MALLI KĀ

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One of the best known commentaries on the 'Four Medical Tantras', the rgyud bāṣi, is the Vaidūrya sman po written by the De.srid Sāla, rgyas rgya. s adapted during the 17th century. Its full title is sGso. ba. rig. pa'i bstan. bcos. sman. bāṣi.rgya. rgyad bāṣi. 'The blue lazuli jasmine ornament to remember the Medicine Buddha's teaching of medicine explaining the Four Tantras.' At least, this is the title of part one. The other three parts bear the same title up to and including sman. po'i, but instead of sman. po'i they have phred. ba. Now, phred. ba means 'rosary'. This rosary consists of sman. po, 'blue', bāṣi or vaidūrya, that is, 'lapis lazuli' or 'beryl', 'cat's eye' or aquamarine'. As I have argued in my paper called Vaidūrya, in this context the word does not mean a specific gem as such as simply 'something very precious'. Thus, it is a rosary consisting of very precious stones. The word phred. ba in the three other parts looks as if it replaced the sman. po of the first part. What is this sman. po?

The word is obviously a borrowing from the Sanskrit. What does it mean? The Sanskrit and the Pali words sālika usually mean 'jasmine'. The word occurs as early as in the Mahābhārata and many more times in Sanskrit literature. The word did not enter the Tibetan language as a loan word through medical texts. The rgyud bāṣi usually provides Tibetan words for plants with healing properties. There are very few
borrowings from the Sanskrit such as sa.m.s.r.a.d.p.a 'cannabis' and pi.p.i.l.n 'pepper'. The word ma.l.i.l.a is not amongst them, so it is to be concluded that whatever it means, for instance, 'jasmine', does not have healing properties. If the word did not enter the title of the 9De.s.r.a.'s work from medical literature where did it come from?

One of the possibilities in the work on the art of Poetics by Dandin called Kayyudara which was a prescribed text in Gelugpa colleges. Dandin, Sanskrit: Dandī, whose Tibetan name is dbyugs.pa.cang, lived from the 6th to the 7th century. His 'Mirror of Poetry' was translated into Tibetan by Stī lamaD infra and Dohn.zon in a Sa.vgya monastery of Western Tibet, and edited by dpal.dan blo-gres.dbyan.pa.

The passage where ma.l.i.l.a occurs belongs to the second section of the 9gran.dchi.kyi.te.lom which is called Don.gyi rgyan, 'Embellishments in the interpretation'. Verse 214 says: 'The desire to describe a characteristic in a manner transcending worldly limits is (giving rise to) Hyperbole; it is the best of figures.' For example: 215: 'Wearing wreaths of ma.l.i.l.a, all their bow adorned with fresh mandala flowers and clai in / lines garments the ascension-seekers are not to be distinguished in the moonlight.' 210: 'Here is asserted, as being of a pre-eminent degree, the abundance of the moonlight.' The hyperbole consists in stating that the moonlight was so bright that the different people moving in it could not be distinguished. The word ma.l.i.l.a here means 'jasmine'.

The Tibetan translation of the Kayyudara passage reads as follows:

Verse 214: ma.l.i.l.a.kyi.phret.bsho.can

jim.sam.kyi.pbod.pa'i sban.dan.jisher !
The Kāvyadāraśā translation has been included in the Tanjūr. Though this textbook of Poetics was a setbook in Gelugpa colleges, this passage does not have anything to do with Buddhism. It seems therefore to be worthwhile to look for another well-known text which might have introduced the word mālīka into the Tibetan language. Indeed, such a text can be found. It is the Vānāvarga, a Sanskrit work containing portions of the Dhammapada, a very popular work in Pali. While the Dhammapada was a postcanonical work, the Tibetan translation of the Vānāvarga is part of the Tanjūr and presumably was part of the Sanskrit Tripitaka. It was compiled in Sanskrit by Dharmaratna (Tibetan Cho-skyi) between 75 B.C. and 200 A.D. and translated into Tibetan by Vidyaprabhakara and Lotsava Rin.chen. mo'hog and finally arranged by dpal. brtsegs in the 9th century.

The relevant Dhammapada passage occurs in verse 11 of the chapter called 'Flowers' which is chapter 4. It is verse 54 of the whole of the Dhammapada: ‘The perfume of flowers blows not against the wind nor does the fragrance of sandal-
wood, tagara and jasmine. The fragrance of the virtuous does
blow against the wind: the virtuous man pervades every
direction.' What is meant is the atmosphere of peace and
friendliness surrounding the people whose mind is concentra-
ted on the spiritual side of life. The word 'jasmine' here
translates Pali maññ̄ī. In the next verse, 121 (55), the word
does not occur in the Pali version but it does in the Tibetan
one. I, therefore, will give a translation of the Pali first:
'Sandalwood. Tagara. lotus. jasmine (here the Pali word
vasalā) is used for 'jasmine' instead of maññ̄ī.)—of all
these kinds of fragrance, the perfume of virtue is by far the
best.'

The Tibetan adaptation in the Udānavarga reads as
follows: 'The scent of flowers does not move without being
directed by the wind. (cee.tog dri.ni rdzi phyog mi sni. 'gro:\n61)
nor does that of roots. Tagara or Sandalwood (rtsa ba rgya.
spus tsan dan rams khyi sni.):' The holy scent moves without being directed by the wind (dam.
pa'i dri.ni rdzi phyog sni. 'gro:ste): '

The virtuous man pervades all directions' (phyog rmas kun tu
mi mchog dri yis kklyi):'

The word for 'jasmine' occurs in the next stanza:
'Tagara and sandalwood (rgya spus dan sni rtsa dan dan)
blue lotus and jasmine (tus pa la dan led. Beckh) ma:li:As. 
(Peking Tanjur. Otani ma:li:As:)
better than these kinds of incense (spus yis rgyi sni. 'di:lag
past: (Beckh and Mar.than Tanjur) the scent of discipline comes as
a fragrant offering.' (tshol khrims dri bsod phul du phyis): 
(Peking Tanjur): the scent of keeping the discipline comes as
an offering (tshol khrims dri bsod phul du phyis).


It would be very plausible that the sDe.snrid is he composed the title of the Vaidurya sDo. po himself borrowed the word from the Tibetan Udnava. However, the form used there is m.a.l.l.i.ka or m.a.l.l.i.kA and not m.a.l.i.ka. There is another passage in a work composed in the Pali language, namely the Mahasravashagita-Udnava, the lineage or history of the Elephant Rocky Forest Temple in Ceylon, composed during the reign of Pandita Parakramabahu of Damdaniya (1266-1301 A.D.), which contains a passage where the word malaika occurs, this time with a long first a and a single i.

"The slander darts of the wicked become blunted on reaching the shield of forebearance of the righteous and are changed into the flowers of praise bestowed in the society (of the just), whence they become bound with the flowery chaplets of their virtues." This refers to the practice of adorning people with wreaths or garlands as marks of respect. Here the word does no longer mean 'jasmine' but 'chaplet' or 'garland', it being the diminutive form of sara. Association with this word which is the same in Sanskrit as in Pali may have caused the sDe.snrid of whoever composed these titles to use malaika in the titles of the other three volumes. The fact remains that the first volume of the Vaidurya sDo. po uses the word malaika in its title and not m.a.l.i.ka.

Therefore the idea for it does probably not come from the Udnava but from Badin's work, while the titles of the other three volumes may have been influenced by the thought of m.a.l.i.ka.

In Pali malika can mean, apart from the jasmine plant and flower, an earthenware vessel of a particular shape, Sanskrit maliaka from, which compounds with maliika are
formed can also mean a lampstand or a lamp. Though the shape is not specified it is probably that of a jasmine blossom. In Sinhalese it means a vessel made of a coconut shell for containing oil. This seems to suggest that the vessel received their names because of the association with scented oil remaining of jasmine blossoms. But it is unlikely that the meaning 'vessel' was in the mind of the *De. 25* mid

Sahas.rgyas rgya.mtha.

5) Translated by Stara Rakti, Calcutta, Malabadi Society, 1976, p. 41.
6) Translated from the Sanskrit into Tibetan by Khoj.zkyob. Vs.dg.sbyab.chen and Rin.chos.monog. Revised by Dalai Lobsangs during the 20th century.
8) What is next are the five medicinal roots: 1) rgyas (Polygonatum officinale), 2) rgya (Delimum venosum), 3) gsam (Polygonatum falcatum), 4) sdo.ga.na.ha (Aspergus luchuensis).5) gsee.gsa (Trillium terrestre).

11) I am indebted to Mr. K.D. Somadasa of the British Library for explaining to me that the word in this context could not mean 'jewel' but had to mean something like 'garland' because the word 'bound with' is literally used in the Pali text.
