ON BUDDHISTIC (HYBRID) SANSKRIT

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Before the publication of Franklin Edgerton's *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary* (1953) the language of the scriptures of the Northern Buddhists—such as the *Mahābhūta*, the *Lālitaśramamala*, the *Divyāvadāna* etc.—was known as Buddhist Sanskrit. The amended nomenclature seems to have been accepted by scholars without a denouement. But is the insertion of the word 'hybrid' at all necessary or desirable?

The early Buddhist scriptural works that seem to have been produced in the northern half of the sub-continent of India, as known to us, are either in Middle Indo-Aryan (Prakrit) or in a style of Sanskrit more or less removed from the language to which Pāṇini had set the standard. The Prakrit texts (mainly represented by the *Keto* and *Dhammapadas*) are written in the current language in the North-Western mountainous region where Sanskrit did not appear to have been much cultivated before the Christian era progressed a few centuries. The Buddhist scriptural works in "Sanskrit" belonged to the plains of the Madhyāvadāna and to the eastern region. No manuscript of the "Sanskrit" texts is written in Kharosthi, which lacked the long vowels and therefore was unsuitable for Sanskrit. The Gilt Manuscripts of the *Vinaya Pātra* (edited by N. Dutt) are written in the Brahmī script.

The northern Buddhist texts do not present an identical language or dialect but do represent a language style where besides the pure (i.e. Pāṇini) Sanskrit words are used along with Old Indo-Aryan words not formed according to Pāṇini, the words that are Prakritic (i.e. Middle Indo-Aryan) and the words that present an Old Indo-Aryan base and a middle Indo-Aryan suffix (ending or forming) and sīva-sīrma. But the proportion of the three types of words are not the same in the texts. In some texts the first type of words preponderates, in some the second type and in some the third type—but all in different degrees. The three types may be thus illustrated.

(i) Old Indo-Aryan (not found in classical Sanskrit): kampe 'it trembled' (perfect ending but no reduplication of the root); prachchha 'she was asked' (the suffix-sūya added to the present stem instead of the root); imā (nearer plural; Vedic); pratipatiśa 'having dropped down and forward for salvation' (+vi attached to a root compounded to prepositions); etc.

(ii) rātana 'jewel' (as in *saptaraśasaṃyayam*); dāni (as idānī); āsti (as iti); yena (Sanskrit form; for yenema); etc.

(iii) *a* Buddha 'of the Buddhās' (buddha + MIA gen. pl. ending), naravarnam 'of the superior man' (nara + MIA loc. sg. endings); puraṣmatatī 'with a hundred purāna coins' (purapuṣatā + MIA + enī insī; pl. ending); abhātec 'it occurred' (ābha + MIA ending, third pers. sg.); etc.

(iv) bhavatī 'it shall be' (OIA bha + OIA-saytī); dhāvanti 'they hold' (MIA dhīrē/-dhāvaya + OIA-saytī); okastu 'come down to' (MIA dhīrē/-dhāvaya + OIA-saytī);
Buddhist Sanskrit is not a hybrid language although its words are often not homogeneous. The over-all pattern or structure of the language is an Old Indo-Aryan language that was much akin to Sanskrit but unlike it was not rigidly controlled by the grammarians. It was a free kind of language that was used by ordinary men, not aspiring for Brahmanical scholarship or nomenclature. It was what may be called Spoken Sanskrit. By its nature it was an unstable literary or business language varying according to time and place. To call such a language 'hybrid' is not correct. Buddhist Sanskrit was not an artificially made up language fashioned by fusing Sanskrit and the Prakrits. Any language whether spoken or literary, including the Pāñcini and Creole etc has its distinct basic or seed language, however, inescapable it may be. As regards the vocabulary there is no language which is not more or less heredomix. There is bound to be some borrowed element. Is the case of Buddhist Sanskrit its indebtedness in this respect is heavy. But that is only natural. Both Sanskrit and the Prakrits were influential contemporary speeches which controlled between then its career which ultimately vanished into Sanskrit.

Buddhist Sanskrit was not a heretic language; it was a general language, the spoken Sanskrit of the few centuries before and after Christ. It was used as an administrative language in Madhyadesa by Kanishka and his successors. The Sarnath Buddhist Image Inscription of Kanishka (Epigraphia Indica VIII p.173 ff), the Set-Mahat Imag and Umbrella Staff Inscription of the same (Ep. Ind. VIII p. 180 f; p. 297), the Mathura Stone Inscription of Huvishka (Ep. Ind. XXI p. 60 f) etc are written in almost the same language as Buddhavag Rasamitr. It also appears in a few documents from Niya region. I quote below the Inscription of Huvishka which refer to the establishment of an alms of charity house. The date of the inscription is the year 28, probably the Saka year (=106 A.D.).

This hall of piety (i.e. charity house) is established as a perpetual endowment to Pracinaka the Lord of the Khrasasoka the governor of charity institutions, son of Sarukamāna. From out of that deposit (vedbhaktsh) the interest (kudukha; Bengali sud) should be spent month by month for the maintenance of Brahmaw (who come) from the four quarters to the hall of piety. Day by day at the gate of the hall of piety should be stocked freshly made (sudadhi; Bengali dui) barley meal 3 Adhakas, 1 Pratha of salt, 1 Pratha of tamarind (literally, acid stuff), 3 jars of green peas, and 5 earthenware bowls. These are for charity to the destitutes and also for the hungry and the thirsty. Whatever merit there is goes to the Son of Divinity, Sahe
Huvishka. May there be merit also for those who are dear to his majesty, May there be merit for the entire earth. The perpetual gift is made.....

II

Spoken Samskrit, the basic language of the typical Buddhist Samskrit, as for instance in the Mahavanta, has the following characteristics in general.

1. The Phonological pattern is almost the same as that of classical Samskrit. There are, however, exceptions.

a. There are Middle Indoe-Aryan vocables which show the expected simplification.

b. There is no rigidity of Sandhi rules. It follows the Sandhi rules of MIA. The final visarga after a vowel other than a is more often dropped than retained. The final -aḥ becomes more often -a than not; e.g. maddha ca bhikṣuḥ; vanato uvacā; etc.

c. The final -a generally becomes -m. e.g. bhagyam, balavam, mahajarurakāṃ (acc. pl. masc.); etc.

d. The length of the stem vowel is as often retained as not; e.g. saurabhībhiḥ 'All overcome' (nom.sg.); saurabhībhītam (acc.sg.); saurabhībhīvyaḥ (nom. pl.); saurabhībhīvyāḥ (gen. sg.). There is always metrical shortening when necessary.

e. There is often sampratāduṣaḥ of ya and na: e.g. viyayaḥ (vīyam).

2. Morphological characteristics are as follows.

a. The dative number is replaced by the plural as in MIA e.g. dve gandha- mahatrukaṅ 'the two leading spice merchants' (acc.); dve asahāna 'the two stayed'.

b. The noun stems ending in consonants are lost as in MIA, leaving a few fossils such as rajāḥ, bhagavad, bhagavatā, arham, arhatām, etc. The gender remains unchanged. Thus: pariṣṭa (par pariṣṭta).

c. The a- declension influences all other non-feminine declensions. Thus: pītān (gen.sg.), bhikaṣya (gen. sg.), bhikṣṇān (acc. pl.).

d. The ablative singular is formed with the adverbal suffix -tas; e.g. vanato (for vanāt).

e. The regular locative singular ending for the non-feminine is -men. But the regular form for the a-stems is also current; e.g. lokasmin as well as luke.

f. The ending for the instrumental, dative, ablative, genitive and locative singular fem. is -(a)ye/-(a)yā, the OIA dative singular.

g. The ending for the instrumental, dative, ablative and locative plural for all stems is -āhi (ḥhī).
h. The personal pronouns have developed some additional forms such as mamam (acc. sg.), maye, tuse (inst. sg.) etc.

i. In the conjugation of the yena the Anuvampada forms are replaced by the Prasnavampada, even in the passive voice. A few Anuvampada forms survive in the verses mainly.

j. The -sy (and -sy-) conjugation predominates. The -sy- conjugation survives in the passive. The other conjugations survive sporadically.

k. The root bhū (bhūnati) generally becomes bhū (bhū-) and bhe-. e.g. bhūti, bhūyati, bhūyati; etc.

l. The gerundial suffix -trā generally stands for -sy also, e.g. pratitrāvā. Sporadically -sy stands for -tū, e.g. bandhiyā (bandhiya, for buddhā).

There is an additional suffix -trāna, e.g. karitrāna, kṣetrāna, dattirāna, vijñetrāna, etc.

m. There is only one form of the finite past tense. It is a mixture of the perfect, the aorist, and the imperfect. There are also reflexes of the old, e.g. abhāyā (3, sg. pt.); āti (1,3 sg.); etc.

3. The more important syntactical characteristics are as follows.

a. There are many new idioms in the use of the cases. Thus: bhagavatā (intri. of the cause) te anumānayā; pattāḥ on account of the Lord the non-humans fled, kālina kālam 'from time to time'; imma tu tatva-dharmatva (guna of exchange) keśarām 'the perfume bought by hundred thousand coins'; etc.

b. The compound verb also presents fresh idioms. Thus: ākṛṣṭaṃ kariṣṭvām 'I shall eat (it)'; prahlādaṃ dattvā 'having beaven up.'