

INTRODUCTION

From the first centuries of its history, the Buddhist community was divided into numerous *sects* and *schools*, on the occasion of *schisms* which were at times tremendous, and each of these divisions held opinions which were charged with being *heresies* by the others. It is with these sects, these schools, these schisms and these heresies that we shall be concerned in the present work.

Before getting to the heart of the matter, it is important to clarify the meaning of the terms listed above, which we employ for want of anything better but which do not exactly express the Indian notions that they are intended to represent.

We will call a *sect* or *school* that which Sanskrit Buddhism denotes as *nikāya*, and Pāli Buddhism as *ācariyavāda*. A *nikāya* is a group of persons subject to the same rules. It is also, and more generally, a collection of objects, like the collections of *Sūtra*, precisely called *nikāya* in Pāli. Comparing it with the word *kāya*, which has the same root and signifies *body*, one can say that a *nikāya* is a constituted *body* or a *body* of doctrine, according to whether the word is applied to persons or to things. It thus renders sufficiently well our word *sect*, even though it is constructed upon a quite different etymology. The Pāli term *ācariyavāda* signifies oral teaching (*vāda*) of a master (*ācariya*) and corresponds rather to our word *school*. As the Sanskrit texts call *nikāya* that which the Pāli texts call *ācariyavāda*, we shall employ the words *sect* and *school* as having an equal sense. They express the idea of a spiritual association constituted under the patronage of a master whose teaching it follows.

The Buddhist sects differ from those of ancient Christianity in that the Buddhist community did not possess, as did the Christian church, a supreme authority incarnated in a single person, pope or patriarch, the sect or school did not truly separate itself from the community, and its *heresy* was purely relative to the other portions of that community. In the majority of cases, even, the relations between diverse sects were not without peace and harmony, and one should compare the Buddhist sects with the Protestant sects which, each differing, at times greatly, in matters concerning doctrine or worship, are not less unified in a certain way within the ecumenical movement.

We shall call a *schism* that which the Buddhists named *saṃghabeda*, “rupture of the community,” which constituted one of the five major crimes, comparable in its gravity to parricide, to matricide, to murder of an Arhant and to wounding of a Buddha. It occurred when an intelligent and virtuous monk, who in

consequence enjoyed a great authority, drew away a part of the community and gave it a new master and a new Path.¹ But, once again, since the community lacked a supreme authority, the Buddhist schism was purely relative and the schismatic claimed to be the guardian of doctrinal or moral purity, which had been weakened by the decadence of the community from which he had come and of which he presented himself as the reformer.

We will call *heresy* that which the Buddhists named *dr̥ṣṭi* (Pāli *dit̥ṭhi*), “view” of the mind [l’esprit], personal opinion not conforming to the teaching of the Buddha. It is also called *mithyādr̥ṣṭi*, “false view,” in order to oppose it to *samyagdr̥ṣṭi*, “correct view.” These terms have, however, only a relative value, that which is heresy or false view for one sect being correct view for another.

Of the some twenty or thirty sects or schools of the Hīnayāna, we have only the works of the Theravādin and Sarvāstivādin, plus several works, especially *Vinaya*, of the Dharmaguptaka, Mahīśāsaka, Mahāsāṃghika, Lokottaravādin, Mūlasarvāstivādin, Sammatīya, Kāśyapīya, Haimavata, Abhayagirivāsin, Bahuśrutīya or Prajñaptivādin. Happily, there exist collections of theses classed by sect, collections of controversies, some commentaries on the one group and the other, and a rather large amount of data dispersed among several treatises such as the *Vibhāsā* or the *Abhidharmakośa*. The comparative and critical study of all of these documents, of such diverse origin, has been much less disappointing than one would generally believe based on the evidence of summary works, ancient and often poorly prepared. It has thus been established that certain pessimistic judgments were founded on bad readings of texts, on the use of faulty editions or quite simply on grave errors of method, such as that, too frequently committed, of placing on the same level documents of quite varied epochs and degrees of worth, and then concluding, after a superficial examination, that the contradictions existing among them render them completely unuseable. What is worse is that these errors are durable, that some of them have been piously preserved for a century and have been used, without the pretense of verification, by often eminent researchers.

To be sure, one must not exaggerate the worth and accuracy of the documents used and the wholly provisional conclusions that can be drawn from their study. The study of Indian Buddhism requires a great deal of prudence and

1. L. V. P.: *Kośa*, IV, pp. 208-209.

it can be affirmed almost without reserve that, in this domain, historical certitude does not exist, that there are only more or less great probabilities. It is however more true that, despite the magnificent efforts accomplished for over a century, there remains a very great deal more to discover in the vast forest of documents that have become available, without taking account of all of those, certainly much more numerous, alas, that have disappeared without leaving a trace. Here more than elsewhere it is proper to constantly remember that our information is fragile, uncertain, that it always requires an interpretation from which it is indeed difficult and probably even impossible to remove the part due to the "personal equation," that of the reader and that of the author, whatever may be the degree of integrity and experience of the one and the other.

The object of the present work has been first and above all to provide documents and references. In its primitive form it was only to have been a series of notes incorporated into the French translation of the treatises of Vasumitra, Bhavya and Vinītadeva. The general subjects and the various hypotheses which have been drawn from the direct study of the documents thus collected are nothing other than simple propositions, simple theses awaiting antitheses, and not definitive conclusions. They have no other goal than to show new aspects of ancient problems and to pose new questions.

CHAPTER ONE

The Existence and the Genealogy of the Buddhist Sects of the Hīnayāna

Numerous Buddhist works have preserved for us traditions relative to the sects, more or less detailed genealogical tables, or simple lists. For a long time attempts have been made to draw from them the means of reconstituting the history of the schisms that divided the Buddhist community of the Small Vehicle. Unfortunately, these various traditions are, at first sight, far from being in agreement. Moreover, the greater part of these documents have come down to us in their Chinese or Tibetan versions, the translation and interpretation of which is sometimes difficult and has occasioned rather numerous errors. With an unjustified piety, the majority of these errors have been preserved for about a century, serving as the foundation for reckless hypotheses and augmenting the confusion which seems to characterize the problem of the lists.

A systematic study of the traditions, based on the documents themselves without concern for the most authorized translations, allows us to resolve this problem with a satisfactory coefficient of probability.

At the outset it is necessary to establish the very existence of these sects since, due to the confusion which surrounds the question, certain philologists, erring through an excess of prudence, have put it in doubt. But the existence of the majority of the sects is proven by sound documents²:

1) *Inscriptions*: sects of the Mahāsāṃghika, Bahuśrutīya, Caitika, Aparasāila, Pūrvasāila, Rājagirika, Siddhārthika, Sarvāstivādin, Mahīśāsaka, Kāśyapīya, Vātsīputrīya, Sammatīya, Dharmottarīya, Bhadrāyānīya.

2) *Literary works*: referring to sects of the Theravādin, Sarvāstivādin, Mahāsāṃghika, Dharmaguptaka, Mahīśāsaka, Haimavata, Sammatīya, Lokottaravādin, Mūlasarvāstivādin.

This thus makes 19 sects in all whose existence is attested by undeniable

2. For the references, see Part II.

documentation. There remain only 6 whose existence is not so proven: the Gokulika, Ekavyāvahārika, Prajñaptivādin, Sautrāntika (or Saṃkrāntika), Tāmraśātiya and Saṅṅarika. But it seems likely that chance alone has not enabled the traces of their existence to have been preserved and that one hardly has any reasons to suspect them. Moreover, the Sautrāntika are too well known from the treatises of the Sarvāstivādin, who attack them frequently, for one to doubt their reality, and it seems probable that the Lokottaravādin completely or partly belonged to the Ekavyāvahārika, as we shall see.

Consequently, the existence of some 20 to 30 sects of which the traditions speak should not be doubted.

The works which have transmitted to us the tables and lists of sects are not very ancient. None of them date with certitude before 300 AD, which is to say some 500 years after the events which they report. But we have the fortune to possess, among these ancient texts, those whose geographical and sectarian origins were the most widely separated, from Kashmir and Ceylon, from the Mahāsāṃghika and the Theravādin.

The classification of these documents obliges us to distinguish three chronological groups.

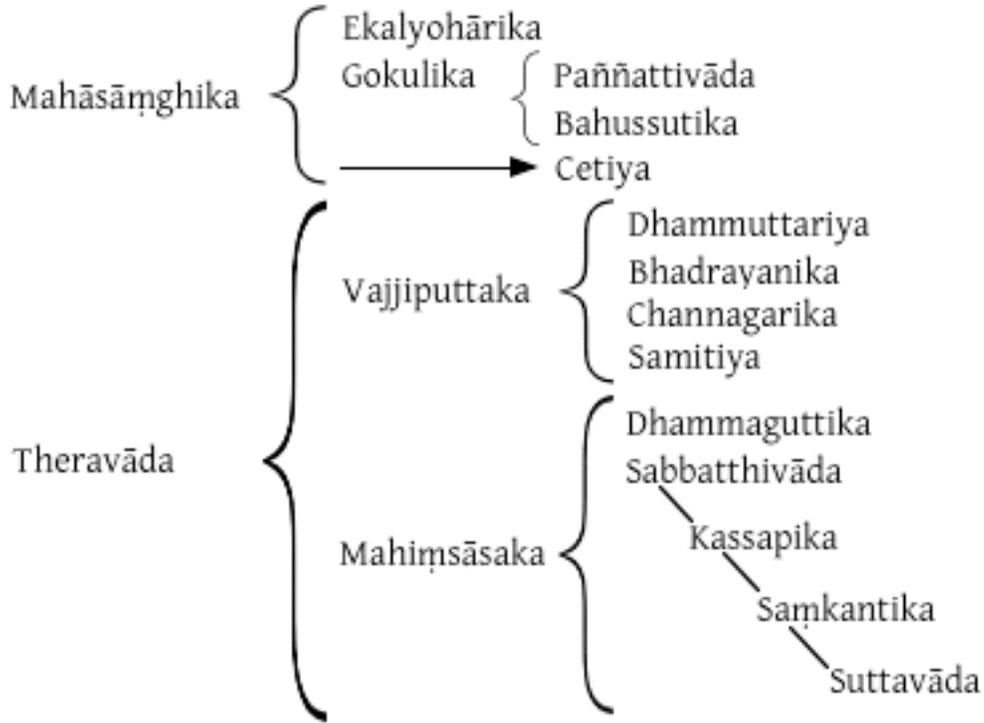
I. — THE TRADITIONS OF THE FIRST PERIOD

These are anterior to the 6th century AD and are characterized by a division of the sects into two principal groups. These must be classified according to their geographical origin.

A. — The Sinhalese Tradition

This tradition is presented for the first time by the *Dīpavaṃsa*³ which dates from the 4th century AD and is of Theravādin inspiration. According to this work, all of the schisms were produced during the course of the 2nd century after the Nirvāṇa.

3. *Dīpavaṃsa*, V, beginning. *Mahāvāṃsa*, V, beginning.



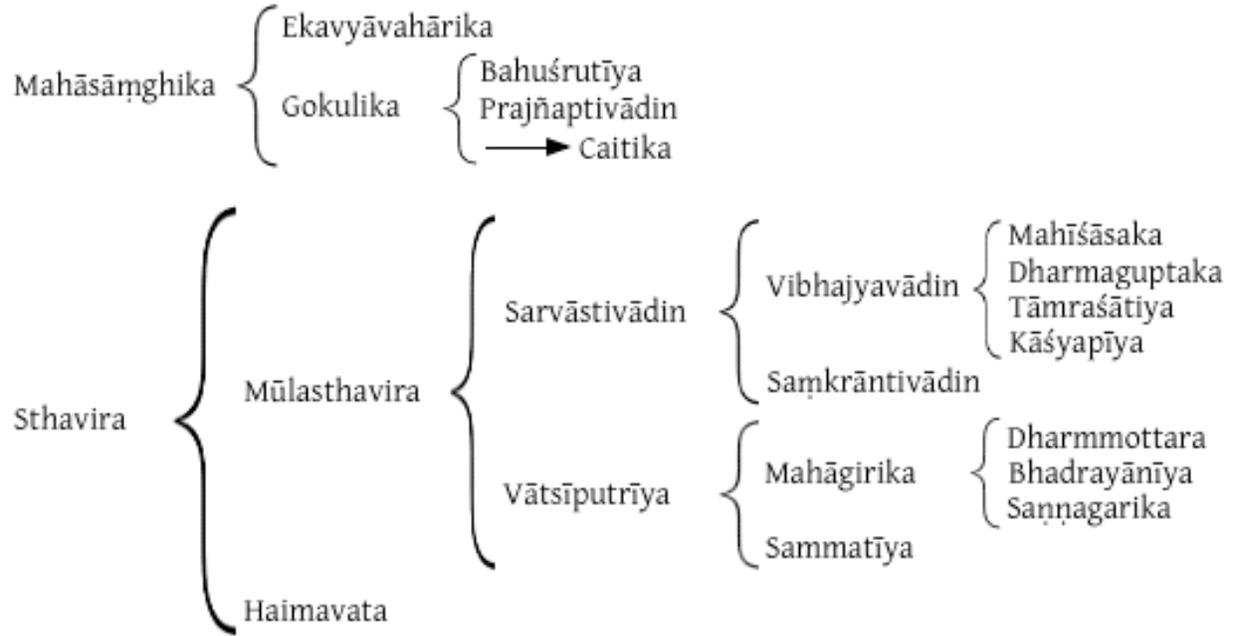
In the following century Buddhaghosa, in the introduction to his commentary on the *Kathāvatthu*, mentions the existence of six new sects: the Rājagirikā, the Siddhatthikā, the Pubbaseliyā, the Aparaseliyā, the Haimavata and the Vājjiṛiyā. He groups the first four under the generic name Andhaka. It is a fact that the inscriptions indicate their presence only in the land of Andhra, around Amarāvātī. In the same work, Buddhaghosa attributes several theses of the *Kathāvatthu* to sects or groups of sects which he does not describe: the Uttarāpaṭhaka, the Hetuvāda and the Vetullaka.

Nothing is known about the [Vājjiṛiyā](#). Under the name Uttarāpaṭhaka Buddhaghosa denotes the sects inhabiting the North, whom he is not able to define more explicitly. A tradition reported by Bhavya (list 1) identifies the Hetuvādin with the Sarvāstivādin, but Buddhaghosa expressly distinguishes these two sects. To the Vetullaka he attributes distinctly Mahāyānist opinions.

B. — The Tradition of the Sammatīyā

This is given to us by Bhavya (list 3). It dates the first schism to 137 EN (Era of

the Nirvāṇa), the second to 200 EN, the third to 400 EN.

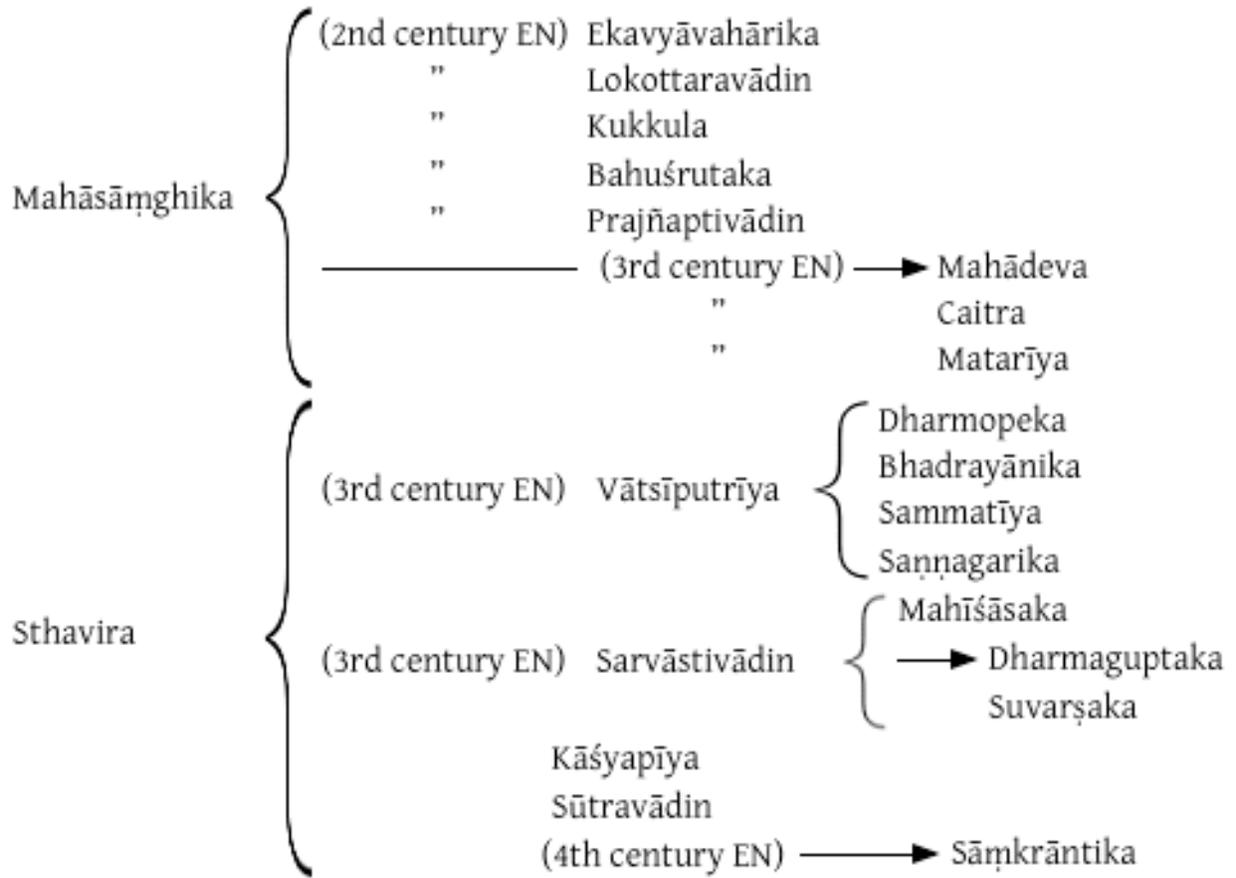


C. — The Tradition of Kashmir

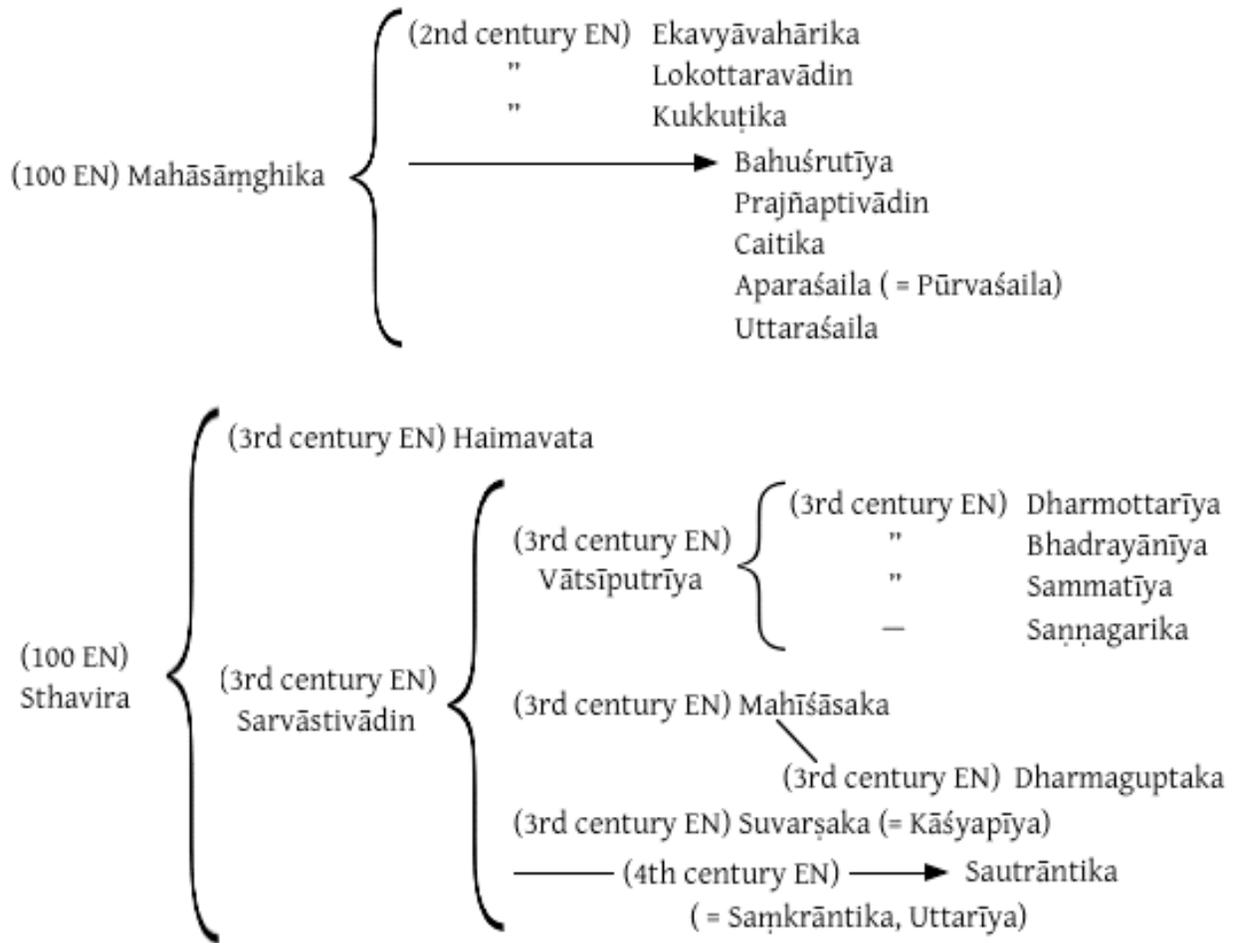
This tradition is represented by several works.

1st) The *Śāriputrapariṣcchāsūtra*⁴ is a work of Mahāsāṃghika origin, but properly belongs to the tradition of Kashmir, as is proven by a comparison with the following. The dates at which the different sects appeared are given in parentheses. Translated into Chinese between 317 and 420, it thus dates at the latest from the beginning of the 4th century.

4. T. S. 1465, p. 900 bc. (T. S.: Taishō Issaikyō edition).



2nd) The *Samayabhedoparacanacakra* of Vasumitra. There is one Tibetan translation and three Chinese translations of which the oldest dates to the neighborhood of 400. Its origin is certainly Sarvāstivādin.



If one compares this list to the three preceding, one will immediately note that it is directly related to the third, that of the *Śāriputrapariṣcchāsūtra*. Indeed:

- a) the periods during which the sects appeared are the same;
- b) the order of the first five sects of the Mahāsāṃghika and that of the four sects of the Vatsīputrīya are same in both cases.

The differences are much more obvious with the two other lists. But, even between the two Kashmirian lists there are divergences:

- a) the last three Mahāsāṃghika sects do not bear the same names; those given by the *Sūtra* are themselves otherwise unknown; this could be a matter of

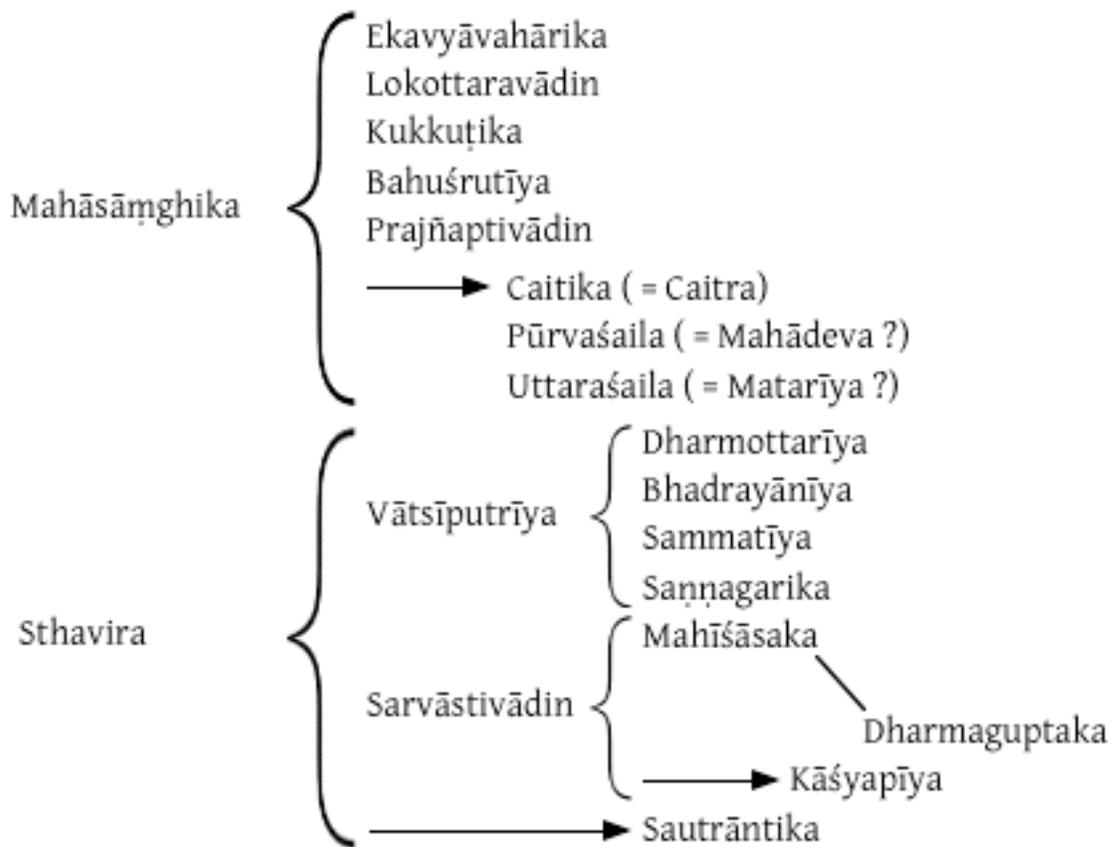
little-used synonyms;

b) the *Sūtra* does not mention the Haimavata, as is also the case with the Sinhalese *Dīpavaṃsa*; this sect poses a problem to which we shall return below;

c) the *Sūtra* distinguishes the Sūtravādin from the Sāṃkrāntika and the Kāśyapīya from the Suvarṣaka, while Vasumitra equates them; it seems that the latter is correct;

d) Vasumitra, who was a Sarvāstivādin, tended to give his sect an importance much greater than it had; in contrast to the three other lists, he derived from the Sarvāstivādin all of the sects of the Sthavira, with the sole exception of the Haimavata; it is clear that this feature is a falsification of Sarvāstivādin origin and should not be considered as having historical worth.

We may thus reconstitute the shared Kashmirian list (leaving aside the dates, on which there is agreement):



3rd) The *Mañjuśrīpariṣchāsūtra*⁵ : according to this work, all of the schisms took place in the 1st century of the Era of the Nirvāṇa. The sects were derived one from another in succession:



This list is clearly just a poor reading of the description given by Vasumitra, in which all of the secondary connections have been dropped and the sect of the Prajñaptivādin has been omitted in order to obtain the traditional number of 18

5. T. S. 468, p. 501 ab.

sects. The *Sūtra*, translated into Chinese in 518 by Saṃghavara, dates at the latest from the end of the 5th century. It is later than the treatise of Vasumitra which inspired it. It gives a simple list and not a description, which is a characteristic of a yet more recent period.

The translation of the terms of this list has given rise to several errors because it has been based on the Chinese *Mahāvvyutpatti*.⁶ But chapter CCLXXIV of the latter, devoted to the names of the sects, admits of several interpretations which are incorrect, as Professor Anesaki has certainly seen in his edition of this work, where he indicates them with the sign “(!).” It is high time to go further and to correct these errors:

a) The 6th term of the 1st column, 只底舸, which the *Mahāvvyutpatti* reads as *Jetavanīya*, should be read as *Caitika* since the ancient pronunciation is *ṭṣie-tiei-kâ* (Karlgren), the modern pronunciation *chih-ti-ko* [pinyin *zhi di ge*] and the Japanese pronunciation *shi-tai-ka*. It can be clearly seen that the initial is the palatal surd corresponding to the Sanskrit *c* and not the sonant which corresponds to the *j* of that language. Consequently, 只底舸 (*chih-ti-ko*) should indeed be read *Caitika* and not *Jetuvanīya*. It is moreover *Caitika* which is expected at this place in the text.

b) The 8th term of the 2nd column, 芨山, is translated as *Abhayagirivāsin* in the *Mahāvvyutpatti*. But this expression signifies “mountain of wild grass” and not “mountain of the impassive one” like *Abhayagiri*. On the other hand, it translates very well *Sanḍagiri*, “scrub mountain,” a form close to *Sanṇagiri(ka)*, the name of the fourth sect of the *Vātsīputrīya*, which one expects at precisely this place.

c) The 9th term of the 2nd column, 大不可棄, is translated as *Mahā-Avantaka* in the *Mahāvvyutpatti*. Moreover, a note to our *Sūtra* gives another translation of the Sanskrit term: 能射. Now, the correct interpretation of 棄 is not “to vomit,” Sanskrit *VAM*, as is suggested in the *Mahāvvyutpatti*, but rather “to quit, abandon, neglect,” which corresponds to the Sanskrit *ŚIṢ*. Furthermore, *Mahā-Avantaka* in no way represents the Chinese expression, for it neglects the potential meaning of 可. It can only correspond, strictly speaking, to 大不棄. In order to correctly render the Chinese expression while preserving the root *VAM*, it would have to be *Mahā-Avamya*, which is rather different from *Mahā-Avantaka*. On the contrary,

6. The errors seem to have come in large part from S. Julien: *Listes diverses des dix-huit écoles schismatiques qui sont sorties du Bouddhisme*, J. A., t. XIV, 1859, pp. 327-361, of which the first list is a repetition of that found in the *Mañjuśrīpariṣcchāsūtra*. It may be noted that Przyluski himself has not rectified it.

one can restore, from the Sanskrit root ŚIṢ, a form which preserves this potential meaning: *Mahā-Aśeṣya*, which, due to internal sandhi, becomes *Mahāśeṣya* and is very close, phonetically, to *Mahāśāsa(ka)*, which is a frequent doublet of *Mahīśāsaka*. The first sibilant is preserved, the second is replaced by another sibilant, an ordinary occurrence in Prākṛitized forms. The second Chinese translation, 能射, means “being able to draw the bow” and corresponds to the Sanskrit *Maheṣvāsaka*, “great archer,” an epithet of Śiva. This form is also quite close to *Mahīśāsaka*. This time, the *ī* is replaced by *e*, a vowel precisely related to *ī* in Sanskrit phonology. The first sibilant, ś, is rendered by the consonant group ṣv, since ś can be considered a Prākṛit consonant representing the Sanskrit group ṣv. The successive passage from ṣv to ss then to s, together with the confusion of the sibilants, ś for ṣ, is explained quite well in Prākṛit phonology. Finally, the last sibilant is preserved. As a consequence, the two Chinese expressions clearly encompass in their translation the Sanskrit *Mahīśāsaka* which one expects precisely in this place. The hypothesis of Przyluski,⁷ identifying *Mahīśāsaka* and *Mahā-Avantaka* on the basis of this last point and drawing from it the proof of the residence of the *Mahīśāsaka* in Avanti, is thus by no means justified.

4th) *The first list of Bhavya*: although Tāranātha, who reproduces it, attributes it to the Sthavira, it is of Kashmirian and Sarvāstivādin origin. It is, like the preceding, a poor reading of the description of Vasumitra converted into a list. The associated tradition dates the first schism to 160 EN, but this date is more than suspect for reasons that we shall indicate elsewhere.

Mahāsāṃghika	Sthavira (= Haimavata)
Ekavyāvahārika	Sarvāstivādin (= Vibhajyavādin, Hetuvādin, Muruṅṭaka)
Lokottaravādin	Vātsīputrīya
Bahuśrutīya	Dharmottarīya
Prajñaptivādin	Bhadrayānīya
Caitika	Sammitīya (= Avantaka, Kurukula)
Pūrvaśaila	Mahīśāsaka
Aparaśaila	Dharmaguptaka

7. *Concile de Rājagṛha*, p. 235.

Dharmasuvarṣaka (= Kāśyapīya)
Uttarīya (= Sāṃkrāntivādin)

One notes that:

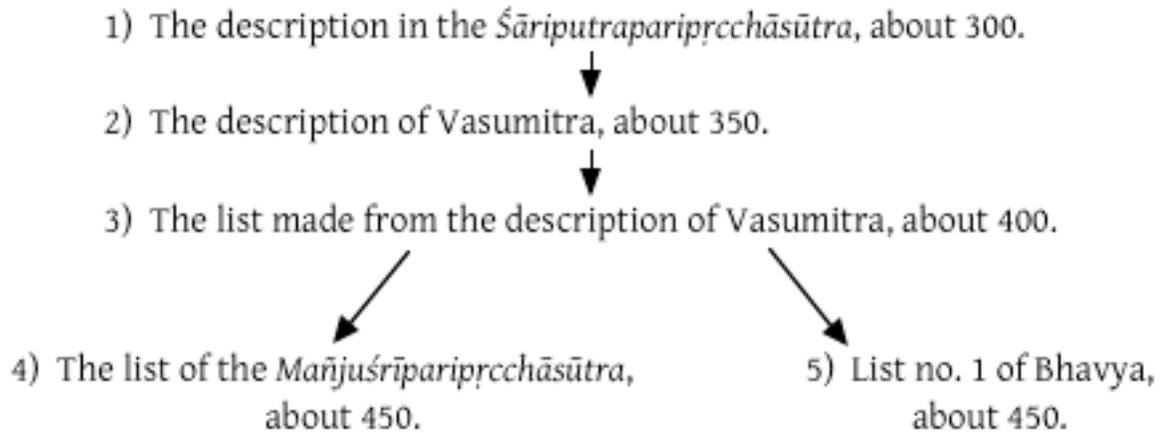
a) the Kukkuṭika have been omitted, but the Prajñaptivādin appear in the 1st column; as in the preceding list, a term has been omitted to obtain the total of 18 sects, but the choice has been different;

b) the Saṅṅarika are missing in the 2nd column, and the Haimavata are identified with the Sthavira, which makes it possible to obtain the total of 18 sects.

It is easy to reconstruct the list which inspired both this and the preceding list. We have:

Mahāsāṃghika	Sthavira
Ekavyāvahārika	Haimavata
Lokottaravādin	Sarvāstivādin
Kukkuṭika	Vātsīputrīya
Bahuśrutīya	Dharmottarīya
Prajñaptivādin	Bhadrayānīya
Caitika	Sammitīya
Pūrvaśaila	Saṅṅarika
Aparaśaila (= Uttaraśaila)	Mahīśāsaka
	Dharmaguptaka
	Kāśyapīya (= Suvarṣaka)
	Sautrāntika (= Uttarīya, Sāṃkrāntivādin)

This is simply the arrangement in list form of the description given by Vasumitra. Chronologically, this list is later than the description, but before the 3rd and 4th Kashmirian lists that derive from it. Based on the dates of the Chinese translations, we have:



5th) *The list of the five sects of Uḍḍiyāna*: the Chinese historians of Buddhism have preserved the memory of a classification in five sects, these five sects being sometimes given as the five stems of the eighteen sects.⁸ In addition to the fact that this classification is known, in India, only in the works of that region, those works provide a satisfactory explanation for it. The *Śāriputrapariṣcchāsūtra*, translated between 317 and 420,⁹ after having given the description of the sects, states that at the time at which it was composed, around 300, there remained no more than five sects, the Mahāsāṃghika, the Dharmaguptaka, the Sarvāstivādin, the Kāśyapīya and the Mahīśāsaka. We know by means of undeniable evidence (inscriptions, Pāli literature, the travel narratives of Xuanzang and Yijing) that in fact a good many other sects were still prospering at this time, but outside of Uḍḍiyāna, which explains the error of the *Sūtra* on this point. It was in Uḍḍiyāna that Xuanzang met the last remaining members of this group of five sects¹⁰ who studied their five *Vinayapiṭaka* but had fallen into the ways of magic. Close to a century later Yijing mentions them still in the same region.¹¹ Another Indian work, translated around the same period as the *Sūtra*,¹² gives a description of the five sects which is nearly identical to that of the latter, but places the Sarvāstivādin at the head, which appears to indicate that its author belonged to

8. See especially Chavannes: *Mémoire sur les religieux éminents*, Paris, 1894, p. 131, note, which cites the texts and attempts to interpret them, and quite recently Lin-li Kouang: *Introduction au Compendium de la Loi*, pp. 193-194.

9. T. S. 1465, p. 900 c.

10. Watters: *On Yuan-chwang's Travels in India*, London, 1904, vol. I, pp. 226-227.

11. Takakusu: *A Record of the Buddhist Religion*, Oxford, 1896, p. xxiv.

12. T. S. 1470, pp. 925 c-926 a.

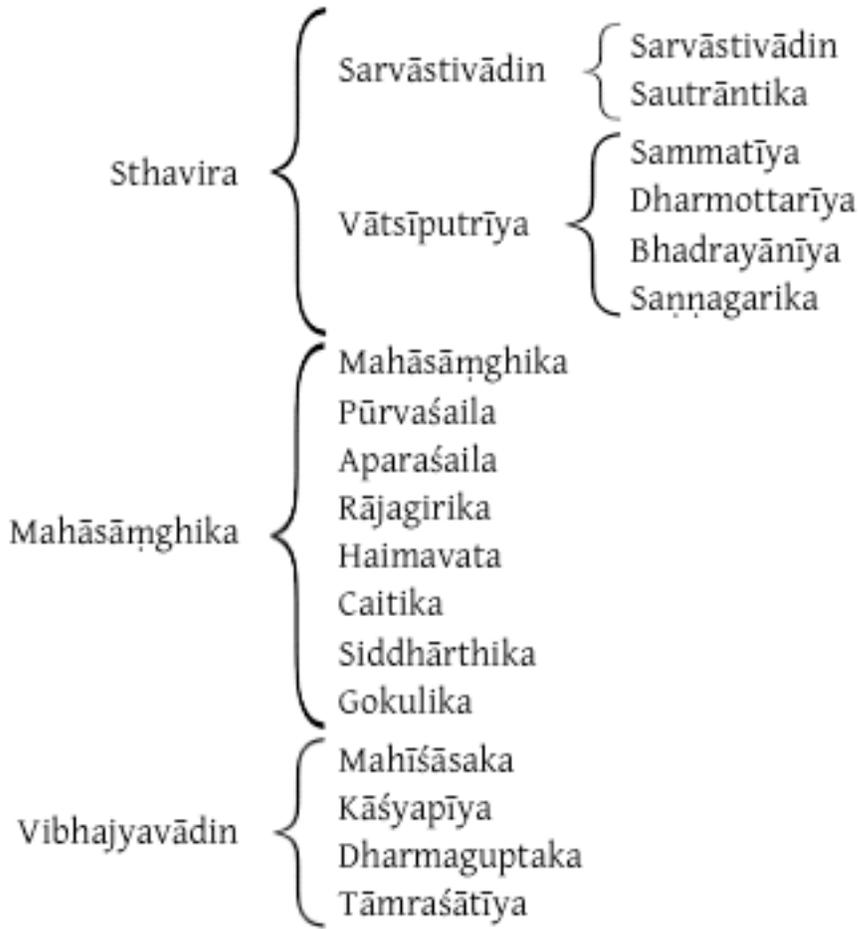
that sect. It is remarkable that in their descriptions these two works praise the five sects equally. This would seem to indicate that in Uḍḍiyāna the sects lived in perfect harmony. In any case, neither of the two works claims that these sects were the original five, nor do they make them the anchor for a classification of the eighteen sects. To the contrary, one of them, and probably the oldest, clearly explains that they represent all that remains (in the region of its composition, at least) of the eighteen sects at the time in which it was written. In fact, no Indian document has been found which justifies the Chinese classifications based on these five sects. We must therefore consider those to be absolutely false, the more so since they are contradicted by all of the other classifications of the eighteen sects which we study more precisely here.

II. — THE TRADITIONS OF THE SECOND PERIOD

These date from the 6th and 7th centuries and are characterized by the distribution of the sects among three or four principal groups.

A. — The Tradition of the Mahāsāṃghika

This is found in the second list of Bhavya. Tāranātha attributes it to the Mahāsāṃghika, which is possible since it differs from all of those we have seen previously. It is a classification in three principal groups, which could place it chronologically between the last Kashmirian lists of the 5th century and the lists of the Mūlasarvāstivādin of the 7th century, thus in the 6th century.



We note that:

a) the Vibhajyavādin form a group apart, clearly distinct from the Sarvāstivādin; this indicates a southern origin, as the Sarvāstivādin were absent from the South, in contrast to the Vibhajyavādin; furthermore, the fact that the memory of the connections between the two groups had been lost indicates a rather late date;

b) the Vātsīputrīya emerged directly from the Sthavira and not, as Vasumitra maintains, from the Sarvāstivādin;

c) the order of the four Vātsīputrīya sects is new; in particular, the Sammatīya occupy the first place, which is probably not unrelated to the importance which they had around the beginning of the 7th century as reported by Xuanzang and Yijing;

d) the great sects of the Mahāsāṃghika have disappeared, with the exception of the Gokulika, which is however named last; on the other hand, the four Andhaka sects of Buddhaghosa are named, which seems to indicate a southern origin;

e) the Haimavata are placed among the Mahāsāṃghika sects, in contrast to the preceding lists which place them among the Sthavira, but in agreement with Vinītadeva;

f) the Tāmraśātīya are named, as in the description of the Sammatīya given earlier; perhaps we should see in this a geographical indicator, the land of Andhra being very close to Mahārāṣṭra and Mālwa, the principal domains of the Sammatīya and those related to it.

This tradition is clearly of southern origin. If Tāranātha is correct, it thus was current among the Mahāsāṃghika of the South, that is, the land of Andhra, around Amarāvātī. This is all the more plausible as it differs distinctly from the two other southern traditions, those of the Theravādin of Ceylon and the Sammatīya of the West. It is thus of great documentary worth. On the other hand, it belongs to a relatively late period. This is probably the most recent of the three lists given by Bhavya. By reflecting the state of the sects at that time, probably the 6th century, it provides us with an appreciable landmark in the chronological scale of our data.

B. — The Tradition of the Mūlasarvāstivādin

This has reached us from two sources: Yijing, in an incomplete form, for the end of the 7th century, and Vinītadeva for the 8th century. It consists of four principal groups.

1st) *The list of Yijing*¹³:

- 1) Arya-Mahāsāṃghika, 7 subdivisions, unspecified.
- 2) Arya-Sthavira: 3 subdivisions, unspecified.
- 3) Arya-Mūlasarvāstivādin: 4 subdivisions:

13. Takakusu: *A Record of the Buddhist Religion*, pp. xxiii-xxiv and 7-20.

- a) Mūlasarvāstivādin.
 - b) Dharmaguptaka.
 - c) Mahīśāsaka.
 - d) Kāśyapīya.
- 4) Arya-Sammatīya: 4 subdivisions, unspecified.

It is possible to partly reconstruct the list with the aid of the list of Vinītadeva:

- 1) Arya-Mahāsāṃghika { Mahāsāṃghika ?
Lokottaravādin ?
Bahuśrutīya ?
Prajñaptivādin ?
Haimavata ?
Pūrvaśaila ?
Aparaśaila ? } (*under the most express reservations*)
- 2) Arya-Sthavira { Jetavanīya
Abhayagirivāsīn
Mahāvihāravāsīn } (*very probable*)
- 3) Arya-Mūlasarvāstivādin { Mūlasarvāstivādin
Dharmaguptaka
Mahīśāsaka
Kāśyapīya }
- 4) Arya-Sammatīya { Sammatīya (or Vātsīputrīya)
Dharmottarīya
Bhadrayānīya
Saṅṅarika } (*probable*)

2nd) *The list of Vinītadeva:*

It differs considerably from the preceding and contains some notable errors.

Mahāsāṃghika	{	Pūrvaśaila Aparaśaila Haimavata Lokottaravādin Prajñaptivādin
Sarvāstivādin	{	Mūlasarvāstivādin Kāśyapīya Mahīśāsaka Dharmaguptaka Bahuśrutīya Tāmraśātiya Vibhajyavādin
Sthavira	{	Jetavanīya Abhayagirivāsin Mahāvihāravāsin
Sammatīya	{	Kaurukullaka (?) Avantaka (?) Vātsīputrīya

In this list, it should be noted that:

- the Haimavata are ranked among the Mahāsāṃghika, as in the Mahāsāṃghika list above;
- the Mahāsāṃghika sects of the North and the South seem moreover to be poorly known, whether they had disappeared by this period, which is probable, or the list had been composed in a region distant both from Kashmir and from Andhra, specifically in Magadha or Madhyadeśa, where, according to Yijing, the Mūlasarvāstivādin were at that time the most numerous (there is hardly any doubt that the list of Yijing comes from that region);
- the Mahīśāsaka, Dharmaguptaka, Kāśyapīya, Tāmraśātiya and Vibhajyavādin are ranked among the Sarvāstivādin, which is an indication of Sarvāstivādin

origin;

d) the Bahuśrutīya are also ranked among the Sarvāstivādin and not among the Mahāsāṃghika, as in the older lists; recall that Vasumitra mentions the doctrinal relationship which existed between the Bahuśrutīya and the Sarvāstivādin;

e) for the first time a Vibhajyavādin sect appears, distinct from but related to the Mahīśāsaka, Dharmaguptaka, Kāśyapīya and Tāmraśātīya, which poses a problem;

f) the three Sinhalese Sthavira sects are named; this proves that the geographical location from which this list originated was in regular contact with Ceylon, and reinforces the hypothesis of an origin in Magadha;

g) the Sammatīya have eclipsed all of the related sects and become head of the group; Xuanzang, in the second quarter of the 7th century, had already mentioned their great numerical importance;

h) the three small Vātsīputrīya sects, the Dharmottarīya, the Bhadrāyānīya and the Saṅṅarika, have disappeared.

III. — THE TRADITIONS OF THE THIRD PERIOD

These are but more or less distorted repetitions of the ancient lists.

A. — The Chinese Lists

These are presented in particular by the [San louen yi Kiuan](#) translated by Stanislas Julien,¹⁴ and are only exact copies of the tables and lists of the Kashmirian tradition of the first period. The only notable differences stem from errors of translation by Stanislas Julien. It is unnecessary to present them again here.

B. — The Tibetan Lists of Tāranātha

These are rather exact copies of the three lists of Bhavya and that of Vinītadeva. The greatest errors stem from incorrect readings by Schiefner: it is

14. *Listes diverses des dix-huit écoles schismatiques qui sont sorties du Bouddhisme.*

not the Tibetan text which is at fault, it is the German translation.

In his copy of the first list of Bhavya, which he attributes to the Sthavira, Tāranātha omits only the citation of the synonyms given by Bhavya.

His copy of the second list of Bhavya, which he attributes to the Mahāsāṃghika, is completely correct. Schiefner errs in translating *don-grub-pa*, which signifies Siddhārthika, by Saṃkrānti.

Tāranātha copies the third description of Bhavya, which he correctly attributes to the Sammatīya, transforming it into a simple list in three groups: Sarvāstivādin, Vātsīputrīya, Haimavata and Mahāsāṃghika. Schiefner errs in translating *man-ston-pa*, which signifies Mahīśāsaka, by Bahuśrutīya, in the first group.

The copy of the list of Vinītadeva is entirely correct.

C. — The Other Tibetan Lists

These are all connected to the traditions of the Mūlasarvāstivādin of the second period. They are more recent by several centuries, but still consist of the same four groups as these: Sarvāstivādin or Mūlasarvāstivādin, Mahāsāṃghika, Sammatīya and Sthavira. In general, they are content, like Yijing, to give the names of the subdivisions of each group without specifying their composition, and these names are rather variable.

The *Varsāgrapṛcchāsūtra*,¹⁵ translated in the 11th century, gives:

15. *Mdo*, LXXIV, 2; XCV, 16; XC, 2, 6 and 21. Rockhill: *Life of the Buddha*, London, 1884, p. 183, n. 1.

Arya-Sarvāstivādin	{	Kāśyapīya Mahīśāsaka Dharmaguptaka Mūlasarvāstivādin
Arya-Mahāsāṃghika	{	Pūrvaśaila Aparaśaila Haimavata Vibhajyavādin Prajñaptivādin Lokottaravādin
Arya-Sammatīya	{	Tāmraśātīya Avantaka Kurukulla Bahuśrutīya Vātsīputrīya
Arya-Sthavira	{	Jetavanīya Abhayagirivāsin Mahāvihāravāsin

It should be noted that:

a) the Sarvāstivādin group is that of Yi-jing, although the order has been changed, and it is in accord with the older lists;

b) the Mahāsāṃghika group is identical to that of Vinītadeva, which is correct, but for some obscure reason the Vibhajyavādin have been incorporated into it; this is certainly an error;

c) the inclusion of the Tāmraśātīya and the Bahuśrutīya in the Sammatīya group is an obvious error; apart from that, this group is identical to that of Vinītadeva;

d) the Sthavira group is identical to that of Vinītadeva.

Consequently, this list is only a copy of that of Vinītadeva, with a few flagrant errors. It does not present us with anything new that is of any use.

In sum, all of the lists of the third period are more or less correct copies of the

lists of the two preceding periods, and we can draw nothing from them which is not known from the older documents.

As we should have expected, the more recent the traditions are, the greater the divergence between them. A comparison of the three great traditions of the first period should allow us to reconstruct a description of the relations of the sects which reflects the historical reality sufficiently well.

One will object that this effort is vain, that we possess only traditions and not trustworthy documents. This argument is of little worth because:

- a) we have shown that the existence of almost all of the sects is a certain fact;
- b) the five traditions which have come down to us had their origin in places at the greatest distances from each other in India, Kashmir, Ceylon, the West, Andhra and Magadha, which makes it difficult to accept that all of these regions had a common tradition;
- c) these traditions differed in characteristic details, proving sufficiently that they do not all derive from a single common tradition.

Consequently, we find ourselves in the presence of independent traditions, each sect having preserved the memory of the schisms which disturbed the Buddhist community and above all of the schism which gave birth to that particular sect. Each of these traditions presents the history of these schisms from a particular angle, which is the cause of certain errors.

Accordingly let us compare the three traditions of the first period group by group.

I. — *The Mahāsāṃghika*

1st) The three traditions agree that two great sects first emerged, the *Ekavyāvahārika* and the *Gokulika* or *Kukkuṭika*.

2nd) Only the northern tradition was cognizant of the *Lokottaravādin*. The only information we have about their residence comes from Xuanzang, who placed them at Bamiyān, in the north of Afghanistan, which sufficiently explains why the southern traditions take no notice of them. Furthermore, the tradition of the *Sammattīya* attributes the theses characteristic of the *Lokottaravādin* to

the Ekavyāvahārika. Vasumitra attributes them conjointly to the Mahāsāṃghika, Ekavyāvahārika and Kukkuṭika, and Vinītadeva attributes to the Lokottaravādin all of the theses which the two others ascribe to the Ekavyāvahārika and the Mahāsāṃghika. It is therefore probable that the Lokottaravādin were hardly distinct from the Ekavyāvahārika.

3rd) The three traditions agree that the *Bahuśrutīya* and the *Prajñaptivādin* emerged together, at a date later than the appearance of the two or three preceding great sects. The two non-Kashmirian traditions portrayed them as emerging from the Gokulika, which is indeed possible. This precision could owe its origin to information furnished by the *Bahuśrutīya*, whose presence in Andhra close to the centers of these two traditions is attested by an inscription.

4th) The three traditions agree that the *Caitika* emerged at a still later date. The tradition of the *Sammātīya* has them develop from the Gokulika. This seems to be confirmed by the fact that the presence of the *Caitika* is attested in Andhra by inscriptions, as is the presence of the *Bahuśrutīya* to whom the same origin is attributed.

5th) The *Pūrvasāila*, *Aparaśāila* or *Uttaraśāila* are unknown to the ancient traditions of the Theravādin and the *Sammātīya*. This justifies the Kashmirian tradition which places their appearance still later.

6th) The *Rājagirika* and the *Siddhārthika* are unknown to the traditions of the first period. But the Mahāsāṃghika tradition of the second period places them within that group and Buddhaghosa in the 4th century attributes distinctly Mahāsāṃghika theses to them.

II. — *The Sthavira*

1st) The *Haimavata* are unknown to the ancient Singhalese tradition and to the Kashmirian Mahāsāṃghika tradition of the same period. Vasumitra and the *Sammātīya* consider them to have been a very orthodox Sthavira sect completely separated from the other sects of this group. The Kashmirian tradition of Bhavya, which also dates from the first period, makes even their name a synonym of Sthavira. On the other hand, the two traditions of the second period regarded them as a Mahāsāṃghika sect and placed them among the Mahāsāṃghika sects of Andhra, which seems to be in contradiction with their name which clearly reflects a northern origin. One should not err too much in regarding the *Haimavata* as a Sthavira group isolated in the Himālaya which

remained quite orthodox on account of such isolation, and which from its inception may not have been distinguished from the Sthavira. Later, around the 4th century, it was made a separate sect. Still later, in the 5th or 6th century, it could have been profoundly influenced by Mahāsāṃghika sects, perhaps by missionaries who had come from the center in Andhra, and after that time could have been regarded as belonging to the Mahāsāṃghika group.

2nd) The *Vātsīputrīya* were recognized by the three traditions (Vasumitra aside, for good reason) as having issued in the first place directly from the Sthavira. The three traditions agree in establishing that the *Dharmottarīya*, the *Bhadrayānīya*, the *Sammatīya* and the *Sanṇagarika* were the four subdivisions of this group.

There is therefore no doubt to be maintained regarding this point.

3rd) Contrary to Vasumitra who considered all of the Sthavira sects to have emerged from the *Sarvāstivādin*, the Theravādin tradition considered them all to have come from the *Mahīśāsaka*, with the exception of the *Vātsīputrīya*. But Vasumitra was a *Sarvāstivādin*, while in the south these were unknown, unlike the *Mahīśāsaka*. These two traditions thus deform the real state of affairs, each to the profit of their own sect. The tradition of the *Sammatīya* and that of the *Mahāsāṃghika* of Kashmir agree upon an intermediate solution: apart from the *Haimavata* and the *Vātsīputrīya* group, all the other Sthavira sects issued from the *Sarvāstivādin*. In fact, we have a whole collection of documents (*Kathāvatthu*, *Vijñānakāya*, Vasumitra, Bhavya, Vinītadeva) which prove to us that the Theravādin, the *Mahīśāsaka* and the *Kāśyapīya* rejected the fundamental thesis of the *Sarvāstivādin*. In this case, it would seem abusive to call *Sarvāstivādin* the Sthavira before they divided into *Sarvāstivādin* or non-*Sarvāstivādin* (Theravādin, *Mahīśāka*, *Kāśyapīya*, etc.) or *Vibhajyavādin*. It would be better to preserve for them the name *Sthavira*.

4th) The Kashmirian and Singhalese traditions agree in regarding the *Dharmaguptaka* to have emerged from the *Mahīśāsaka*, and this does not contradict the tradition of the *Sammatīya*.

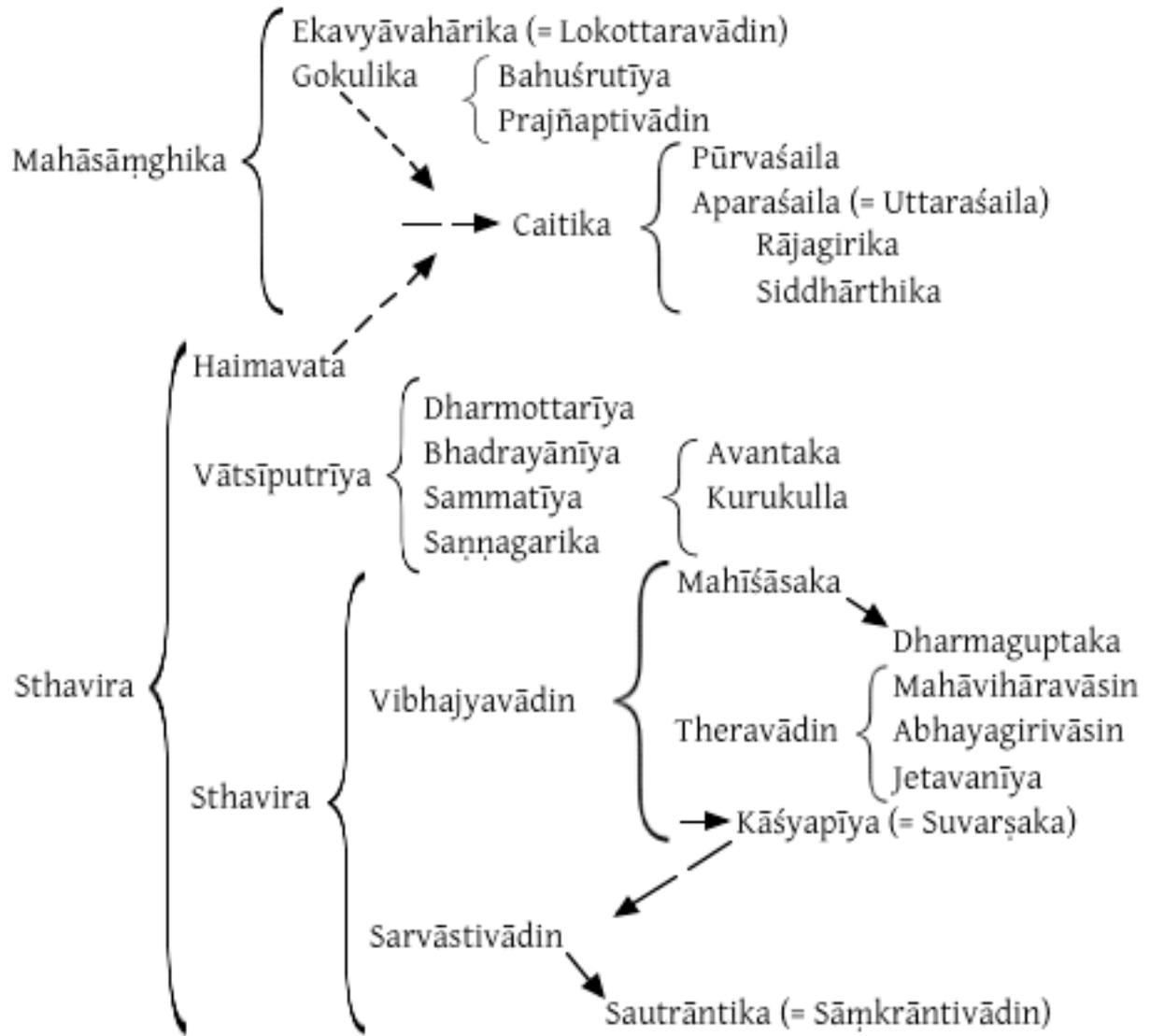
5th) All of the traditions agree that the *Kāśyapīya* appeared after the *Dharmaguptaka*, but do not agree on their origin. The Singhalese believe them to have descended directly from the *Sarvāstivādin*, and in that way indirectly from the *Mahīśāsaka*; the *Sammatīya* and the *Mahāsāṃghika* of the south place them beside the *Mahīśāsaka* in the subgroup of the *Vibhajyavādin*; the *Mahāsāṃghika* of Kashmir seem to have them derive directly from the Sthavira; Vasumitra clearly made them a subdivision of the *Sarvāstivādin*. Since we know

(*Kathāvatthu*, *Satyasiddhiśāstra*, Vasumitra, Bhavya, Vinītadeva) that their fundamental thesis represented a compromise between the Sarvāstivādin and non-Sarvāstivādin theses, one can regard them as having issued directly from the Sthavira group, but a little later than the Sarvāstivādin and the Mahīśāsaka.

6th) Vasumitra and the Sammatīya identify the *Sautrāntika* with the *Sāṃkrāntivādin*. The Mahāsāṃghika of Kashmir and the Theravādin consider them to be two distinct but closely related sects. Only the Mahāsāṃghika of Kashmir regarded them as having emerged directly from the Sthavira and not, as all the other traditions believed, from the Sarvāstivādin. All of the traditions seem to agree in considering them to be the last sect or sects to have appeared in the Sthavira group.

7th) The *Singhalese Sthavira* formed a separate group composed of three sects in the lists of the Mūlasarvāstivādin. Its composition is confirmed by the Singhalese Chronicles, but it is difficult to place this group in the schemata of the first period, and even that of Ceylon does not mention it. Study of the *Kathāvatthu* and of the various *Vinaya* shows us that it belonged to the non-Sarvāstivādin Sthavira group, but that it was distinguished simultaneously from the Mahīśāsaka, to which it nevertheless approached most closely, from the Dharmaguptaka, whose *Vinaya* is very different, and from the Kāśyapīya. It is thus necessary to make of it a particular group.

Here, then, is the table which can be reconstituted after this discussion of the data, a table which should represent the actual connections among the sects with near certainty:



CHAPTER TWO

The Appearance of the Sects

The title of this chapter is ambitious indeed