that the emphasis on the motivation for what they do would always be the most decisive factor. The differentiation into three categories of *śīla* thus seems to be especially (but not exclusively) directed to Buddhists who wanted to remain laymen and laywomen and who longed for a canon of rules that would let them train and live as bodhisattvas.

The Different Meanings of *kuśala*

Let me round up this paper with some remarks on the term *kuśala*, 'beneficial'. It is true that, among the three main categories of *sarvaśīla* discussed above, the term *kuśala* – as Lambert SCHMITHAUSEN points out in his contribution to this volume – appears exclusively in the name of the second *śīla*-category, i.e., *kuśaladharmasamgrāhakaśīla*. I do not think, however, that the author aimed at restricting the use of the term to this second category. Rather, we see that the term plays a vital role in many descriptions under the third category of *sattvārthakriyāśīla* as well. It appears to me that whenever the term is used in the second category (*kuśaladharmasamgrāhakaśīla*), *kuśala* implies the beneficial aspect of the act for the practitioner himself. If something in this sense is *kuśala*, it is, in soteriological terms, "positively charged" and, putting the particular *dharma* into practice increases one's own spiritual and moral degree of perfection. The accumulation of *kuśaladharma*s thus implies the appropriation of benefit and, in this sense, *kuśala* denotes less a potential than something like a real power inherent to the respective *dharma*.

The third category of *śīla*, on the other hand, deals primarily with the results of actions on others and how they can be lifted from a state of *akuśala* ('baneful'), i.e., a state in which it is difficult for them to have spiritual and moral growth, to a state which is *kuśala*, i.e., a state that favors spiritual and moral progress. In other words, while the term *kuśala* in the second category (*kuśaladharmasamgrāhakaśīla*) denotes the positive soteriological value of the action itself, its usage in the *sattvārthakriyāśīla* category does not touch on the act itself and thus has a somewhat profane touch. It is rather the result of the deed in terms of its potential soteriological benefit for the individual to whom it is directed. In extreme cases, as they are also discussed in the chapter (see 2.4.3), the act itself thus turns into a kind of "soteriologically uncharged" tool in reference to the agent, when, e.g., the bodhisattva has to kill a potential mass murderer in order to prevent him from a

fatal regress on that person's own soteriological path and eons of existences in the hells. That the bodhisattva here potentially has to break with one of the most fundamental principles on which Buddhist ethical life has traditionally been based – the commitment to nonviolence (*ahimsā*) – matters little.⁷ It is the result the bodhisattva's action carries in respect to the other being (and of course the bodhisattva's *motivation* for getting the action done) that is decisive. In less pretentious words: the term *kuśala* here denotes no inherent positive quality as we have had it before, but simply describes the situation as it is relevant for the other individual. This situation can be good (*kuśala*) or bad (*akuśala*) for this individual. *Kuśala* serves in this case just to characterize the quality of the external circumstances this person finds himself or herself in. They are "good," if they encourage the person to actively follow the Buddhist path. They are "bad," if they prevent him or her from engaging with the *dharma*.

Skill in Means: *upāyakaśalya*

It is interesting to observe that under this third category of *śīla*, i.e., *sattvārthakriyāśīla*, the compounds *upāyakaśalya* and *upāyakuśala* make a prominent appearance. As I have just outlined, whereas *kuśala* under the second category of *śīla* marks the practice or act itself as beneficial, under the third category *kuśala* does not denote the act but refers primarily to the external situation for the individual to whom the action is directed. Looking at this point a bit closer, it does not seem to be a pure coincidence that the term *upāyakaśalya* was chosen in order to express what *upāyakaśalya* primarily stands for: the skill (*kaśalya*) of the bodhisattva when it comes to choose and apply strategies for the spiritual advancement of other sentient beings – strategies which will put them in good (*kuśala*) external circumstances for their religious practice. Further, in order to know what is "good" for a person you have to have the appropriate skill. Here both meanings of *kuśala*, i.e., "good, wholesome, beneficial for the other" and "skillful" come together under the third category of *śīla*. It seems that we have a play of words with two meanings of the term *kuśala*, both of them being distinctively different from how we encountered the term in the second category of *śīla*, viz. in the term *kuśaladharmā*. Whereas the idea of "skill in means" is a topic deeply weaved into the whole section on *sattvārthakriyāśīla*, it does not at all appear under the second category. This could indeed reflect a relatively early state of development in the formational history of the concept of *śīla*. I imagine that once the concept of *upāyakaśalya* was firmly established and identified particularly with more advanced spiritual beings, we would see it range under the *kuśaladharmā*

⁷ According to the narrative-like descriptions in which such scenarios are discussed, the case is, however, not that simple: the bodhisattva, who is driven by compassion, is well aware of the danger for his own moral purity. And it is expressly stated that he is mentally prepared to accept the karmic consequences for this violation of *ahimsā*. This is important as it is made clear that the whole situation is not really portrayed right from the beginning as constituting a kind of automatic process which would guarantee the bodhisattva right from the beginning a maximum of merit (even when in the end it does!). I agree, by the way, with SCHMITHAUSEN's argument that the sequence of seven actions which are by their very nature objectionable (*prakṛtisāvadya*) in section 2.4.3, such as killing, stealing, and sexual intercourse, is probably a later insertion into the *Śīlapāṭala*. I am, however, less sure whether the *Upāyakaśalyasūtra* can be the source for the passage which deals with killing (cp. SCHMITHAUSEN, 2007:435f.).

category as well, given that its employment would – as a kind of automatism – also have beneficial results for the "skilful person" himself. But speculations like this are a different project, which will directly lead to more fundamental inquiries into the general history of ethics in Mahāyāna Buddhism.

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