Who Composed the Lotus Sutra?

— Antagonism between wilderness and village monks —

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1. Verses in the Uṣṇīṣa-verṣa

The Śākta-verses in Chapter XII, the Uṣṇīṣa-verṣa, in the Saddharmapuṇḍarīkaśāstra, give us a great deal of evidence as to the composition of the Lotus Sutra. However, their importance for the historical research of this scripture and consequently that of so-called Mahāyāna Buddhism has not really been taken into true consideration. I assume that the prime reason for this is that not only modern translators of the Sanskrit version, but also the authors of ancient Chinese commentaries on Kumārajīva’s translation of the Lotus Sutra, whose interpretations have significantly influenced Japanese Buddhist scholars and consequently Western translators of the Chinese version, interpreted these verses incorrectly.

1.1. Sanskrit Text

The verse in question in the Kern-Nanjio Edition of the Saddharmapuṇḍarīkaśāstra read as follows:

KN.271.9-274.6

śrutāram samasahāhyāni uvācita dvikārayānām ca 1
bālāśrama nāyakā vā dhāraṇārāmā māyā // 3
darśanāda ratukā ca samhāra ca śatābhāja bhūtimāṇavaḥ // 4
aprāpa prāpa-sāmyādhī ca ghoṣa kālaṁ patiṁ // 5

arasva-sūryatakā caśena kathāṁ prāvakṣyati ca
samāhlakhaśastra arṣo evam vaśyati durmāti // 5

1 Hereafter, I shall refer to the readings of five relatively old manuscripts only when their readings differ significantly from those in the Kern-Nanjio Edition. They are namely:


(3) D1 - Giglit MSS. of the Saddharmapuṇḍarīkaśāstra, kept in the National Archives of India (New Delhi), the British Museum (London), and in the possession of Mr. M. A. Shah (Lahore). Facsimile edition and translocation: Watanabe 1972-1973. Verses 1-3 are missing in D3.


Moreover, the sign "****" is used here to designate a missing portion in a Sanskrit manuscript. For example, K. 8. 38 vs. 142v. 10, D2: śrutāraṃ samasahāhyāni uvācita dvikārayānām ca. O: akṛṣṭaḥ stāṇaḥ bīkṣuḥ dviḍaḥ māyāyaḥ, F: akṛṣṭaḥ stāṇaḥ bīkṣuḥ dviḍaḥ māyāyaḥ ca.

2 O: darśanaḥ tām ca samāḥ prākāśāḥ kālaḥ bhūtimāṇavaḥ, F: darśanaḥ tām ca samāḥ prākāśāḥ kālaḥ bhūtimāṇavaḥ.

3 O: aprāpa prāpa-sāmyādhī ca ghoṣa kālaṁ patiṁ, F: aprāpa prāpa-sāmyādhī ca ghoṣa kālaṁ patiṁ.

1.2. Kern's English translation

Kern translated these verses as follows (1884.259-261):  

3. We will suffer, patiently endure, O Lord, the injuries, threats, blows and threats with sticks as the hands of foolish men.  
4. As that dreadful last epoch men will be malingered, crooked, wicked, dull, conceited, forcibly to have come to the limit when they have not.  
5. 'We do not care but to live in the wilderness and wear a patched cloth; we lead a frugal life,' so will they speak to the ignorant  
6. And persons greedily attached to enjoyments will preach the law to laymen and be honoured as if they possessed the six transcendent qualities.  
7. Cruel-minded and wicked men, only occupied with household cares, will enter our retreat in the forest and become our calumniators.  
8. The Tirthikas, themselves bent on profit and honour, will say of us that we
are so, and—shame on such monks! They will preach their own fictions.

9. Prompted by greed of profit and honour they will compose Sūtras of their own invention and then, in the midst of the assembly, accuse us of plagiarism.

10. To kings, princes, king's peers, as well as to Brahmans and commoners, and to monks of other confessions, they will speak evil of us and propagate the Tithra-doctrine. We will endure all that out of reverence for the great Seers.

12. And those fools who will not listen to us, shall (sooner or later) become enlightened, and therefore will we forbear to the last.

13. In that dreadful, most terrible period of frightful general revolution will many mendicant monks stand up as our revellers.

14. Out of respect for the Chief of the world we will bear it, however difficult it be; girded with the girdle of forbearance will I proclaim this Sūtra.

15. I do not care for my body or life, O Lord, but as keepers of this immeasurable deposit we care for enlightenment.

16. The Lord himself knows that in the last period there are (to be) wicked monks who do not understand mysterious speech.

17. One will have to bear frowned looks, repeated disfavor (or concealment), expulsion from the monasteries, many and manifold abuses.

18. Yet mindful of the command of the Lord of the world we will in the last period unassuagedly proclaim this Sūtra in the midst of the congregation.

19. We will visit towns and villages everywhere, and transmit to those who care for it this immeasurable deposit, O Lord.

1.3. Kunaraiva's Chinese translation

In Kunaraiva's translation of the Lotus Sūtra, we find verses corresponding to the above-cited Sanskrit ones (Taishō, vol. 9, No.262, 362b3–37a1)46. I shall cite only the part, parallel to Sanskrit verses 5–11, here.

46 Burnouf translated verses in question (i.e. 5–11) as follows(1852: 161–166):

5. «Ne songeant qu’au désert, couverts d’un morceau d’étoffe, nous passerons notre vie dans la pauvreté!» c’est ainsi que parleront les sages.

6. Désirant avec avidité tout ce qui flotte le goût, et pleins de cupidité, ils seront honorés, quand ils enseigneront la loi aux maîtres de maison, comme s’ils possédaient les six connaissances surnaturelles.

7. Pleins de pensées cruelles et de méchanceté, exclusivement occupés des seuls se leur maison et de leur fortune, ils pénétreront dans les retraites des forêts pour nous abandonner d’où la glèbe.

8. Avides de gain et d’honneurs, ils nous parleront d’une manière conforme à leurs sentiments; ces religieux Tirthankaras nous exposent leurs propres pratiques.


10. Au surplus des rois, auprès des fils de roi, auprès de leurs conseillers, auprès des Brahmanes, des maîtres de moines et des sages Religieux.

11. Ils nous bâtonneront dans leurs discours, et feront entendre le langage des Tirthankaras; mais nous supporterons tout cela par respect pour les grands Rūgis.

46 In another Chinese translation of the Lotus Sūtra, namely Dharmakīśa's Zhōnghào jīng 正法華經, one can also find relevant verses. Taishō, vol. 9, No.263, 106c29–107a8.
Hurvitz translated these Chinese verses as follows (1976: 205-206):

Or there are śānyāśakas (forest-dwelling hermit), clothed in patched rags and living in the wilderness, who say of themselves that they are treading the True Path, holding mankind cheaply. Because they covet profit and nourishment, they preach Dharma to white-robed laymen, and are held in humble reverence by the world, as though they were arhants of the six penetrations.

These men, harboring evil thoughts, constantly mindful of the affairs of the world, borrow the name of śānyāsakas because they love to display our faults. Then they make such talk as this: “These bhikṣus, out of greed for profit and nourishment, preach the arguments of external paths.

Haring themselves created this scriptural canon to deceive worldlings and lead them away, in the quest for name and renown they preach this scripture with much discrimination.”

Since within the great multitude they ever wish to ruin us, turning to kings and great ministers, to Brahmanas and householders, and to multitudes of other bhikṣus, they slanderously speak evil of us, saying, “These fellows of wrong views preach arguments of external paths.”

Out of veneration for the Buddha, we will endure all these evils.

1.4. Who slandered whom?
The Sanskrit and Chinese verses which are given above is boldface, have been wrongly understood, as I shall explain in the following sections.

In particular, there is a great deal of confusion between those who slandered and those who were slandered, which is found not only in the modern translations of the Lotus Sutra but also in ancient Chinese commentaries, resulting presumably from the lack of marks or words which would indicate a quotation (such as ita in Sanskrit or 乽in Chinese), in the verses in question. The cause of this confusion may also be attributed to these modern translators' insufficient understanding of past antagonism between wilderness and village monks.

In the following section, we shall see the dichotomy and antagonism between these two groups, found in various texts.
2. Antagonism between wilderness and village monks

2.1. aranya ("wilderness")14 and grāma ("village")

Since Vedic and Brahmanical times throughout the Hindu tradition, we find a dichotomy in Indian culture, namely aranya ("wilderness") and grāma ("village"). Regarding this, Olivelle writes:15

... the two religious paths, Vedic ritualism and asceticism, are symbolised by the places—village and wilderness.

This opposition is also to be found in the Buddhist tradition as we shall see below.

2.2. Arāhantavāt (wilderness monks) v. Gāmavātā (village monks) in Sri Lanka

In ancient Sri Lanka, three schools (or mukhās) of monks, namely the Mahāvihāra, the Abhayagiri and the Jetavana, are known to have existed which are often mentioned in Pali chronicles. According to Rahula,16 long before these, records from around the latter part of the first century B.C.E. show there were two groups of monks, known as Pammukkālika (lit. "one, who wears clothes made of rags") and Dhammakathika (lit. "one, who preaches the Dhamma"). The former maintained that the practice (paripatti) of the Dhamma was the basis of Buddhism (sīlāna), while the latter held that learning (pariyatti) was of more importance. They argued with each other, bringing forth reasons in support of their theories, and, in the end, the Dhammakathika won.17 It must be remembered that they were not two different schools but rather two groups of monks living in the same community, holding different opinions and leading two different lifestyles.18 However, when the three schools — namely the Mahāvihāra, the Abhayagiri and the Jetavana, were later formed, they had their own Pammukkaliika.19 As well as this,

14 The Sanskrit word aranya is usually rendered as "forest", but, following Srokkhoff (1981, 1984) and other, I use the English word "wilderness" for aranya in contrast to tasma ("forest") in this paper. Citing P. Thiméen's definition of aranya: "Et est dehi — nicht erwa in einem undurchdringlichen Dschungel, sondern — an einer unberührten, menschenleeren Steppeflandscatz zu denken, dem unbeschränkt wegen ihrer Einnahme und der bei Eintritt der Dunkelheit drohenden Angriffe bösiger Wesen die Fruchtbarkeit erregt und das Bewusstsein der Gefahr erzeugt." Srokkhoff, himself, describes the picture of aranya as follows: "Im Aranya gibt es betretendes Gehölz (kakka) und Dickicht (ghatana), räudische Erdspalten (pavitra) und Graben (kika); Daunen und Spliter durchdringen die Pfl führen, der sich dorthin traut." (Srokkhoff 1981: 33-34). Cf. also von Hambüker 1996: 106. The Vinndhamasoge (P.C.V. ed., p. 72; l. 111f.), however, gives us other definitions: "Pavitra (pavitra), according to the Vinaya method firstly, is described thus: "Europe the village and its precincts, all that is forest' (Vin.v.4.46). According to s the Abhakhamma method it is described thus: 'Having gone out beyond the boundary post, all that is forest' (Vin.251; Pu.2.76). But according to the Suttanta method its characteristic is this: 'A forest shode is five hundred bow-lengths distant' (Vin.v.1833; Vin.an.2.75).Nisano: 1956: 71).
18 Rahula 1956: 158-159.
according to Rahula, from about the 6th century C.E., another “pair” of groups of monks, namely the Arahānąvatā (Skt. Arunavatī; lit. “dweller is the wilderness”, also known as Panaṇāvatā (“forest dweller”)) and the Gāmaṇavātī (Skt. Grāmavatī; lit. “village dweller”), are referred to in Pali chronicles as distinct groups, though not as separate schools.66 He tells us that the Panaṇāvatā and the Arahāṇavatā, both of which were practitioners of the dhātuvagīsas (asetic practices), were regarded as separate groups67, though he remains silent on the relationship between the Dhammaṇikaṭhika and the Gāmaṇavatī.

Therefore, from Rahula’s study, it is clear that since olden times, there have been, broadly speaking, two types of groups of monks, namely, those who, practising dhātuvagīsas, lived outside the village in the wilderness, and those who lived in (or nearby) towns and villages.

2.3. Arahāṇavatī (wilderness monks) v. Gāmaṇavatī (village monks) in Myanmar

Though Rahula’s study does not say anything concerning the attitudes of the two groups towards each other, a later Pali chronicle, the Sāmarasamsa, written in Myanmar in 1861, reports of a separation and conflict between wilderness monks (arāhāṇavatī) and village ones (gāmaṇavatī) in the Marañña-samgha or the Community of Myanmar.

In the thirteenth century68, a king, named Ujana, built seventy-seven monasteries (sihāras) and dedicated many fields and much land (khettas-vatthas) in support of these monasteries. Then, monks began to quarrel on account of these fields and land. On hearing of the quarrel, one elder, who was a holder of the teaching (cīvadhabhetteras), and two others, who were exerting themselves (parakkhamasthātir̃s), left there and took up residence in the mountains. They were called those who walked alone (asakāsas), while the remaining monks were known as village-dwellers who walked with many (gāmaṇavatī abhiceṭās). Since then, there have been two groups of monks, namely wilderness dwellers (arāhāṇavatā) and village dwellers (gāmaṇavatī).

Much later69, in 1698, an elder monk (thera), named Gunabhikṣakāra, ordered his novices to cover only their left shoulders when excercising a village, which the traditional ānasas thought as an offense against monastic rules. He, also, did not allow them to use palm leaves for head-dresses, which seems to have been the custom of village monks.70

66 Rahula 1956: 196.
67 Rahula 1956: 196.
68 Rahula 1956: 197.
69 Sāmarasamsa 83.10f. An English translation of this part is found in Law 1952: 91-92
this happened, Guṇabhiśānkaśa's group, which was named "the group which covers one shoulder", and the traditionalists, known as "well-covered", began disputing and quarrelling over this matter. As the "one shoulder" group could not find any textual evidence supporting their stance, they bribed (lakṣṭhavam dāna) a lay devotee to compose a book (gāthā) in accordance with their views. This quarrel was intensified by a conflict between village monks (gāmavāsa), who used palm leaves for their head-dresses, and wilderness monks (arathṭhavāsa). A group of village monks (gāmavāsaśīhikākhyāna) was reported to have destroyed this book (gāthā) and driven the wilderness monks out from the place, saying: "Let there be no suspicious monks in the religion (śramaṇa), who do not put on head-dresses". Then, other village monks took up arms and also went forth to drive away the wilderness monks who were at that time dwelling in a monastery (ṭhāra). The king, having heard of this matter, sent a royal writ stating: "The group of village monks is one and that of the wilderness is another. The former should not harass the latter. They should dwell in their own places according to their own views." Thus, the wilderness monks could live happily. However, even after these incidents, the "one shoulder" group and the traditionalists still continued the dispute until it was finally settled by the king in 1784.

Here, we can see an instance of antagonism between village and wilderness monks, which even took the form of an armed attack. It is also noteworthy that a group forged a text — in this case a text of discipline — and another group destroyed it.

The Śūkramānas also tells us of a well-learned elder monk (ṭhera), who had formerly been a village monk and followed the tradition of his teacher, but later gave up such a practice and became a wilderness monk. From this, we learn that it was possible for a monk to alter his mode of living in the midst of his religious practice.

The dichotomy of wilderness monks and village ones is found not only in the history of Sri Lanka and Myanmar, but also in Thailand.24

2.4. Aratṭhaka (a wilderness monk) and gāmavāsaśīhā (a village monk) in Pāli literature

In Pāli scriptures, we come across some instances in which aratṭhaka (a wilderness monk) and gāmavāsaśīhā (a village monk)25 are mentioned along side each other. For instance:

Vin. III 171-2f. ye icchati aratṭhakas kho, ye icchati gāmavasā śīhāsas, ye icchati pāpeṣaṁ kho, ye icchati nīveṇamassū tāsilasu, .... ("Whoever wants, let him be a

24 Śūkramānas 116.27f; Āv. 1952: 122.


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wilderness monk; whoever wants, let him dwell in a village; whoever wants, let him be beggar for alms; whoever wishes, let him accept an invitation —"

MN 110-35. kiccati sī bhi ariyāthāno tenasamāna, pittagāthī supadāmakāri, pinnakālose bhikkhussavādho, attha kho namo sahabhasāri na sukkeni ....... kiccati a bhi gāmamaṇsavāri tenasamāna pittagāthī supadāmakāri, attha kho namo sahabhasāri sukkeni...

("Then for all he may be a forest dweller, a freecenter of remote abodes, an almfood enter, a house-to-house seeker, a refuse-tract wanderer, a wanderer of rough stones, still his fellows in the holy life do not honour, .... then for all he may be a village dweller, an acceptor of invitations, a wanderer of stones given him by householders, yet his fellows in the holy life honour ..."

[Nissami 1995. 112])

MN I 473.1-3. ariyānāmarājā kho evo Moggallāna bhikkhā sapo dhāmam samādāya vatteya, payo eva gāmamaṇsavāri ("Friend Moggallana, these things should be undertaken and practiced not only by a forest-dwelling bhikkhu, but by a town-dwelling bhikkhu as well"

[Nissami 1995. 576])

The following scriptures show explicitly that the opposition between wilderness monks and village ones existed in early times.

Anguttara-Nikāya III 34f runs as follows. The Buddha, on hearing the tumult of the people who came to pay homage to him, told his attendant Nāgita that he preferred the bliss of seclusion to homage. He said further: "Whosoever cannot obtain the bliss of seclusion, of calm, of enlightenment, should enjoy profit, honor and praise (ākha- sikkha-nikāya-nukka) which is to be likened to the pleasure of dining or filthy pleasure", then he dispersed the people in the following way (AN III 34f-13):

“When I see a village monk (gāmamaṇsavāri), seated in concentration, I think: ‘Presently, a monk attendant or a novice might disturb and distract him from his concentration.’

Therefore, I am not pleased with his dwelling in the village (gāmamaṇsavāri).

When I see a wilderness monk (ariyāthāna), seated nodding in the wilderness, I think: ‘Presently, he will get rid of this sleepiness and fatigue, and then surely ponder on the wilderness as a single object.’ Therefore, I am pleased with his dwelling in the wilderness (ariyāthāna).

Or I see a wilderness monk, seated composed in the wilderness, I think: ‘Presently, he will compose his uncomposed mind, or will keep his mind composed.’

Therefore, I am pleased with his dwelling in the wilderness.

Or I see a wilderness monk, seated composed in the wilderness, I think: ‘Presently, he will liberate his unhindered mind, or will keep his mind liberated.’ Therefore, I...

17 The Pāli text (PTS ed., p. 71, l. 46) defines the Pali word gāma as follows: tāmā sādhana upaśāto gāma pava gāmamaṇsavāna ("Therein, a village abode is the village itself with its precincts.

[Nissami 1956. 70]."

CE also SN IV 37.11-14, kiccati gāmamaṇsavāri abhīva bhikkhussabhi sikkhassabhi dhammasassabhi, attha kho sahabhasāri ruci (

"Even if he dwells in a village (gāma), crowned with monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, kings, royal ministers, ministers and their followers, yet he is called 'one, who dwells alone'."

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am pleased with his dwelling in the wilderness.

Or I see a village monk, who, having obtained robes, alms, beds, chairs, medicaments and utensils, and delighting in their profit, honour and praise, abandons the solitude, the wilderness and woodlands (arādhāsamaparabhāt), solitary lodgings (samāhāsamābāth), and then enters a village, town or the capital, and dwells there. Therefore, I am not pleased with his dwelling in the village.

Or I see a wilderness monk, who, having obtained robes, alms, beds, chairs, medicaments and utensils, but warding off their profit, honour and praise, does not abandon solitude, the wilderness, woodlands, solitary lodgings. Therefore, I am pleased with his dwelling in the wilderness."

We find a similar description also in AN IV 343.23f. These two scriptures are apparently on the side of wilderness monks, disparaging the lifestyle of those of the village.

In contrast to the above, a scripture named Migajāna in the Sāṃyutta-Nikāya (SN IV 35.46) seems to pay due respects to life in the village. Being questioned by a monk named Migajāna about the meanings of "dwelling alone" (cakrabhāsy) and "dwelling with a partner" (sadārūpa-cakrabhāsy), the Buddha replied in the following way:

"There are forms, sounds, odours, tastes, touch and mental objects which are wished for, desired, agreeable, and provoking lust. If a monk delights in them, welcomes and clings to them, pleasure and passion will occur to him, and finally, he will be bound with the fetter of pleasure. Such a monk is called 'dweller with a partner'. Even if he frequents the wilderness, woodlands, solitary lodgings, which are free from sound and uproar, hidden away from people (manusa-niḥsa-mayāka), and fit for solitary meditation, he is still called 'one, who dwells with a partner'.

On the contrary, if a monk does not delight in agreeable forms, sounds etc., pleasure and passion will not occur to him, and he will not be bound with the fetter of pleasure. Such a monk is called 'one, who dwells alone'. Even if he dwells in a village (gāmanta), crowded with monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, kings, royal ministers, heretics and their followers, yet he is called 'one, who dwells alone'."

From these descriptions in the Pāli scriptures, we learn that the opposition between wilderness monks and village ones already existed in early times.

2.5. Ārānyakas (wilderness monks) v. Grāmāntikas (village monks) in the Ābhilāmācārīka-Dharmāṅga

In the Ābhilāmācārīka-Dharmāṅga, a portion of the Mahāsāṅghika-Lokuttaravāda-Vinaya for which we have an extant Buddhist Sanskrit text (I am preparing a new transliteration and an annotated German translation of this text), we find very good descriptions which may help to clarify the relationship between these two groups in olden times. 

A chapter in this text deals with rules of conduct of wilderness and village monks concerning having meals.27 Namely, the following rules were laid down by the Buddha, after knowing that these two groups of monks quarrelled on the occasion of the common
meal (ekabhaktatarpana): When both groups have meals together, whether it is in a monastery of wilderness monks (āryapāka-, rāhukā-, āryapāka- sāmyasāsana-) or that of village monks (pāramukhakā-, rāhukā-, pāramukhakā- sāmyasāsana-), residing monks should wait for any visiting ones until the very last moment and even if the latter do not appear, the former should keep food reserved for them. When a lay devotee (pātīsākha) invites the community (sāmgha) for a meal, noising village monks inform wilderness monks about it, the former should inform the latter and the latter should go there on time; When someone invites village monks for a meal, they should ask him to also invite the wilderness monks, and so on.

The Buddha also told the two groups not to abuse one another but to please each other in the following way:

Now, wilderness monks must not revile village monks in any situation (by saying): “You have much to do, you are very busy, (because) you seek for the most tasty foods with the tip of your tongue.” (Wilderness monks) rather should please the latter (by saying): “O venerable ones, you do good. You do much by bearing burdens (and) by preaching the Dharma. You take care of chaityas, burn incense, please (lay) families (. . . that they become Buddhists.)” Thus (village monks) should be pleased. 58

Now village monks must not revile or abuse wilderness monks in any situation (by saying): “You live in an empty house, hoping to gain fame/. (However,) jackals also live in the wilderness. You sit (there) all day long, while you (just) accumulate (the number of) years (counted since ordination).” (Village monks) should say to the (latter): “It is hard to live in lodgings in the wilderness, which are secluded, isolated, devoid of human beings (sāgāmājanapāsā), in which one can dwell, hidden away from people (manasapa-rāhukā-), (and) fit for solitary meditation. It is difficult and unpleasant

for one (to stay) one (or) more nights in solitude, controlling one’s mind or one’s own self.” (and also) “O venerable ones, you do good; you take care of lodgings in the wilderness. The Blessed One also said: ‘As long as monks shall dwell in lodgings in the wilderness, only an increase in good things is expected not a decline. With you, not even Mara, the False One, will find an opportunity of causing the true doctrine to disappear (and) confusing (you concerning it).’ (Village monks) should please (wilderness monks) in this manner and leave.19

From the above descriptions, it is evident that there was antagonism between wilderness and village monks, who belonged to one and the same community.

2.6. Wilderness monks v. village monks in Mahāyāna texts

2.6.1. Praises for the Aranyakas in the Sūkṣmaśāstra

As Ray (1994: 251f.), Mochizuki (1988), Silk (1994) and others have demonstrated, there are several early Mahāyāta texts which praise seclusion in the wilderness.

For instance, the eleventh chapter, i.e. the Aranyakamārana ("Praise of the Wilderness"), in the Sūkṣmaśāstra or A Compendium of Buddhist Doctrine, attributed to Sāntideva of the eighth century, cites many passages from early Mahāyāna sutras, which praise seclusion in the wilderness.20

2.6.2. Praises for the Aranyakas in the Ugraparipṛcchā Śāstra

One such early scripture, the Ugraparipṛcchā Śāstra, which is also completely preserved in Tibetan and Chinese, proclaims that a bodhisattva should enter the wilderness in order to attain enlightenment.

19 Ṣablamādikārī Dhamyā 32Ae. udā dīnā gnehathunhē aranyaka bhavatārṇa | yamavyāya (MS. yam); “āthātprasānti (MS. ‘āgatradh) yamāna prakāśa/sūkṣmaśāstra (s corruption) ‘āgatradh aranyaka vastrati. dīnān yamāna prakāśa prajñānātāitra.”’ as ekha bhūd vikasā; “āthātprasānta aranyaka bhavatārṇa prakāśa (MS. prapāth) vikasā bhavatārṇa prapāthāparīkṣā prakāśaśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraśāstraś
"Bodhisattvas who stay at home will never be able to rightly attain supreme enlightenment. All of them, having left their homes, thinking of the wilderness (dong pa), applying their minds to the wilderness, go to the wilderness and then attain supreme enlightenment. The multitude ( thugs ) of (bodhisattvas) was thus formed."

In another place in this scripture where the twelve abhagamas (ascetic practices) are explained in detail, "living in the wilderness" is included in the following way.

"An ordained bodhisattva, having realized merits, should not stop dwelling in the wilderness as long as he lives." 42

The text also tells that a wilderness monk occasionally visited village monks and even stayed in their monastery primarily to learn.

"Then, householder, if a bodhisattva, who dwells in the wilderness, goes to a lodging in a village (grangmi (dasamcha), wishing to listen to the Dharma, to meet teachers (dgyugs) and instructors (gpalha) or, in order to visit a sick person, he should think: 'I should go back in the evening.' If he, relying on others in terms of instruction (upa) and recitation (na thugs) (of Buddha's teachings), stays in a monastery (stobs), should keep the wilderness and hillside in his mind. When he thinks of the wilderness at (the sight of) everything, and seeks the Dharma unceasingly, it is regarded as a true wilderness life (gsera dang)."

"When we ordained bodhisattvas go amongst the multitude (stons) for the purpose of (receiving) instructions (dudrel) and recitation (na thugs), he should be courteous there, respectful towards teachers and instructors, he should respect (in terms of years since ordination) elder, middle-ranked, and newly-ordained monks."

A wilderness monk is also said to practise the six perfections (snying ma) in the wilderness. 43 After having done so together with other practices, and "having established a root of good (thugs lugs), then he will enter a village, town, market-place, kingdom and capital and preach the Dharma." 44

From these descriptions, we learn that wilderness monks, dwelling alone, practised the six perfections and meditated, while village monks engaged in preaching the Dharma.

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42 Byang chub sems dpya' khyim na gna te blasa mdz pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i bying chub mugng par rdzogs par sngags ras nu wu wu dang ma de, de dga' thams cu bying khyim gi gna ma mugng par byang nas dgyen pa la tsho, dgyen pa la stod, dgyen par sngags nas bla na ming pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i bying chub mugng par rdzogs par sngags ras nu te sngags de yang dag par legs nas (D(T), vol. 3, p. 324, 541.7f; Q, vol. 23, p. 235, 31368f).
43 Byang chub sems dpya' nab tu byang kas phrul po las mong nas ji rgya te ba'i mtho'i bar de dgyen pa la gna ma yang na mi gnyang bar bya bs (D(T), vol. 9, p. 326, 553.5; Q, vol. 23, p. 269, 3220f).
44 Skts.200.7f; cf. the Tibetan translation of the Uganayurpaṇīya Sūtras, D(T), vol. 9, p. 326, 556.1f; Q, vol. 23, p. 269, 3220f.
46 D(T), vol. 9, p. 327, 567.7f; Q, vol. 23, p. 270, 3266f.
2.6.3. Wilderness bodhisattvas v. monastery monks in the *Rātapalaparipṛcchā Sūtra*

Another early Mahāyāna text, also cited in the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, praising life in the wilderness, is the *Rātapalaparipṛcchā Sūtra*, which is preserved in Buddhist Sanskrit — edited by Louis Finot (1903) and translated into English by Ensink (1952) — as well as Tibetan and Chinese translations.

In this scripture\(^6^7\), those who seek enlightenment are advised to dwell in mountains, the wilderness (araya) or caves.\(^6^8\) Bodhisattvas thus abandon their homes and dwell in a desolate wilderness, in which they find pleasure.\(^6^9\) They live alone without the company of women or men, like a rhinoceros.\(^7^0\) They are satisfied with whatever they obtain, like birds they do not store up things, they have no home anywhere in the world.\(^7^1\) They are indifferent to gain or respect (abhāsa-sattvā) as well as obtaining acquaintances with good families (kula-samastvā).\(^7^2\) They, who seek the Buddha’s wisdom, abide in generosity (dāna) and self-control (dama); they have attained the perfection of meditation (dhyanā) and the virtue of energy (vīryaguna).\(^7^3\) The practice of the six perfections is said to be one of the main factors which leads to Buddhahood.\(^7^4\) A bodhisattva lives with his mind, centred on emptiness (śūnyatā) and “causelessness” (anumittā), delighting in tranquility (sama) and self-control (dama).\(^7^5\) The Buddha tells us that in his former lives, he gave his flesh, skin, marrow, blood and everything forming his body as well as all his possessions, thus he practised generosity along with good conduct, patience, vigour, meditation, experiences and wisdom.\(^7^6\) In short, he practised the six perfections and expedients. He also practised ḅūtas (ascetic practices) constantly, when he was a bodhisattva.\(^7^7\)

Therefore, to sum up, in this scripture, true bodhisattvas are expected to dwell alone in the wilderness, mainly practising ḅūtas, the six perfections and meditation without associating with lay people. They are not expected to preach to people. A passage: “they do not look for the stutering of Dharma-preachers (dharma-bāhūraka)”\(^7^8\)

\(^6^7\) Ray (1994: 240f) has gathered descriptions concerning the wilderness bodhisattvas from this text and carefully summarised them.

\(^6^8\) RP. 59.7 (Ensink 18).


\(^7^0\) RP. 13.6-7 (Ensink 14).

\(^7^1\) RP. 16.3-4 (Ensink 17).

\(^7^2\) RP. 12.17-13.1 (Ensink 14).

\(^7^3\) RP. 13.10-11 (Ensink 14).

\(^7^4\) RP. 71.7 (Ensink 21).

\(^7^5\) RP. 16.13-14 (Ensink 17).

\(^7^6\) RP. 27.13-15 (Ensink 27-28).

\(^7^7\) RP. 27.18 (Ensink 28).
may also indicate that their way was different from that of the latter, as Ray points out (1994: 263). Thus, in the Raṣṭrapālaśaṣṭrapārāčā Sūtra, ideal bodhisattvas are depicted as wilderness monks.

This scripture also tells us that these monks had antagonists. When bad monks, we are told, see a patient one absorbed in meditation, they expel him from the monastery, bearing him with sticks. 79 They are said to be intent upon worldly things, alas-bowls and robes, and always zealous in obtaining acquaintances with good families.80 They, desiring gain, are thus bound by the ties of such acquaintances.81

This text also describes in detail the activities of degenerate monks in later times, when the Dharma decays (RP.28.17ff.). They are said to serve householders, holding the banner in their hands; having abandoned the multitude of virtues which the teaching brings, they always carry a scripture (lekha) with them. 82 They go around to houses in villages (ṣāmakulaṇa), intoxicated by alcohol and pride. 83 “You should not indulge in delights”, thus they always tell householders, but they themselves are uncontrolled, groups of their pupils are equally uncontrolled; they spend days and nights with talk of food and sexual intercourse.84 Even when they live in the forest (vavana), their minds still dwell in the village.85 Having abandoned meditation (ādhyātma) and study (adyatmanas), they are always occupied with the administration of monasteries (viharālakṣana), desirous of a dwelling, surrounded by unrestrained pupils; they say: “I am not a worker (karmita) in the monastery. It is built for my sake. Only the monks who are obedient to me shall get a room in the monastery.”; they are not kind to those who conduct themselves well and are well-restrained, they say to the latter: “This cell (āyana) is allotted to me, this for my fellow-pupil, and that for my companion. Go away, there is no dwelling place for you. Lodgings (ānyātana) are completely distributed, many monks are taken in here. There is also no chance of getting anything here. What will you eat here? Go away, monk!”; they do not allocate lodgings (ānyatana), but store up things like householders, possessing many utensils and attendants.86 Being maltreated and despised in this manner, true bodhisattvas leave villages and capital cities and dwell in the wilderness.

79 RP. 15.11-12 (Emnkt 16).
80 RP. 18.8 (Emnik 19).
81 RP. 19.10 (Emnik 21).
82 RP. 21.1 (Emnik 21).
83 RP. 29.3-4 (Emnik 28-29).
84 RP. 29.2 (Emnik 28).
85 RP. 29.15-30.2 (Emnik 29).
86 RP. 30.13 (Emnik 30).
87 RP. 31.1-12 (Emnik 30).
In brief, in this scripture, the antagonists of wilderness bothjastivas were those who stayed in monasteries in or new villages and associated with lay people and gave them teachings. Also, judging from the description of allottments of logings, we can assume that both of them originally belonged to the same community.

2.6.4. Dhutagヌna monks v. village-oriented monks in the Sarvadharma-pravṛtti-nirdeśa Sūtra

Recently, Sanskrit fragments of the Sarvadharma-pravṛtti-nirdeśa Sūtra have been discovered in Afghanistan which are now kept in the Scheub Collection in Norway. Prof. Jens Braarvig has meticulously edited them in juxtaposition with their Tibetan and Chinese parallels as well as an English translation, mostly from the Sanskrit (Braarvig 2000: 1-166). This text, which, according to Braarvig belongs to the middle period of the Mahāyāna sutra literature, provides very remarkable testimony to the antagonism between dhutagヌna-practising monks and village-oriented ones.87

The antagonism is demonstrated in the two yuktas parts in the text, namely §6 and §12, based on Braarvig’s division of the text. The first one (pp. 125-131) is about a dhutagヌna-practitioner called Čāritramati and a Dharma-preacher (dharmah)&nabla;aka), Viśuddhadhācitra.

There was once a monk named Čāritramati, who believed in very severe practices (bhikṣuṣṭuma), was perturbed in the rules of the most pure morality, had attained the fivefold worldly supernatural knowledge, was an expert in mystical rules, and was a practitioner of severe austerities (agra-vapati). He founded a monastery (cānita), where he stayed, practising meditation.

The Dharma-preacher, Viśuddhadhācitra, came with his followers to the monastery where the monk Čāritramati lived, and stayed there. From there, they went into the town out of compassion, and when they had conducted the rituals of monks, they returned. He and his followers thus made many people believe in Buddhism, while Čāritramati and his followers were only intent on meditation, without going for rounds in the town.

Čāritramati, out of hatred for these other bothjastivas, prohibited dwellers in the monastery going to the village, while, at the same time, criticized Viśuddhadhācitra and his followers for not practicing properly, not talking too much. Saying that the Buddha praised life in the wilderness (brajo), he urged them to practice meditation without going into the village.

After three months, Viśuddhadhācitra and his followers moved to another monastery, from which they went again to towns, villages and the capital in order to preach the Dharma to people. Knowing Viśuddhadhācitra’s activities, Čāritramati blamed him, saying: ‘He has bad morality, perverted morality. How can he attain enlightenment?

87 I wish to thank Dr. M. I. Varnbhana-Deshpakshiyaya for directing my attention to this text.

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His enlightenment is far away. He lives associating with lay people (tā daśī gnan gnan pa)."

Because of this misdeed, Caritaramati later fell into the great hell of Avici.

The second story (pp. 158-164; cf. also pp. 84-85), of which no Sanskrit fragment is extant, is about a dhutagamana-practitioner, Jayayati by name, and a Dharma-preacher, called Pramuditendriya.

There was a dharmaśākha named "Pramuditendriya, who did not teach the people the practices of small passion, contentment, restraints (udayas), solitary life, disassociation from lay people (aśa daśī na mṛd pa), but rather taught that all dharmas had the nature of craving, aversion and ignorance, and that they were, therefore, by no means hindrances. He taught also that all practices were of one characteristic (type)."

At that time, there was a bodhisattva named Jayayati, who was also a Dharma-preacher. He had attained the four states of meditation and practised the twelve dhutagamanas. One day, by mistake, he visited a householder who was an adherent of Pramuditendriya, and praised the practices of small passion, contentment, restraints, solitary life, disassociation from lay people, blaming Pramuditendriya for teaching thereby the intelligent householder asked him in return about craving, whereupon he answered that craving was an impurity. The householder, however, said that craving was to be found nowhere, hence, there was neither an impurity nor a purification.

Jayayati became angry and slandered Pramuditendriya, saying that the latter taught the Buddhist teachings the wrong way round, and then he left the house. Having returned to the wilderness (gdon pa), he criticized Pramuditendriya in front of other monks for teaching perverted ideas. Pramuditendriya, thereupon, elucidated his teaching in the form of 43 verses. After having heard these, many of those present gained intellectual receptivity into the truth that states of existence have no origin (anupatityā dharmakāya), others attained emancipation of the mind which is absolutely free from affections, whereas Jayayati fell into a great hell.

In the verses uttered by Pramuditendriya, we come across the following expressions which dispense the practices of wilderness monks:

"For someone, who, reflecting in a lodging in the wilderness, praises himself, despises others, and (thus) sticks to the false view concerning the wilderness, there is no (hope to attain) heaven, not to say of enlightenment."

"If a layman with the five qualities of desire (kāmagunas) hears this teaching but does not become afraid, he is superior to one who, after entering this religion, holds the (theoretical) view of (reliance on) imagination (upalambha-dṛṣṭika), and boasts of the qualities of dhana.

From these stories, we learn the following points:

66 gan tig dgon pa's gnan la rang byed cin 11 blang la srol byed gnam la smud byed pa 11
dgon par la sbral gnyor de la mo 11 mthu' re sum na byan chub pa la yes 1 7 1 (Delmerig: 2000: 160).

67 sbya la ston mi sdom gan gyur pa 11 'bod pa's yon tan la srig byamo pa'is bris 11 bstan pa'is la sbral 'tsa byan gyur cin 11 den gyis la shyon pa's yon tan rông pa mo 1 4 1 (Delmerig: 2000: 163).
(1) Wilderness monks also built monasteries in the wilderness.
(2) There were Dharma-practitioners who dwelt (in monasteries) in the wilderness and entered villages to preach to lay people.
(3) There were Dharma-practitioners who kept moving from one monastery to another.
(4) There was acrimony between practitioners of dhutagamana, who also practised meditation in the wilderness, and Dharma-practitioners who entered villages to preach.
(5) From the second story, we learn that traditional Buddhists and Mahayana monks used to dwell together in monasteries, slandering each other.

Thus, in this text, dhutagamana-practitioners are antagonistic towards monks who dwell in the wilderness, possessing village-oriented minds. The rivalry depicted here is different from that in the Ugrapariprccha and Rasrapalapariprccha Sutras. I assume that the descriptions in this text reflect more or less the realities of the situations at that time when so-called Mahayana Buddhism was gradually forming in and around monasteries. We can assume, in conclusion, that this Sutra was composed by those who detested dhutagamana-practices. We shall, henceforth, call such monks, who themselves did not dwell in villages but were inclined to be active there, "village-oriented monks".

2.6.5. Antagonism between wilderness and village-oriented monks in Mahayana texts

As we have seen in §2.6.2 and §2.6.3, the compositors of the Ugrapariprccha and Rasrapalapariprccha Sutras were themselves presumably wilderness monks or at least their sympathizers. Apart from these Mahayana texts, the Khotanga-parisutra and the Ramanisī were also evidently composed from the point of view of these monks, as both of them, praising more or less the dhutagamama or ascetic practices, call for dwelling in the wilderness.

These sutras of "wilderness monks" show antagonism towards those who stayed in monasteries in or near villages and associated with lay people, and they present a picture of conflict between "wilderness monks" and "village monks" not only with regard to the living areas but also to their activities. The wilderness monks were preoccupied primarily with meditation and the dhutagamama, while village monks associated with lay people, taught the Dharma and managed monasteries. The conflict within these two groups as well as the antagonism between them are basically the same as those described in the Aklavamacārika-Dharmādi which we have already seen above.

On the other hand, the two opposing groups in the Sarvadharma-pratyettana Sutra, namely the dhutagama-practitioners and the village-oriented monks, dwelt together (in monasteries) in the wilderness, though the latter did not seem to have stayed there.
permanently. Therefore, the dual structure of wilderness / village monks does not exactly fit in here. However, if we pay attention to the division of their activities, namely dharmas and meditation on one hand and preaching and association with lay people on the other, the opposing theme found in this text is exactly the same as that of wilderness / village monks.

3.1. Further to the verses in the Ustaha-parivarta
Now, we shall return to the verses in the Ustaha-parivarta in the Louna Sutra. As there is no quotation marks in the Sanskrit original, it is quite difficult to discern the spoken word from narrative description, which has confused not only modern scholars but also the ancient Chinese and Tibetan translators. If we take the antagonism between wilderness and village-(oriental) monks into consideration and, at the same time, pay attention to the use of the asorit forms (delyi, delayam, ciroya) with an optative meaning, which presumably mark the spoken word here in contrast to future forms in the narrative parts, we may translate verses in question (5-11) as follows:

Ignorant practitioners of austerities\(^{10}\), who dwell in the wilderness\(^{11}\) and wear patched garments, will say of us as follows:\(^{12}\) (vs. 5)

“They, greedily attached to tattas (rūpas), preach (delayi) the Dharmas to house-holders.”(vs. 6-8)

They (i.e. the wilderness monks) will be honoured as if they were those who possess the sixfold supernatural knowledge (saadbhikṣa)\(^{13}\), (vs. 6c)

They are (in reality) cruel-minded, wicked, occupied with thoughts of hosiess\(^{14}\) (vs. 7ab)

\(^{10}\) O. samkhka-carita (-f); D2. samkhka-yatra-cēri.

\(^{11}\) upanyasakṣa-. Nepalese and Gāgāt MSS. read upasyaṃaka-. ("reflecting upon [the life in] the wilderness").

\(^{12}\) ane evam vāyuyami (-O); F. ane evam vāyuyami; D2. "yama evam vāyuyami." The form ane appears in the so-called "Kashyapa" MS. not only as a nominative but also as an accusative plural form of the first person, e.g.: RN 147.10. ane / G. ane / K. anemia (nominative); RN 199.1. anemia / G. ane (accusative). The term in P. is probably its hyper-sanskritized form. For the accusative plural form ane in D2 (here the initial vowel is lost it samukh), see BHS IS §30:45. The phrase ane(oe) evam vāyuyami in this verse is similar to that of vs. 6: anemia ca evam vāyuyami. The expression ane evam vāyuyami dharmaḥ in the verse in question is comparable also with verse 12: ye ca nandam kusumasyaṃ... dharmaḥ. Therefore, I take ane(oe) evam not for the nominative but for the accusative, though the Tibetan and modern translators took it for nominative.

\(^{13}\) A man with sixfold supernatural knowledge was regarded as the highest in the hierarchy of the community, cf. Vin II 161.H. kṣatrayaśādubhīṣaka... bhīṣaṇabhuṭābhīṣaṇa... gahapatiśādubhīṣaṇa... nāthabhuṭa... (vinayavat. 2.21); bhīṣaṇa bhīṣaṇa bhūtī... (vinayavat. 2.22).

\(^{14}\) gṛha-vāsa-vāstumahā. Or "thinking upon house and property" (gṛha-vāsa-vāstumahā, see note [8]).

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Having entered (their) retreat in the wilderness, our slanderers, (vs. 7cd) //who are (themselves) bent on gain and honour //91, will say of us as follows (eṣaṃ)\textsuperscript{5}: (vs. 7ab)

"For sure these monks are heretics! They preach (dharma) their own verses (kavyaṃ)" (vs. 8cd)

Prompted by (greed for) gain and honour, they compose verses by themselves and preach in the midst of the assembly (pāñcā)." (vs. 9bc)

Our revilers (vs. 9d)\textsuperscript{92} will speak evil of us (vs. 11a) to kings, princes, kings’ ministers, Brahmanas, householders, as well as to other monks (vs. 10) (saying): "They are propagating a heresy!" (vs. 11b)

We shall endure all these out of reverence for great seers (i.e. buddhān). (vs. 11cd)

The part, parallel to this in Kumārajīva’s Chinese translation, can be understood in a similar way.\textsuperscript{93} On the other hand, the Tibetan parallel differs from my understanding concerning verse 7ab.\textsuperscript{100}

\textsuperscript{59} I cannot exclude the possibility that verses 6cd and 7ab could be also slanderous words uttered by wilderness monks towards us.\textsuperscript{90}

\textsuperscript{60} amārya satva vākyam iti slāba-skārī-nāsān naḥ. Or: "They will say of us as follows. [These] are bent on gain and honour..."

\textsuperscript{61} This interpretation goes with the Tibetan translation: hād jag ca la ni kṣat skārī nāsā niḥ. They persevere in such slanders: ‘They are bent on gain and honour...’\textsuperscript{90}

\textsuperscript{62} see note (10).

\textsuperscript{63} Vs. 9 of the Tibetan version reads: ruped pha dang ni khang mā sū phye / rang gi gsum sde bskyod nas sa // ‘When go down in the midst of the assembly’ // They abuse us greatly: ‘Having composed verses by themselves 6a, the sake of gain and honour, [they] explain [them] in the midst of the assembly.’ Here, I temporarily follow the Tibetan translator’s interpretation. However, I cannot exclude the possibility that this verse is not slanderous, spoken by wilderness monks, but a narrative description concerning these monks. If that is the case, then we may translate verses 8-9 as follows: ‘The wilderness monks say of us: ‘For sure these monks are heretics! They preach their own verses’ (However,) our revilers (themselves), being prompted by (greed for) gain and honour, compose verses by themselves and preach in the midst of the assembly.’

\textsuperscript{64} The parallel verses in Kumārajīva’s translation can be interpreted as follows:

O there are wilderness monks, wearing patched rags and dwelling in the wilderness, who claim that they are practising the True Religion, and despise (monks who dwell) amongst people (LAR), (saying): “Because they desire gain, they preach the Dharma to lay people”. (Wilderness monks) are revered by people, as though they were saints who possess transcendental powers. (However,) they bear evil thoughts, constantly thinking of worldly matters. In the name of wilderness monks, they like to expose our faults, saying: ‘These monks, out of greed for gain, preach heretical doctrines. Having themselves composed this Scripture to delude lay people, they preach it, hoping to obtain fame.’

Wishing to define us as the assembly, they slander and speak evil of us towards kings, ministers, Brahmanas, householders and towards other monks saying: ‘These are of wrong views and preach heretical doctrines.’\textsuperscript{90} Because we observe the Dharma, we shall endure all these evils.

\textsuperscript{90} The word ‘AMB in Chinese has meant “amongst people, in the world” since olden times, while in Japanese, it means “human beings”. However, all the modern translators of Kumārajīva’s Lotus Sutra, including Haruiz, have interpreted this word incorrectly to mean “human beings”.

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Though I must admit that there is still uncertainty as to the distinction between slanderous words and descriptive parts, we can still learn the following points from these verses:

(1) "Wilderness monks" blame "us." (vs. 5–6a,b; vs. 7c,d)
(2) Wilderness monks are ignorant (dharma). (vs. 5d)
(3) "We" are blamed for preaching to householders. (vs. 6b, vs. 8c; probably also vs. 9c)
(4) "We" are blamed for composing scriptures. (vs. 9a, probably also 8d)
(5) "We" are blamed for being attached to tastes. (vs. 6)
(6) "We" are Buddhist monks. (vs. 8c)

Apart from these, we learn another two facts from verses 18–19 in the same chapter (cited in §1.1 and §1.2):

(7) "We" shall preach this Sutra, i.e. the Lotus Sutra, in the assembly. (vs. 18c)

The Tibetan translation reads here as follows (Nakamura 1986: 272.3–273.8):

I remove all slanderous words and compose the following: No anyone will blame this sutra for being slanderous or for the words being descriptive.

The following is my provisional transliteration of the Tibetan parallel:

Thinking of the wilderness and also wearing patched garments, the wicked-minded will say:

"We practise the minimum of necessities." (vs. 3)

"Those who are attached to tastes, also preach the Dharma to householders."

Like those who possess the aforesaid supernatural knowledge, they will be honoured also. (vs. 6)

They, who are virtuous and ill-minded, thinking of houses and properties, enter into a calm wilderness and abuse us. (vs. 7)

They say of us as follows: "Adhering to gain and honour, these monks, who are heretics, preach self-made verses." (vs. 8)

Having composed sutras by themselves for the sake of gain and honour, (they) explain (them) in the midst of the assembly", thus they abuse us greatly. (vs. 9)

To kings, princes, king's ministers, Brahmins, householders, and to other monks, (vs. 10) they speak evil of us. They even say: "They are heretics!" Out of reverence for great seers, we shall endure all these. (vs. 11)

I take 60a's descriptive words by wilderness monks towards "us", while the Tibetan translator took it for a narrative which describes wilderness monks.

The word "Buddhism" does not occur here. However, from the context, it is obvious that the practitioners in the wilderness, described here, are none other than Buddhist wilderness monks.
(8) "We shall visit people in towns and villages in order to further transmit what the Buddha consigned "us" to do (i.e. the Lotus Sutra) (vs. 19).

In short, the "we" are monks who preach the Dharma to lay people in villages and towns, being blamed by "our" antagonists, namely wilderness monks, for the composition of new scriptures. In future, "we" shall bear and preach the Lotus Sutra.

According to the prose which proceeds the verses in question, eighty hundred thousand bodhisatvas uttered these stanzas. In the Sutra, these bodhisatvas are meant by the word "we", but, in reality, the "we" here is none other than the composers/holders of the Lotus Sutra.

Therefore, we may conclude that those who composed and preached the Lotus Sutra were village or village-oriented monks. Also, it is to be noted that the wilderness monks' slander against "us" in the Lotus Sutra is similar to that against village-oriented monks found in the Abhisamācarīkā-Dharmap (e.g. "You seek for the most tasty [foods] with the tip of your tongue.") and the Ratnapalaśīprāccha Sūtra (e.g. "They always carry a scripture [lekha] with them.").

4. Composers and holders of the Lotus Sutra assumed from other chapters

4.1. The Bodhisattvapiṭṭhitavasamadgama-parisastra

In the preceding section, we concluded that the composers of the Lotus Sutra were village-oriented monks, of whom wilderness monks were critical. When we understand this as the background to the Lotus Sutra, we can then realise why Maitreya and his fellow bodhisatvas were surprised at the sight of so many unknown bodhisattvas emerging out of the earth, which is described in Chapter XIV, the Bodhisattvapiṭṭhitavasamadgama-parisastra.

In this chapter (KN: 297ff.), we are told that countless bodhisattvas, headed by four others namely, Visṣajīvitarā, Anantaśīvitarā, Vaidūvyāśīvitarā, and Supraśīvīśīvitarā, suddenly emerged out of the earth and paid homage to the Buddha, Prahlāda-śīvitarā, and other buddhas who had gathered at the Buddha's assembly. Maitreya and other bodhisattvas in the assembly were surprised at the sight and wandered, whence they came and who they were as they had neither seen nor heard of them before. Thereupon Maitreya asked the Buddha about them, to which the latter replied that he, himself, had taught and converted them long before and that they were, therefore, his "sons". Further, the Buddha gave Maitreya (to Ajita) a presentation of these bodhisattvas who had emerged out of the earth as follows:

And these Bodhisattvas Mahāsattvas, Ajita, occupy in this Saha-world the 40main

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of the ether-element below. Only thinking of the lesson they have to study, and devoted to thoroughly comprehend it, these young men of good family have no liking for social gatherings; not for bustling crowds; they ... delight in seclusion, be fond of seclusion. These young men of good family do not dwell in the immediate vicinity of gods and men, they not being fond of bustling crowds." ....

"All have devoted themselves to a hermit life (śramaṇa-dīnu-sahāyaṇa) and are assiduous in charming places of beast (tamasagabhāma); they walk detached (naga-cintin), these sons of mine, following my precepts in their lofty course (caryā)." (vs. 39)

They dwell in the domain of ether, in the lower portion of the field, those heroes who, unwearied, are striving day and night to attain superior knowledge. (vs. 40)

All strength, of good memory, unshaken in the immense strength of their intelligence, those serene sages preach the law (dharma kathāni), all radiant, as being my sons."

(vs. 41) (Kern 1884: 292-293). The Sanskrit words in brackets are added by the present author.

In short, these bodhisattvas were wilderness monks who practised dhārayasna.

In the Lotus Sutra, Maitreya is depicted as the representative of bodhisattvas who had a close association with lay people, preached the Dharma to them, and propagated the Lotus Sutra. Therefore, his activities were, in the above-stated system, none other than those of a village-oriented monk.

We are told that these dhārayasna-practising bodhisattvas dwelt spiritually as well as temporally far away from Maitreya, and that he had, therefore, neither seen nor heard of them before. Here, again, we come across another piece of evidence of the dichotomy between wilderness monks and village-oriented ones, and we can assume with certainty that the composers as well as the bearers of the Lotus Sutra, symbolised by Maitreya, were on the side of village-oriented monks.

4.2. The Puṇṇaparāśraya-parivarta
Verses 17–32 in the Puṇṇaparāśraya-parivarta (KN. 334–336) describe the unlimited merit (puṇṇa) for those who, upon hearing this religious discourse (dharmaparāśraya) which elucidates the duration of the Tathāgata's life — namely the Tathāgata-dharmaparāśraya-parivarta which precedes this Puṇṇaparāśraya chapter —, believe in it for a single moment. We are told this merit far surpasses that acquired by the practices of the five pāramitās. I shall cite here Kern's English translation to give a convenient explanation.101 The Sanskrit words in brackets are added by the present author.

17. Let a man who is seeking after this knowledge, superior Buddha-knowledge, undertake to practise in this world the five perfect virtues (pāramitās patika) ;
18. Let him, during eight thousand kinds of complete dharma (dharma), continue giving

101 The Central Asian manuscripts read as follows: O. āranyu-dhātudīnaṃkṣat; F. "ādīmukṣatūmā." 
102 Kern 1884: 318-319.
repeated alms to Buddhas and disciples;
19. Regaling Pratyekabuddhas and kōts of Bodhisattvas by giving meat, food and
drink, clothing and lodging;
20. Let him build on earth refuges and monasteries of sandal-wood, and pleasant
convent gardens provided with walls (cakrakarṇaṁśa);
21. Let him after so bestowing gifts, various and diversified, during thousands of
kōts of Kōns, direct his mind to enlightenment;
22. Let him then, for the sake of Buddha-knowledge, keep unbroken the pure moral
precepts which have been recommended by the perfect Buddhas and acknowledged
by the wise;
23. Let him further develop the virtue of forbearance, be steady in the stage of
meekness (väññabhūmā), be constant, of good memory, and patiently endure many
censures;
24. Let him, moreover, for the sake of Buddha-knowledge, bear the contemptuous
words of unbelievers who are rooted in pride;
25. Let him, always zealous, strenuous, studious, of good memory, without any other
preoccupation in his mind, practise meditation, during kōts of Kōns;
26. Let him, whether living in the forest (aranyamātī tīthantu) or entering
upon a vagrant life (śāntikrama abhirūhya), go about, avoiding sloth and torpor,
for kōts of Kōns;
27. Let him as a philosopher (dibhyā), a great philosopher (mahādibhyā) who
finds his delight in meditation (dhyānārūma), in concentration of mind (dhyāyas),
pass eight thousand kōts of Kōns;
28. Let him entergetically pursue enlightenment with the thought of his reaching
all-knowingness, and so arrive at the highest degree of meditation (dhyāna- pāramitam gataḥ);
29. Then the merit accruing to those who practise the virtues oft described,
during thousands of kōts of Kōns;
30. (Is less than that of) a man or a woman who, on hearing the duration of my
life (āyām), for a single moment believes in it; this merit is endless.
31. He who renouncing doubt, vacillation, and misgiving shall believe even for a
short moment, shall obtain such a reward.

Thus, the merit acquired through the practices of the perfection of giving (dāna- pāramitā: verses 18–21), good conduct (śīla-pāramitā: verse 22), patience (ksanti-pāramitā: verses 23–24), vigour (vīrya-pāramitā: verse 25), and meditation (dhyāna-pāramitā: verses 26–28) is said to be far inferior to that of a (lay) man or woman who hears the
Buddha’s discourse, concerning the duration of his life and believes in it for even a
single moment. In the verses, in boldface, we may clearly see that the composers of
the Lotus Sutra deprecated the practices of wilderness monks (Kern’s “living in the
forest”) compared to lay people’s belief in the Sutra. Here, again, we may conclude
that these composers were on the side of village-oriented monks who supposedly

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preached the Sutra to lay people in the name of the Buddha.

4.3. The Dharmabhānaka-parvantra

In the preceding sections, we assumed that the composers and holders of the Lotus Sutra were most probably village-oriented monks of whom wilderness monks were critical. Did the composers and holders of the Sutra constitute a powerful faction in the community and hence held power in the monasteries? Presumably, this was not the case. They seemed to have been a fringe group. It is repeatedlyalluded to in the text itself that the bearers of the Lotus Sutra used to be rejected in the community, suffer terrible persecution, be expelled from monasteries. For instance, verses in the Unāsha-parvantra read:

"We will suffer, patiently endure, O Lord, the injuries, threats, blows and threats with sticks at the hands of foolish men. (v. 5)"

"One will have to endure frowns, repeated disapproval, banishment (niśīkṣaṇa) from monasteries, manifold bindings and reviling. (v. 17)"

Passages, found in Chapter X, the Dharmabhānaka-parvantra, also indicate that holders of the Lotus Sutra in early times, received constant rejection in the community. In this chapter, the Buddha told a bodhisattva named Bhaisajyagurava the following:

A Dharma-preacher in future should propound the Lotus Sutra with confidence in the assembly. The Buddha would send a magically-conjured audience who would not reject nor contradict the preacher. If (savāl) the preacher stayed in the wilderness (aranya), then the Buddha would send large numbers of gods, dragons, spirits, gandharvas, asuras, and others to listen to him preach. If the preacher forgot words or expressions of the Lotus Sutra during recitation, the Buddha would remind him.

These descriptions, concerning the preacher of the Lotus Sutra, are repeated in verses 25–33 in the same chapter. I shall cite Kern's English translation of these verses here. The Sanskrit words in brackets are added by the present author.

25. Where clouds, sticks, pikes, or abusive words and threats fall to the lot of the

68 The verses, cited above, are important also for the consideration of the relationship between the Lotus Sutra and prosthaparamitī thought. In the latter, the prosthaparamitī is given the highest position. However, in the case of these verses in the Parsvarajyapāya chapter, the acts of hearing the Sutra and believing in it are placed at the highest position. We may assume that the composer(s) of the chapter, being aware of the prosthaparamitī thought system, modified it and gave pride of place to that of the acts of hearing and believing in the Sutra, which was usually suited for lay people.

69 Cf. also, KN. 285.1–2, 293.5–6.

70 KN. 271.9–10; Kern 1884: 239.

71 Buddha-kṣatra or buddha-kṣata. Cf. note (33) in this paper.

72 KN. 274.1–2.

73 KN. 234.10–235.7.

74 KN. 236.11–237.14.

preacher, let him be patient, thinking of me.

26. My body has existed entire in thousands of knots of regions; during a number of knots of Atma beyond comprehension I teach the law to creatures.

27. To that auspicious man who shall proclaim this Sutra after my complete extinction I will also send many creations.

28. Monks, nuns, lay devotees, male and female, will honour him as well as the classes of the audience.

29. And should there be some to attack him with cloths, sticks, injurious words, threats, taunts, then the creations shall defend him.

30. And when (padita) he shall stay alone, engaged in study (vibhajyanti), in a lonely place, in the forest (stovit) or the hills (parvata),

31. Then will I show him my luminous body and enable him to remember the lesson (vibhajyati) I forgot.

32. While he is living lonely in the wilderness (vina-citra), I will send him gods and goblins in great number to keep him company.

33. Such are the advantages he is to enjoy; whether he is preaching to the four classes, or living, a solitary, in mountain caverns (vina-kandara) and studying his lesson (vibhajyati), he will see me.

From the descriptions in the Ustaka- and Dharmabhāsaka-parivarta cited above, we can recognise the harsh realities of those who preached the Lotus Sutra in early times. They often received rejection and were persecuted in the Buddhist community. There were even cases where they were expelled from monasteries and had no choice but to dwell in forests or the wilderness, precipitating the Sutra.

There are certain scholars who take the verses in the Dharmabhāsaka-parivarta, cited above, for indicating that the holders of the Lotus Sutra were wilderness monks who practised in recluse.11 However, it must be noted that the text itself reads "Even when (padita) he shall stay alone, ..., in the forest", which shows that they dwelt in the forest because of some special reason. Further, their practices, namely reciting (vibhajyati) the Lotus Sutra and preaching it to non-human spirits, are evidently different from those of true wilderness monks, namely dharmagrasana and meditation. Moreover, according to the Lotus Sutra, preachers or holders of the Sutra had (and still have) a particular mission in life entrusted by the Buddha, that is, to go to villages and towns everywhere, where there was a person who sought the Dharma, and to preach this Sutra.114 This mission evidently contradicts the lifestyle of wilderness monks who abstained from associating with lay people and merely concentrated on practising austerities and meditation.

113 For instance, Okada 2001: 179.
114 Vs. 19 in the Ustaka-parivarta (KN. 274.5-6).
4.4. Composers of the Lotus Sutra

In conclusion, we may assume that the composers of the Sutra as well as its holders in early times were village monks or those who dwelt outside villages while possessing village-oriented minds. They seemed to have constituted a minor group in the monasteries. They were criticised by wilderness monks on one hand and persecuted by factions in power in the monasteries on the other.

In history, we come across many cases where those who dared to state the truth loudly in public were simply ignored, or even persecuted by those in power or by the masses which were, to their turn, often manipulated by the latter. I assume that the composer and holders of the Lotus Sutra in early times were such courageous people.

The truth, which they proclaimed openly, in my opinion, was that everyone could equally obtain the Buddha's knowledge (Buddha-jñāna; or mahā-buddha-jñāna "the great knowledge" as it is also known) and should, therefore, aim at obtaining it. Such a view is by no means shocking to us who are familiar with Mahāyāna Buddhism nowadays but it must have been a complete antithesis of Nāgārjuna Buddhism in those days, in which knowledge of the Buddha, that of pratyekabuddhas and śrāvaka-śrāvakās were strictly graded. Probably, these composers and holders were criticised and persecuted because they uttered this simple and self-evident truth openly in public.

\[11\] In support of my assumption, we find a passage in the Central Asian MSS. and the Chinese translations of the Sutra, which proclaims that the Sutra is a scripture which shows the equality of the great knowledge (mahābuddha-jñāna):

KN-240.3.ādhū sādhu bhagavatā Śakyamunī (= the Nepalese MSS. The Gilgit MSS. see noting here).

O. sādhu sādhu bhagavatā nāthaṃ sādhuṃ buddhasuṃ svayamprabhaṃ mahābuddhaṃ-śatakṣamānāmaṃ sarva-buddhaṃ-parigrahitam dharmasyprayāyam dīrapaiṃ samprabhāsyaṃ pratādād (Śakyamunī) ("It is excellent, excellent, Lord Śakyamuni, that you show and expand this religious discourse which is a compendium for bodhisattvas, an exhaltation of equality of the great knowledge, and which all buddhas embrace.").

\[12\] L&H (B-11.B resort 7) //ōśām Śakyamunīm ya imaṃ baiśākṣaṃ saṃgraham maha-buddhaṃ-śakṣamānām // (i.e. ["It is excellent, excellent, Lord Śakyamuni, that you show and expand this religious discourse which is a compendium for bodhisattvas, an exhaltation of equality of the great knowledge."])..."

Kumārajīva’s translation. Tathāgata, vol. 9, No. 362, 125b8. 般若！智慧！佛說筆記述！佛說大般若！佛說以平等大乘智慧善，佛說懺梵《妙法華經》為大乘說!Excellent! Excellent, O Śakyamuni, O World-Honoured One, that you teach the bodhisattva-dharma with imperial great wisdom, [and] preach the Lotus Sutra, which buddhas keep in mind, to the great assembly.").

Cf. Karashma, forthcoming §2.7.

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5. Searching for the origins of Mahāyāna Buddhism

5.1. The position of the Lotus Sutra in the history of Mahāyāna Buddhism

As I have written elsewhere, I assume that the Lotus Sutra was shaped gradually to its present form, based on results of the re-search of our predecessors as well as my own. I have tentatively divided the process of formation of the Sutra into four stages as follows:

1. Tristubh-Jagāi verses, found in chapters from the Upayakusumā- (II) to the Vyakaranam-parivarta (IX)
2. Śloka verses and prose, found in those chapters
3. Chapters from the Dharmadhātukāya- (Xi) to the Tattvāgamaśāstra-sūtra-parivarta (XX), as well as Nidāna- (I) and Amuparimūla-parivarta (XXVII)
4. The other chapters (XXI-XXVI) and the latter half of the Śrīpustikāpariśāla-parivarta (XI), i.e. the so-called Devadatta-parivarta

While exact dates of formation are impossible to determine, I assume that the Sutra came into existence in this order, apart from some exceptions such as the verse portion of the Samantabhadra-parivarta (XXIV) which probably existed as an independent text box was later incorporated into the Lotus Sutra.

Further, I have assumed that when the prajñāparamitā thought system developed in southern India, Gāndhāra region or elsewhere, the earlier stages of the Lotus Sutra, namely (1) and (2) in the above list, were composed in another area completely unrelated to it. Sometime later, and probably in North-Western India, these two texts met with the result that the Lotus Sutra was influenced by prajñāparamitā literature and the third stage was appended to it. After that, the fourth stage was added when it came across other beliefs, such as in Aśvokiteva, Aṃtiṭhā, Samantaḥādāra, dhāranī, and so on.

Therefore, if we compare the Lotus Sutra in the present form and Prajñāparamitā literature, the former definitely appears much newer than the latter. However, the earlier stages of the Lotus Sutra were probably composed not later than the formation of this said literature.

Moreover, I have pointed out that there are at least seventeen instances in which

139 Karashima 1991, 1993. Prof. Kajiyama has cited my theory in detail in his article in Japanese, which was later translated into English by Wayne Yokoyama (Kajiyama 2000). I use his English translation here with some revision.
the Nepalese and Gélug monasteries of the Lotus Sutra read ज्ञान and (buddha, sambhogakāya, sārvajña-ṣādhuṇa, while the Central Asian ones read योग, (buddha, sambhogakāya, sārvajña-ṣādhuṇa instead, which lead me to the assumption that, in the earliest stage of transmission of the Lotus Sutra, the Middle Indic form ज्ञान or ज्ञान (cess, ज्ञान, योग had previously stood here, and that later, some redactors back-formed it to ज्ञान ("knowledge"), while others sanctified it to योग ("vehicle"). At the same time, I have shown that there is a word play between ज्ञान ("knowledge") and योग ("vehicle") in the famous parable of the burning house, found in the Aṣṭasāhasrika-pārvatara of the Lotus Sutra. I have also assumed, further, that the Mahāyānaist terms, बुद्धवान ("the Buddha vehicle"), भव्यावन ("the great vehicle"), भैरव ) (the inferior vehicle") originally meant बुद्धवान ("Buddha-knowledge"), महाभैरव ("great knowledge") , भैरव ("inferior knowledge") respectively, and that the term महाभैरव (cess, भैरव, महाभैरव, which originally meant "great knowledge, buddha-knowledge" in the earliest stage of the Lotus Sutra, was later interpreted as "the great vehicle", and was then adopted by composers of scriptures to designate the new idea of "Mahāyāna Buddhism". Presumably, the word play of योग / ज्ञान, found in the parable of the burning house, may have given rise to this misinterpretation.

178 Only when we assume in this way, we can explain the following phenomena:
(i) The Aṣṭasāhasrika-pārvatara (hereafter as ज्ञान, which has been deemed as one of the earliest Mahāyāna sutras, emphasizes the performance of ज्ञान in some sutra). In the earliest stages of the Lotus Sutra, namely (1) and (2) in the above list, positively recommends the building and veneration of stupas. From the Dharaniraṇī-pārvatara (X) onwards, however, the building of stupas burial mounds (cūpadha), representing the performance of ज्ञान to sutra scrolls, was recommended.
(ii) In the ज्ञान, the dharma practices of holding, profaning, exposing, copying, and the performing of ज्ञान are explained, but in the first two stages of the Lotus Sutra the practice of copying does not appear, and it is not until the third stage that copying is first mentioned.
(iii) In the ज्ञान, the dharma practices of holding, developing, exposing, copying, and the performing of ज्ञान are explained, but in the first two stages of the Lotus Sutra the practice of copying does not appear, and it is not until the third stage that copying is first mentioned.
(iv) In the ज्ञान, the term preacher of the dharma, or ज्ञानविद, appears, and it is used frequently in the third stage of the Lotus Sutra, whereas in the first two stages, there is no clear-cut instance of the term.
(v) In verses in the first two stages, राजा (emperor) is mentioned, but since it does not go beyond the treatment found in अग्रि and Nīkāya literature, it is merely an artificial. The portion in the Lotus Sutra where we can clearly see the influence of the राजा thought system, in the second half of the Quālā-पारवत, (Vs. Hence this verse portion, which is not found in Kumarāśa's translation, is thought to have been interpolated at a much later time.
(vi) The ज्ञान from the beginning explains the ज्ञान (perfection of wisdom) as the basis of the five ज्ञान, while in the Lotus Sutra the six paramās are merely enumerated. ' is not, until the third stage, in the Patanjali-pārvatara (XVII), that the ज्ञान (perfection of wisdom) thought system is first mentioned as the basis of the five ज्ञान.
Also, I have demonstrated elsewhere¹¹ that the old Sanskrit fragments of the Lotus Sutra are much more Middle Indic in nature than other manuscripts, and that some of these forms show the peculiarities of Eastern dialects. These facts lead me to agree with the hypothesis of H. Liéder and Prof. Dichi Hsin-lin (or Ji Xianlin) that "the original text of the Saddharma-pundarika was written, if not in pure Māgadhi, in a 'mixed Sanskrit' which was based on that dialect".¹²²

As well as this, it is to be noted that the descriptions, which tell us that the composers and holders of the Lotus Sutra were rejected, criticised, and even persecuted, occur in the third stage, which means that probably the composers and holders of the first two stages, who had been, in reality, rejected, criticised, and persecuted by other groups of Buddhists, described these unfortunate experiences together with their strong resolve to further propagate the Sutra under such adverse circumstances. However, the first stages, primarily dealing with the equality of the "great knowledge", as it is known from the Sutra's own subtitle "An Elucidation of Equality of the Great Knowledge" or Mahāyāna-samātā-nirdeśa),²⁸ contain by no means sophisticated ideas compared with other Mahāyāna texts. The fact that the composers and holders of the Sutra with such primitive ideas were severely criticised and persecuted seems to indicate that the earlier stages of the Sutra date back to the time of the very formation of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Therefore, in conclusion, I assume that the formation of the earlier stages of the Lotus Sutra dates back to much earlier times than is supposed, maybe even back to the period when the earliest Mahāyāna came into existence, as it is indicated above.

5.2. The origins of Mahāyāna scriptures

It is very difficult to say who were the first who proclaimed themselves as Mahāyānists: wilderness monks, village-oriented ones or others. As we have already seen, there are several early Mahāyāna texts which praise seclusion in the wilderness, like the Ugraparipṛcchā, the Kṣatrapali-paripṛcchā, the Kṣitigarbha-parivarta, the Karakāvatī, and the Abhijñānājñātā.²³ Based on this fact, some scholars have been inclined to think that the Mahāyāna originated as a tradition of wilderness (or forest) monks.¹²³

However, we have already seen above, we know of two Mahāyāna sutras which reject dhutanga-practices in the wilderness, namely the Sarvadharma-pratītya-nirdeśa Sutra and the Lotus Sutra. As well as these, in my opinion, there are at least two more

¹²³ See note (115).
¹²⁴ All of them are contained in the Mahāyāna collection, which is possibly not a coincidence.

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Mahāyāna scriptures which are critical of such practices, namely the Rātanagosamucayāgīrī and the Aṣṭasāhasrika Prajñāpāramitā.

Verses 3–8 in Chapter XXI in the Rātanagosamucayāgīrī evidently demonstrate that the Sutra is not on the side of wilderness monks. I shall cite Conze’s English translation of these verses here:

3. If he is one who has behaved in accordance with the ascetic practices, a devoted yogin, [Mara will tell him:] ‘Formerly [in your past lives] you have also had these very same qualities.’

The Bodhisattva who, on hearing this, becomes concealed,
One should know him to be possessed by Mara, of little intelligence.

4. Though he might practise quite detached from villages or cities in a mountain cave,
   In a remote forest, or in inosted woods,
   The Bodhisattva who esteems himself, who deprecates others,
   One should know him to be possessed by Mara, of little intelligence.

5. Although they may constantly dwell in a village, a royal city [or] a market town;
   If therein they do not generate longing for the vehicle of the Arhats and Pratyekabuddhas,
   But are devoted to enlightenment for the sake of maturing beings:
   Then this has been preached as the detachment of the Sugata’s sons.

6. Though he may reside in mountain caves, five hundred miles wide,
   Infested with wild beasts, for many kotis of years:
   That Bodhisattva does not know this [true] detachment
   If he dwells contaminated by conceit.

7. When he feels superior to Bodhisattvas who practice for the weal of the world,
   And who have attained the concentrations, emancipations, faculties, trances and powers,
   On the ground that they do not course in the detachment of the remote forest,
   Of him the Jina has said that ‘he is established in Mara’s sphere.’

8. Whether he dwells in the neighbourhood of a village, or in the remote forest:
   If he is free from the thought of the twofold vehicle and fixed on the supreme enlightenment,
   Then this is the detachment of those who have set out for the weal of the world.
   As one whose self is extinct should that Bodhisattva be considered.

In my view, these are a summary of prose passages found in the Aṣṭasāhasrika Prajñāpāramitā pp. 192.14–196.14 (Conze 1973: 230–235), rather than the other way round. From these verses and passages in which dhatus are depreciated, it is evident that the Rātanagosamucayāgīrī as well as the Aṣṭasāhasrika Prajñāpāramitā, presumably upon which the forms is based, are not on the side of wilderness monks, but rather on village-oriented monks.

Thus, there are also several early Mahāyāna scriptures which were apparently composed by those who were critical of the wilderness tradition.

Therefore, my preliminary hypothesis is that those, who were frustrated by groups of monks who were dogmatic as well as formalistic in the community, gradually removed themselves from the latter and finally began to compose texts according to their own ideas—they could have been discalceate practitioners, monks who were occupied with meditation, village-oriented monks or others. Though they may have been critical of the established monasticism of the day, they may have remained within the community, at least in early times, criticizing each other. The following description found in the *Ugrapariprajñabhā* presents a picture of various groups of monks living together in one community.

When he (i.e. a householder bodhisattva) enters a monastery (vihāra), he should discern all the practices of the community of monks: who is a learned monk? who is a Dharma-teaching monk (dge 'long chen byas pa); who is a monk who observes discipline? who is a monk who holds the saṅghabaliṣṭa; who is a monk who holds the *Buddhissāra-pitaka*? who is a wildness monk? who is one who lives by alms? who is one who wears rag-robes, one who has few desires, one who is content with oneself, or one who lives in solitude? who is a monk who practices yoga? who is a monk who meditates? who is a monk who belongs to the *Buddhissāra-pitaka* (dge 'long byang chub sems dpal 'byar pa); who is a monk who is in charge of the buildings (lag gi bla, Skt. *navakarmaka*); who is a monk who supervises the monastery (chab ta byed pa, Skt. *ajñāpatyāpatra*); who is a monk who is the head (of the monastery) (byas ma byed pa, Skt. *vyāharetarītu*). After having discerned all this, he should dwell rightly in harmony in order to get along well with all of them.⁵⁷

New scriptures, composed by monks who were disillusioned with the established monasticism, might have been later labelled as Mahāyāna texts all in all, regardless of their origins.

As in the case of the Lotus Sutra, each Mahāyāna text must have its own complex background and history. Therefore, before we can come to a final conclusion concerning the origin of the Mahāyāna Buddhism, we need many more careful, philological studies into all the sutras relevant to this theme.

While writing this article concerning the history of Buddhism, I have noticed anew the importance of Buddhist philology. Historical research on Buddhism is, in my opinion, like building a house, while philological study—identification, editing, translation of Manuscripts, or compilation of grammar, glossaries, dictionaries—is likened to making the bricks, which must be made solid and applicable for any design, otherwise they are useless. When we possess such bricks, we can build a sound house.

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according to our design. If we use very weak material, we merely build castles in the air. After having baked many solid bricks myself, while possessing good ones made by others, I shall, one day, come back to the question as to the formation of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

**ABBREVIATIONS AND SIGNS**

Abbreviations of the titles of Pāli texts are those adopted by CPD. Editions are those of the PTS. Other abbreviations:

- **BISD, G** = Edgerton 1953
- **KN = Kern and Nanjo 1908-12**
- **Lā = Liang 1997**
- **O = the so-called Kashgar manuscript of the Saddharmapundarikāsūtra, see footnote (1).**

**vs = verse**

- **- = stem of a word, e.g. *abhava* -**
- **+ = except for letters, following or preceding the sign, the word is the same as the preceding one.**
- **α + β: the Sanskrit form should be changed to α.**
- **/A/ = the meaning of A is unclear.**

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