

## State or Statement? *Samādhi* in Some Early Mahāyāna Sūtras

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MEDITATION has, in recent years, been ascribed an important role in early Mahāyāna Buddhism. In his survey volume of Mahāyāna doctrine, Paul Williams has taken note of recent work on certain meditation texts, particularly that by Harrison on the *Pratyutpannasamādhi Sūtra* (hereafter cited as PSS),<sup>1</sup> and has made a convincing case for meditative experience, particularly of the “visionary” kind, being a major factor in the origination of Mahāyāna literature and hence in the origin of Mahāyāna itself.<sup>2</sup> In his bibliographical survey of Indian Buddhism, Nakamura Hajime cites a group of texts that includes the PSS along with other sūtras and *śāstras*, but instead links them to the origins of the Yogācāra school.<sup>3</sup> In a previous publication, I have myself linked a number of such *samādhi* sūtras

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<sup>1</sup> Harrison 1978a, where the same point is first made by Harrison himself. Williams also cites Demiéville 1954 in his bibliography.

<sup>2</sup> Williams 1989.

<sup>3</sup> In doing this, he goes against the opinion of others (including the present author) who associates at least the PSS and *Samādhirāja Sūtra* with the *prajñāpāramitā* genre. See Harrison 1978a, Gómez and Silk 1989 and Regamey 1990.

on the understanding that they teach meditation-related matters and had some role in early Mahāyāna.<sup>4</sup> Whatever historical use we make of this body of textual material, it consists of a small group of early Mahāyāna sutras that we associate with the practice of meditation. The basis of this association is primarily the use of the term *samādhi* in the title of these texts. As I have shown on another occasion, this usage was understood to be generic, at least in the circle of Aśaṅga, and because of this, such texts were themselves occasionally known as *samādhi*.<sup>5</sup> In the present article, my interest is to examine our association of these sutras with meditation practice(s) and see if it is justified.

My starting point is the substantial Mahāyāna text known as the *Samādhirāja Sūtra* or the *Candrapradīpasamādhi Sūtra* (hereafter, SRS). This text appears to have circulated in at least four distinct recensions, represented by: the Chinese translation of Narendrayaśas; the Gilgit manuscript; and two groups of Nepalese manuscripts (hereafter, SRS I and II), from the first of which the Tibetan translation was made.<sup>6</sup> The extended title of the recension I have termed SRS II describes the text as the *sarvadharmasvabhāvasamatāvīpañcitāt samādher yathālabdham samādhirājaṃ nāma mahāyānasūtram*, i.e., “the Mahāyāna discourse that is called the king of *samādhi*, as received from the *samādhi* elaborated as the sameness in their essence of all phenomena.” In a separate investigation of the date of composition of this text, I have already concluded from this and other passages that the text itself is considered in some way to be a *samādhi*, and we can add to this the observation that the sutra is also considered in some way to be derived from a *samādhi* called the *sarvadharmasvabhāvasamatāvīpañcitasamādhi*.<sup>7</sup> This interpretation is justified by, and the title itself probably derived from, the repeated reference to this *samādhi* throughout the sutra. In fact, almost every chapter of the SRS is introduced as an explanation or glorification in some form or another of the *sarvadharmasvabhāvasamatāvīpañcitasamādhi*, and so we are doubly justified in taking this as the explicit subject of the entire text.

The SRS is thus concerned with a *samādhi* that is *vīpañcita* in some way.

<sup>4</sup> Skilton 1994, p. 105.

<sup>5</sup> Skilton 1999a. Aśaṅga uses this term to denote four texts: *Śūraṅgamasamādhi Sūtra*, *Pratyutpannasamādhi Sūtra*, *Samādhirāja Sūtra* and *Sarvapūnyasamuccayasamādhi Sūtra*.

<sup>6</sup> Skilton 1999b.

<sup>7</sup> See Skilton 1999a, chap. 1 et passim.

This latter term has been interpreted variously. Narendrayaśas took it as a grammatically negative, though religiously positive, term, synonymous with *niṣprapañca*, “the absence of conceptualizations,” and which he translated literally as “absence of frivolous talk.” *Niṣprapañca* is widely attested throughout the canon, both Śrāvaka and Mahāyāna, and seems to be used to denote a state very similar to the “transconceptual” knowledge, *nirvikalpañāna*, of the Vijñānavāda.<sup>8</sup>

Regamey, however, translates *vipañcita* as “explained,” rightly drawing attention to the literal meaning of the verb *vipañcayati*, “to diffuse, to expand,” and the secondary sense, “to explain.” In a footnote, he mentions the *Paramatthajotikā*’s definition of *vipañcitaññu* as applied to those “who need a detailed instruction; thus learning by diffuseness.”<sup>9</sup> This last usage is also frequent throughout the *Peṭakopadesa* and *Nettipakarana*, and affirms the significance of the term in the didactic context.<sup>10</sup> Thus, Regamey’s translation of the full title of the *samādhi* is “the samādhi which is explained as the equality of all the dharmas in their essence.”<sup>11</sup>

Gómez and Silk, acknowledging the difficulty of interpretation of this title, adopts the translation “manifested,” but without specific justification; thus, “the *samādhi* that is manifested as the sameness of the essential nature of all dharmas.”<sup>12</sup> In a lengthy footnote, the authors refer to the single occurrence of the expression °*vipañcitasamādhinirdeśa* in chapter 40 and, following Regamey, look to chapter 8, verse 7 for guidance on interpreting the term. I am not convinced that either of these passages is justified as a definitive guide to interpretation. In particular, it strikes me as unsound to rely upon chapter 8, verse 7, even assuming that it does clarify the situation, since it only occurs in recensions SRS I and II. Nor is it clear why, if it were

<sup>8</sup> Following Schmithausen’s translation of the term (1987, vol. 1, p. 202). Edgerton directs attention to passages in the *Lankāvātāra Sūtra* and the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* in which *prapañca* is paired with *vikalpa*, BHSD s.v. *prapañca*. The lack of a careful study of this term in the Pali literature which he notes in this entry has since been rectified by Bhikkhu Ñāṇananda (1971). See also Schmithausen 1987, vol. 2, n. 1425.

<sup>9</sup> Regamey 1990, p. 22 and n. 21, quoting the Pali-English Dictionary.

<sup>10</sup> I have located this and cognate forms some thirteen times in the *Nettipakarana* (text, Hardy 1902; translation, Ñāṇamoli 1962), and twenty-two times in the *Peṭakopadesa* (text, Barua 1949; translation, Ñāṇamoli 1964).

<sup>11</sup> Regamey 1990, p. 73.

<sup>12</sup> Gómez and Silk 1989, pp. 15–16. In this volume, the section dealing with the SRS is the product of an experiment in collaborative authorship by a group of scholars and advanced graduate students at the University of Michigan, 1982–83.

introduced to these recensions with the intention to explain this title, such an important passage should be so recondite. As I will argue later, we do not need to look to this source as the sutra provides more explicit guidance in a more obvious place.<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, chapter 8, verse 7 reads:

tasmād dhi yo icchi vipañcitām imām  
svabhāvasamatām sugatāna mātām  
sa bhāvayatu sarvi abhāvadharmām  
pratilapsyatimām janānim jinānām<sup>14</sup>

Thus, Regamey:

He who longs for this Mother of the Sugatas explained as the  
“Equality of the Absolute Essences,” let him meditate upon all the  
dharmas as non-existent. Then will he attain this Parent of the  
Victorious Ones.<sup>15</sup>

Finally, in Gómez and Silk:

Therefore, one seeking the Mother of the Sugatas,  
Who manifests herself as sameness of essential nature,  
By meditating on all dharmas as nonexistent,  
Will attain to this Mother of the Conquerors.<sup>16</sup>

As for *vipañcita*, my own preference is to attempt a translation which combines the two meanings noted by Regamey, and for this purpose I suggest “elaborated” as an appropriate translation in this context. This, I hope, combines the root meaning of “expansion” with the didactic character indicated by its frequent use in the *Peṭakopadesa* and *Nettipakaraṇa*.

However, the problems of interpretation of the name *sarvadharmasvabhāvasamatāvipañcita-samādhi* cannot be solved on a philological basis alone. Inherent in the task of deriving a satisfactory translation is the need to place the linguistic item in context; in this case, for example, to understand what it could possibly mean for a *samādhi* to be “elaborated,” and in fact

<sup>13</sup> We should also note two further translations of this title: Tatz: “the King of Samādhis, which explains in detail the similarity of all dharmas in their own-being,” for the full title of the sutra (1972, p. 1); and Rockwell: “this samādhi that is explained in detail as the equality of the nature of all dharmas” (1980, p. 23).

<sup>14</sup> Text as established by Regamey 1990, p. 31.

<sup>15</sup> Regamey 1990, p. 66.

<sup>16</sup> Gómez and Silk 1989, p. 80 n.1.

what is meant by *samādhi* in the SRS in general. As I have already mentioned, it seems to be the case that the term *samādhi* is used in some early Mahāyāna sutras and by Asaṅga to denote the text itself (written or oral). I would like here to take this argument one step further, and to suggest that in some Mahāyāna sutras the term *samādhi* can be used to denote a specific literary item incorporated within the sutra text.

Before doing so, however, we should review the recognized usages of the term *samādhi* in the Śrāvaka and Mahāyāna canons.<sup>17</sup> Common to both bodies of scripture is the ubiquitous account of the Buddhist path in terms of ethical conduct (*śīla*), meditation (*samādhi*) and knowledge or insight (*prajñā*). In this usage, which is the primary usage of *samādhi* in the Śrāvaka canon, *samādhi* includes both the range of preparatory practices and the series of distinct altered mental states which they produce and support. Thus the preparatory practices include: guarding of the senses; mindfulness and awareness; contentment; and suppression of the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*). The resultant altered mental states which these produce and sustain are the meditative absorptions (*dhyāna*): four in number in canonical sources, but considered as five in commentarial and Abhidharma sources.<sup>18</sup> The meditative absorptions constitute a series of successively more refined and tranquil states of mind, characterized by concentration and equanimity. Experience of them is regarded as a prerequisite for experiencing knowledge or insight, the third stage of the path. This insight or knowledge consists in the deconstruction of the person into its constituent phenomena (*dharmas*). The meditative absorptions constitute the primary general referent of the term *samādhi* in the Śrāvaka canon. Allied to this usage is one more specific and technical. For Vasubandhu and Buddhaghosa, i.e., in both Sarvāstivādin and Theravādin Abhidharma, *samādhi* is that factor which characterizes the increasing concentration experienced in the meditative absorptions, i.e., it is given a technical definition by them as “one-pointedness of mind (of a wholesome character).”<sup>19</sup> As such, and lying behind this applied usage, is the understanding for both authors that *samādhi* is primarily an omnipresent

<sup>17</sup> I present a brief survey of the main characteristics here, but refer the reader to Gunaratana (1985, *passim*), Lamotte (1965, pp. 14–35) and Deleanu (2000, pp. 69–78) for more exhaustive treatments.

<sup>18</sup> I mention only the four *dhyāna*; from the fourth of which, however, can be developed a set of four *ārūpyasamāpatti*.

<sup>19</sup> As *samādhiś cittasyaikāgratā* in *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* 2.24 (Śāstri 1987, p. 187), and *kusalacittakaggatā samādhi* in *Visuddhimagga* (Rhys Davids 1975, pp. 84, 464).

mental state, being that *dharma* which facilitates the mind continuing to remain on any object.<sup>20</sup>

Complementary to this account of *samādhi* is the categorization of it according to three applications or subjects: emptiness (*śūnyatā*), desireless(ness) (*apraṇihita*), and “signlessness” (*ānimitta*).<sup>21</sup> These are known collectively as the *vimokṣasamukha*. From this point of view, *samādhi* is seen as applied to three characteristic features of the Buddhist analysis of phenomena (*dharma*s): namely, that phenomena are empty of “selfhood,” do not arise or decay through self-will, and are free from the characteristics of conditioned existence. This threefold categorization of *samādhi*, although secondary to *samādhi* as one-pointedness or meditative absorption, is the third main referent of the term in the Śrāvaka canon. *Samādhi* is thus directly associated with meditation, both as a mental technology and as the resulting transformed consciousness of the practitioner, viewed as either “mental state” or “mental content.”

This same picture is repeated in the Mahāyāna corpus, but with the addition of a number of new features. First, the insight or knowledge which can be attained by the bodhisattva on the basis of his practice of *samādhi* transcends that of the Śrāvaka path insofar as it deconstructs not only the person, but also the phenomena which make up the person. Second, the bodhisattva’s motive is altruism, rather than the perceived self-interest of the Śrāvaka, and thus seeks to take advantage of the magical power (*ṛddhi*) with which *samādhi* is associated in the Mahāyāna. Supposedly in association with this last feature, there also appear in Mahāyāna literature references to a number of specific *samādhi*, each with a name and associated benefits, and a number of which are associated with specific sutras, as I have already noted. Finally, one notes the appearance of lengthy lists of *samādhi* names, which one suspects have acquired their own aura of magical potency. Thus we can find *samādhi*-name lists, some of considerable length, in the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa*,<sup>22</sup> *Bodhisattvapīṭaka*,<sup>23</sup> *Daśabhūmīśvara*,<sup>24</sup> *Gaṇḍavyūha*,<sup>25</sup>

<sup>20</sup> I am grateful to both Sasaki Shizuka and Honjō Yoshifumi who pointed out to me at the 2001 Asilomar conference the importance of this last definition of *samādhi*.

<sup>21</sup> *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* 8.24 (Śāstri 1987, p. 1163), *Visuddhimagga* (Rhys Davids 1975, p. 657f.).

<sup>22</sup> 118 *samādhi*; Braarvig 1993 vol.1, pp. 58–60.

<sup>23</sup> 101 *samādhi*; summarised in Chart II of Pagel 1994, pp. 362–66.

<sup>24</sup> 10 *samādhi*: Vaidya 1967 p. 34, Rahder 1926 p. 53; 9 *samādhi*: Vaidya 1967, p. 39, Rahder 1926, pp. 59–60; 10 *samādhi*: Vaidya 1967, p. 55, Rahder 1926 p. 82.

<sup>25</sup> 100 *samādhi*: Suzuki and Idzumi 1934–36, pp. 36.22ff.

*Kārandavyūha*,<sup>26</sup> *Mahāvvyutpatti*,<sup>27</sup> and various *Prajñāpāramitā* texts.<sup>28</sup> Section 21 of the *Mahāvvyutpatti* records some 118 *samādhi*.

Perhaps because of the perceived emphasis on magical power attained through these new Mahāyāna *samādhi*, modern scholarly explication of this subject in the Mahāyāna tends to assume that here, as in the Śrāvaka context, *samādhi* is essentially a matter of altered states of consciousness and the practices that induce and sustain them. This is despite the fact that in the SRS we find only minimal and passing reference to the altered mental states and associated practices familiar from the Śrāvaka canon. For this reason, some modern commentators have expressed mild perplexity and exercised some ingenuity in explaining this state of affairs. “The Buddha . . . expounds on the merits of ‘preserving the *samādhi*’, a concept that will recur throughout the sūtra and which denotes preserving, in memory or written form, the text of the sūtra, as well as the variety of spiritual exercises usually associated with the term *samādhi*.”<sup>29</sup> This “variety of spiritual exercises usually associated with the term *samādhi*” is hard to discern in the SRS. It contains no significant exposition of either meditational practices or states of mind. Although every chapter is dedicated to expounding the benefits or powers of the *sarvadharmasvabhāvasamatāvipañcita-samādhi*, no description of a meditative technique that might generate an altered mental state is associated with it. We are faced rather starkly by the need to explain why, in a sutra that claims to expound the “king of *samādhis*,” there is only passing reference to meditative techniques and altered states of mind.<sup>30</sup>

My own engagement with this issue stems from text editorial work I had begun on chapter 17 of the SRS. This chapter contains a versified recounting of a prose passage in chapter 1. Since, for the purposes of the work on

<sup>26</sup> Three distinct lists: Vaidya 1961, 62 *samādhi*, p. 284; 17 *samādhi*, p. 297; and 37 *samādhi*, p. 305.

<sup>27</sup> #505–623; Sakaki 1916, pp. 40–49. These are attributed to the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*.

<sup>28</sup> *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā*–62 *samādhi*: Vaidya 1960, pp. 242–43, 24 *samādhi*: Vaidya 1960, p. 259; *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā*–108 *samādhi*: Dutt 1934, pp. 142–44 and 198ff.; *Śatasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā*–121 *samādhi*: Ghoṣa 1902–12, pp. 1412–14.

<sup>29</sup> Gómez and Silk 1989, p. 18.

<sup>30</sup> The reader perforce relies on my judgement. However, in a recent article that deals in its first section with the nature of *samādhi* in the *Prajñāpāramitā* corpus, Deleanu notes in passing concerning the SRS that “there is no clearly identifiable meditative technique which can be singled out as this particular *samādhi*” (Deleanu 2000, p. 73). Formulaic references to the attainment of Pure Land rebirth in the SRS are discussed in Schopen 1977.

chapter 17, the material in chapter 1 is therefore a significant testimonium, I found myself committed to reviewing and eventually “re-establishing” this passage from a variety of sources. It was only after almost a year of rereading this material that its full significance began to be clear, i.e., only after my preconceptions regarding the material had been thoroughly disappointed, did I begin to take note of what the sutra is saying explicitly at this point. I am referring to the list of terms which constitutes the greater part of chapter 1.

The SRS begins with a moderately full *nidāna*, in which the scene is set and the audience described. This is followed by the identification of the main interlocutor of the sutra, here Candraprabha, who proceeds to ask the Buddha a series of questions, in particular enquiring how it is that one can acquire certain qualities. In his reply, the Buddha explains that there is one single *dharma*, the acquisition of which enables one to acquire all these other things, and furthermore that possession of that *dharma* enables one to acquire the *samādhi* that is the subject of the SRS. The following is the full text of the Buddha’s reply:<sup>31</sup>

When that had been said, the Illustrious One said this to the young man Candraprabha: “Young man, when he possesses one single quality (*dharma*), a bodhisattva mahāsattva partakes of these virtues [of a Tathāgata],<sup>32</sup> and quickly awakens fully and completely to unsurpassable, perfect and complete Awakening. Young man, possessing which single quality (*dharma*) does the bodhisattva mahāsattva partake of these virtues and quickly awaken fully and completely to unsurpassable, perfect and complete Awakening? It is that his mind is equable towards all beings, his mind is beneficial, his mind is sympathetic, his mind is not inclined to retaliation, his mind is not vexatious. Possessing this single quality (*dharma*), young man, a bodhisattva mahāsattva partakes of these virtues and quickly awakens fully and completely to unsurpassable, perfect and complete Awakening.” Then, on that occasion, the Illustrious One addressed the young man Candraprabha in verse:

“The bodhisattva who proceeds, having taken up a single quality (*dharma*), obtains these virtues and quickly awakens to Awakening. 12

<sup>31</sup> All translations are the author’s, unless otherwise specified.

<sup>32</sup> I have added the terms in brackets for clarity.

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The mind of the bodhisattva whose mind is not inclined to retaliation, retaliates nowhere, and he produces no harshness or ill will, and obtains these special qualities (*guṇa*) just as they have been lauded. 13

Enjoying an equal mind, the results of all actions are seen to be equal. The soles of his feet are even, and the range of his conduct is even. 14

Developing an even mind that is not vexatious, is free from ill will and harshness, his doubts abandoned, the soles of his feet are even, marvellous, luminous, pure and delightful to look upon. 15

The bodhisattva blazes in the ten directions, fills the buddha-field with splendour and light. When he obtains the serene stage of spiritual development, he establishes many beings in the knowledge possessed by the buddhas. 16

In this respect, young man, the bodhisattva mahāsattva whose mind is equable towards all beings, whose mind is beneficial, whose mind is not inclined to retaliation, whose mind is not vexatious, partakes of this *samādhi* that is called ‘elaborated as the sameness in essence of all phenomena’.

And what, young man, is the *samādhi* that is called the elaboration of the sameness in their essence of all phenomena? It is:

- 1 Restraint of the body
- 2 Restraint of speech
- 3 Restraint of mind
- 4 Purity of actions
- 5 Going completely beyond supports
- 6 Comprehension of the aggregates
- 7 Indifference towards the bases of consciousness
- 8 Withdrawal from the sense-fields
- 9 Abandonment of craving
- 10 Direct realization of non-arising
- 11 Illumination of causes
- 12 Not destroying the fruit of action
- 13 Seeing the Teaching
- 14 Cultivation of the Path

- 15 Attentiveness to the Tathāgatas  
 16 Possession of penetrating understanding  
 17 Knowledge and penetration of the Truths  
 18 Knowledge of the Teaching  
 19 Knowledge and realization of the analytical knowledges  
 20 Knowledge of the divisions of words and syllables . . .  
 [and so on, up to:]  
 320 The discontinuation of syllables  
 321 Impossible to understand through sound  
 322 Recognized by the Wise  
 323 Known by those who are gentle  
 324 Penetrated by those with few desires  
 325 Taken up by those who have begun [to practise] vigour  
 326 Memorized by those who are mindful  
 327 The destruction of suffering  
 328 The non-arising of all things  
 329 The instruction which is a single method for every existence,  
 destiny, rebirth and realm<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup> *evam ukte bhagavāms Candraprabham kumāra-bhūtam etad avocat. "eka-dharmaṇa kumāra, samanvāgato bodhisattvo mahāsattva etān guṇān pratilabhate, kṣipram cānuttarām samyaksambodhiṃ abhisambudhyate. kathamena kumāraika-dharmaṇa samanvāgato bodhisattvo mahāsattva etān guṇān pratilabhate, kṣipram cānuttarām samyaksambodhiṃ abhisambudhyate. yad-uta sarva-sattveṣu sama-citto bhavati hita-citto dayā-citto 'pratihata-citto 'viṣama-citto 'nena kumāraika-dharmaṇa [sic] samanvāgato bodhisattvo mahāsattva etān guṇān pratilabhate, kṣipram cānuttarām samyaksambodhiṃ abhisambudhyate."*

*atha khalu bhagavāms tasyām velāyām Candraprabham kumāra-bhūtam gāthābhīr adhyabhāṣata.*

<i>eka-dharmaṃ samādāya bodhisattvo ya vartate etān guṇān sa labhate kṣipram bodhiṃ ca budhyate</i>	12
<i>na ca kva cit pratihanyate 'sya cittaṃ apratihata-cittu yo bhoti bodhisattvaḥ na ca khilu janayāti na pradoṣam, labhati yathā-parikirtitān viśeṣān</i>	13
<i>samaṃ cittaṃ niṣevitvā vipāko darsitah samaḥ samā pādatalā bhonti samaś c' ācāra-gocaraḥ</i>	14
<i>sama-m-aviṣama-cittu bhāvayitvā apagata-doṣa-khilaḥ prahīna-kāṅkṣaḥ caraṇa-vara-talā samā 'sya bhonti parama-prabhāsvara-śuddha-darśaniyā</i>	15

As soon as he has recited the final item of this list, the Buddha concludes, “This, young man, is that *samādhi* for which the name ‘the elaboration of the sameness in their essence of all phenomena’ is used.”<sup>34</sup> In other words, the list itself is explicitly introduced as the *samādhi* of our sutra—not as aspects of the *samādhi*, nor as benefits produced by it (as the Chinese translation suggests), but as the *samādhi* itself. Despite the initial peculiarity of this statement, there is surely a certain virtue in taking the text at its face value.

According to the explicit statement of the SRS, the *samādhi*, it appears, consists of a list of about 330 terms or phrases, which are arranged as far as I can tell in no identifiable overall order, and are related only indirectly, if at all, to meditation practice.<sup>35</sup> Many of the terms are cognitive in scope, but there are also plenty that relate to affect or to deportment. By way of illustration, I offer three further passages of items from the list:

- 29 Being free from frowns
- 30 Mildness
- 31 Being of good conduct

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daśa-diśatu viroci bodhisattvah  
 sphurati śīriya prabhāya buddha-kṣetram  
 yada bhavati sa labdha-śānta-bhūmis  
 tada bahu-sattva sthapeti buddha-jñāne

16

tatra kumāra sarva-sattveṣu sama-citto bodhisattvo mahāsattvo hita-citto ’pratihata-citto ’viṣama-citto imaṃ sarva-dharma-svabhāva-samatā-vipañcitaṃ nāma samādhiṃ pratilabha-te. katamaś ca kumāra sarvadharmasvabhāvasamatāvipañcito nāma samādhiḥ. yaduta kāyaśamvaro, vākśamvaro, manaśśamvaraḥ, karma-pāriśuddhiḥ, ārambaṇasamatikramah, skandhaparijñā, dhātusamatā, āyatanāpakarṣaḥ, trṣṇāprahāṇam, anutpādasākṣātkriyāvataṛah, hetudīpanā, karmaphalāvīpraṇāśaḥ, dharmadarśanam, mārgabhāvanā, tathāgatasamavadhānam, tīkṣṇaprajñatā, satyānupaveśajñānam, dharmajñānam, pratisaṃvidāvataṛajñānam, akṣara-padaprabhedajñānam . . . vivarto ’kṣarāṇām, durvijñeyo ghoṣeṇa, ājñātam vijñāih, jñātam sūrataih, prativeddham alpecchaiḥ, udgrhītam ārabdhaviryaiḥ, dhṛtam smṛtimadbhiḥ, kṣayo duḥkhasya, anutpādaḥ sarvadharmāṇām, ekanayanirdeśaḥ sarvabhavagatyupapattyāyatanānām (The text up to the term yaduta is quoted, minus some diagnostic typography, from Matsunami 1975, pp. 227–28. The list of terms beginning kāyaśamvaraḥ is quoted, minus apparatus and annotation, from Skilton 1997, pp. 162–175.)

<sup>34</sup> ayam sa kumāra ucyate sarvadharmasvabhāvasamatāvipañcito nāma samādhiḥ

<sup>35</sup> Although in my edition the total of items comes to 329, my numbering is employed for ease of reference and not in order to establish a definitive total. The Sāṅkrtyāyana manuscript of the SRS appends the total of 333 to the list in numerals, while the Chinese translation groups the first 210 items into groups of ten, but does not number the remaining items, instead treating them as names of the *samādhi*.

- 32 Friendliness  
 33 Sweetness  
 34 Having a smiling face  
 35 Being the first to greet  
 36 Being welcoming by saying, 'come'  
 37 Freedom from idleness  
 38 Regarding one's teachers as important<sup>36</sup>
- 105 Guarding one's deportment  
 106 Lack of disturbance in one's deportment  
 107 Lack of distortion in one's deportment  
 108 Being becoming in one's deportment  
 109 Knowledge and skill regarding what is meaningful and what is meaningless  
 110 Being one who speaks appropriately  
 111 Being one who knows the world  
 112 Being one who gives freely  
 113 Being one who is open-handed  
 114 Being unimpeded in one's mind  
 115 Shame  
 116 Being fearful of reproach<sup>37</sup>
- 145 Absence of desire for honor  
 146 Equanimity in the face of not being honored  
 147 Being unmotivated by gain  
 148 Not being downcast without gain  
 149 Absence of desire for fame  
 150 Lack of aversion to ignominy  
 151 Lack of attachment to praise  
 152 Absence of dejection at blame  
 153 Absence of devotion to pleasure
- 154 Absence of aversion to suffering

<sup>36</sup> *vigatabhrkuṭitā, suratatā, suśilatā, sākhyam, mādhyam, smitamukhatā, pūrvābhilāpitā, chētisvāgatavādītā, anālayam, gurugauravatā*

<sup>37</sup> *iryāpatharakṣaṇam, iryāpathāvikopanam, iryāpathāvikalpanam, iryāpathaprasādikatā, arthānarthakauśalyajñānam, yuktabhāṇitā, lokajñatā, muktatyāgitā, pratatapāṇitā, anavagrhitacittatā, hrī, vyapatrāpitā*

- 155 Not appropriating conditioned things  
 156 Non-attachment to praise that is true  
 157 Endurance of baseless renown  
 158 Lack of intimacy with either householders or non-householders  
 159 Avoiding what is outside one's proper field of action  
 160 Conduct appropriate to one's field of action<sup>38</sup>

Such examples demonstrate unambiguously that we are not dealing with a list of attributes, preconditions or products of *samādhi* as meditative practice.

My proposition is therefore that *samādhi* is used in the SRS to denote a specific literary item, an item which is itself enclosed within the SRS, and in this sense is used to denote not a "state of mind" so much as a "statement of terms." My evidence for this suggestion is both internal and external, direct and indirect. The most explicit evidence is that provided by the text of chapter 1 of the SRS itself, viz. the explicit identification of this list as the *samādhi* with which the sutra is concerned.

The most concrete support for understanding *samādhi* in this way comes from external sources—from parallel passages in a number of other sutras. We find exactly the same usage in another of the very sutras designated by Aśaṅga as *samādhi*. Thus, in the first chapter of the PSS, the bodhisattva Bhadrāpāla asks for the *samādhi* which produces some 146 "qualities and abilities" which he describes one by one (PSS 1K–1Y). After due congratulations, the Buddha responds to this enquiry as follows:

[2B] "Bhadrāpāla, there is a *samādhi* called 'Direct Encounter with the Buddhas of the Present'; if one preserves that *samādhi* without forgetting it, if one listens to it attentively and succeeds in being mentally undistracted, then those excellent qualities will not be difficult to obtain."

Then the bodhisattva and mahāsattva Bhadrāpāla said to the Lord:

<sup>38</sup> satkāreṣv anabhilāṣaḥ, asatkāreṣūpekṣā, lābhe anarthikatā, alābhe anavalīnatā, yaśasy anabhilāṣaḥ, ayaśasy apratighaḥ, praśamsāyām ananunayah, nindāyām aṣādaḥ, sukhe abhiṣvaṅgaḥ, duḥkhe avaimukhyam, saṃskārāṇām anādānatā, bhūte varṇe aśaṅgaḥ, abhūte varṇe adhivāsanatā, gr̥hasthapravrajitair asaṃstavah, agocaravivarjanam, gocarapracārah. This last sequence clearly bears some relationship to the aṣṭau lokadharmāḥ, cf. Dharmaśaṃgraha LXI (Kasawara 1981, pp. 13 and 48).

“Reverend Lord, would the Tathāgata therefore please expound that *samādhi*, which would be for the benefit of many beings, for the happiness of many beings, out of compassion for the world, and for the welfare, the benefit, and the happiness of the great body of beings, of *devas* and of humankind; and which would shed a great light for future bodhisattvas and mahāsattvas.”

Then the Lord said to the bodhisattva and mahāsattva Bhadrapāla: “In that case, Bhadrapāla, listen well and consider it carefully, and I shall expound it to you.”

[2C] Saying: “So be it, Lord,” the bodhisattva and mahāsattva Bhadrapāla and the world with its *devas*, humans, *asuras* and *gandharvas* listened to the Lord, and the Lord then said: “Bhadrapāla, if one *dharma* is practised, cultivated, developed, frequently rehearsed, mastered, actively pursued, made to arise, made familiar, fully purified, fully concentrated on, and fully undertaken, then one will become distinguished by all good qualities. What is the one *dharma*? Namely, the *samādhi* called ‘Direct Encounter with the Buddhas of the Present’, which brings to fulfilment the *dharma*s of which the first is great learning (*bāhuśrutya*).”

[2D] “Bhadrapāla, what then is the *samādhi* called ‘Direct Encounter with the Buddhas of the Present’? Namely, (1) concentration (*manasikāra*) on thoughts which have the Buddha as their object; (2) absence of mental distraction; (3) obtaining mindful engagement and wisdom; (4) not renouncing vigour (*vīrya*); (5) attending on good friends (*kalyāṇa-mitra*); . . . [and so on, up to:]

[2J] . . . (151) striving for the aspiration to awakening; (152) equanimity towards the perfections (*pāramitā*); (153) [seeing] the sameness of the vision of the Tathāgatas and perfect truth (*bhūta-koṭi*); (154) [seeing] the sameness for all Buddhas of all virtuous qualities—this, Bhadrapāla, is the *samādhi* called ‘Direct Encounter with the Buddhas of the Present’.”<sup>39</sup>

<sup>39</sup> [2B] bzang skyong / da ltar gyi sangs mngon sum du bzhugs pa zhes bya ba'i ting nge 'dzin yod de / ting nge 'dzin de bzung zhing ma brjed la / rna blags te nyan cing sems mi gyeng ba myed na / yon tan gyi khyad par de dag myed pa mi dka' bar 'gyur ro //

Here, in explicit response to a request for a *samādhi*, the Buddha provides a substantial list of concepts, practices and affects, indistinguishable in general type from that in the SRS. As before, this *samādhi* has an identity—it is not just any old list, but a list with a name, the *pratyutpannabuddhasam-mukhāvasthita-samādhi*. Again, to make it quite clear that we are not dealing with a list of meditational terms, the following sequence serves:

[2F] . . . (55) being in harmony with the Buddha; (56) not rejecting the Dharma; (57) not causing schism in the Saṅgha; (58) avoiding slanderous talk; (59) entering the presence of the Holy Ones (*ārya*) and attending upon them; (60) shunning fools; (61) not enjoying, taking no pleasure in, and avoiding worldly (*laukika*) talk; (62)

de nas byang chub sems dpa' sems dpa' chen po bzang skyong gis bcom ldan 'das la 'di skad ces gsol to //

btsun pa bcom ldan 'das / de bas na de bzhin gshegs pas ting nge 'dzin de bshad par gsol // de ni skye bo mang po la sman pa dang / skye bo mang po la bde ba dang / 'jig rten la snying brtse ba dang / skye bo phal po che dang / lha dang mi'i don dang sman pa dang bde bar 'gyur zhing / ma 'ongs pa'i byang chub sems dpa' sems dpa' chen po mams la yang snang ba chen po bgyis par 'gyur ro //

de nas bcom ldan 'das kyis byang chub sems dpa' sems dpa' chen po bzang skyong la 'di skad ces bka' stsal to //

bzang skyong / de'i phyir legs par rab tu nyon la yid la zung shig dang ngas khyod la bshad par bya'o //

[2C] bcom ldan 'das / de bzhin no //

zhes gsol te / byang chub sems dpa' sems dpa' chen po bzang skyong dang / lha dang / mi dang / lha ma yin dang / dri zar bcas pa'i 'jig rten bcom ldan 'das kyi ltar nyan pa dang / bcom ldan 'das kyis de la 'di skad ces bka' stsal to //

bzang skyong / chos gcig la kun tu bsten / nges par bsten cing bsgoms la lan mang du byas / lam du byas / gzahir byas / yang dag par bslang / legs par byang bar byas / shin tu yongs su sbyangs / shin tu mnyam par bzhag / shin tu yang dag par brtsams na / yon tan thams cad khyad par du 'phags pa 'gyur ro // chos gcig po gang zhe na / 'di lta ste / da ltar gyi sangs rgyas mngon sum du bzhugs pa zhes bya ba'i ting nge 'dzin te / mang du thos pa sngon du 'gro ba'i chos nmams yongs su rdzogs par 'gyur ro //

[2D] bzang skyong / de la da ltar gyi sangs rgyas mngon sum du bzhugs pa zhes bya ba'i ting nge 'dzin de gang zhe na / 'di lta ste / sangs rgyas la dmigs pa'i sems yid la byed pa / sems mi gyeng ba / dran pa nye bar gnas pa dang shes rab thob pa / brtson 'grus mi gtong ba / dge ba'i bshes gnyen nmams la bsnyen bkur byed pa / [ . . . ]

[2J] [ . . . ] byang chub kyi sems yongs su tshol ba / pha rol tu phyin pa nmams la sems mnyam pa / de bzhin gshegs pa nmams blta ba la yang dag pa'i mtha' dang mnyam pa / sangs rgyas thams cad la yon tan gyi chos thams cad mnyam pa 'di ni / bzang skyong / da ltar gyi sangs rgyas mngon sum du bzhugs pa zhes bya ba'i ting nge 'dzin ces bya'o // (Harrison 1978b, pp. 20–25; 1990, pp. 25–30).

enjoying, taking pleasure in, liking, and employing talk which transcends the world (*lokottara*); (63) eliminating meaningless babble.<sup>40</sup>

Comparing the two sutras in which we have now found this usage, we can see also that it occurs within a formulaic narrative setting shared by both texts, and turning now to the third of Asaṅga's *samādhi* texts, the *Śūraṅgama-samādhi Sūtra* (hereafter, SSS), it appears that we have the same usage in a similar setting. Quoting again at some length:

§7 The bodhisattava Dṛḍhamati said to the Buddha: Bhagavat, what is the *samādhi* through which a bodhisattva:

rapidly attains *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*,  
is never apart from frequentation by the Buddhas,  
illuminates with his own light (*avabhāsa*) all the ten regions,  
[. . .]

manifests, through the power of his previous aspiration (*pūrvaprañidhāna*), the disappearance of the Saddharma (*saddharmavipralopa*),

What then, O Bhagavat, is this *samādhi* through which a bodhisattva manifests such virtues (*guṇa*), but without definitively entering Parinirvāṇa?

[. . .]

[*The Heroic Progress*]

§10 The Buddha said to Dṛḍhamati: It is a *samādhi* called 'Concentration of the Heroic Progress' [*Śūraṅgamasamādhi*]. Bodhisattvas who have obtained this *samādhi* can, since you ask about it, manifest Parinirvāṇa, but without definitively ceasing to be.<sup>41</sup>

There follows a list of 12 further attainments, which are, I suggest, wrongly taken by Lamotte to be the *Śūraṅgama-samādhi*. After several intervening matters, we come to the point at which the Buddha reveals the *Śūraṅgama-samādhi* proper:

<sup>40</sup> [2F] . . . sangs rgyas dang 'thun pa / chos mi spong ba / dge 'dun mi 'byed pa / phra ma'i tshig spong ba / 'phags pa mams kyi drung du nye bar 'gro zhing de dag la bsnyen bkur byed pa / byis pa mams mam par spong ba / 'jig rten pa'i gtam la mngon par mi dga' zhing mi 'dod la ring du byed pa / 'jig rten las 'das pa'i gtam la mngon par dga' zhing 'dod la 'dun cing sten pa / gtam rgyud ma yin pa mam par spong ba /

<sup>41</sup> Lamotte 1998, pp. 110–12 (Lamotte 1965, pp. 121–23).

[*The Hundred Aspects of the Heroic Progress*]

§21 Then the Buddha said to the bodhisattva Dṛḍhamati: The Śūraṃgamasamādhi is not obtained by the bodhisattvas of the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth stages (*bhūmi*); it is only the bodhisattva dwelling in the tenth *bhūmi* who can obtain this Śūraṃgamasamādhi. What then is this Śūraṃgamasamādhi?

1. Purifying the mind [and making it pure] like space (*ākāśavac cittaparikarman*).

2. Examining and bringing to the fore the minds of all beings (*sarvasattvacittānām pratyavekṣā sammukhīkaraṇam*).

3. Knowing the strength and weakness of the spiritual faculties in beings (*sarvasattvānām indriyaparāparajñānam*).

4. Determining (*avadhāraṇa*) and understanding (*parijñāna*) the [mechanism of] the cause and the fruit (*hetuphala*) in beings.

5. Knowing the fruition of action in beings (*sattvānām kar-mavipākajñānam*).

[. . .]

96. From moment to moment, manifesting the acquisition of complete enlightenment (*abhisambodhi*) and, by conforming with beings to be disciplined (*vaineya*), causing them to obtain deliverance (*vimukti*).

97. Manifesting the entry into the womb (*garbhāvakrānti*) and the birth (*janman*).

98. [Manifesting] the renunciation of the world (*abhiniṣkramaṇa*) and the acquisition of Buddhahood [or complete enlightenment] (*abhisambodhana*).

99. Setting turning the Wheel of the Dharma (*dharmacakra-pravartana*).

100. Entering great Nirvāṇa, but without attaining complete cessation.

O Dṛḍhamati, the Śūraṃgamasamādhi is so infinite (*apramāṇa*) that it reveals all the marvellous power of the Buddha and innumerable beings benefit from it.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Lamotte 1998, pp. 119–27 (Lamotte 1965, pp. 131–40). In these passages, all bracketed items are Lamotte's insertions.

The discordance between Lamotte's titles imposed upon the text in brackets and the content of the text is particularly noticeable once one understands that it is the list of terms that is the *samādhi*.<sup>43</sup>

The conclusion of Lamotte's translation of the Chinese text does not follow exactly the pattern shown by the SRS and PSS, in that the list is not concluded by the enclosing phrase of identification, "This, young man, is that *samādhi* for which the name *śūraṅgama-samādhi* is used." Fortunately the Tibetan translation contains the complete text of the passage and thus allows us to see that the SSS, too, conforms closely to the pattern of the other *samādhi* sutras we have examined. Lamotte, working from Kumārajīva's Chinese version, which lacks this conclusion, and assuming that the Tibetan material is a later interpolation, relegates it to a footnote.<sup>44</sup> The footnote reads:

Ripening an infinite and countless number of beings and ripening them from moment to moment according to the requirements of beings to be disciplined (*vaineyasattva*); manifesting the attainment of enlightenment (*abhisambodhi*) and deliverance (*vimukti*): manifesting the Bodhisattva's entry into the womb (*garbhāvakrānti*), the birth (*janman*), leaving of the world (*abhinīṣkramaṇa*), the practice of austerities (*duṣkaracaryā*), the going to the seat of enlightenment (*bodhimandagamaṇa*), the victory over Māra (*māradharsaṇa*), the attaining of enlightenment (*abhisambodhana*), the turning of the Wheel of the Dharma (*dharmacakra-pravartana*), the great Nirvāṇa and the destruction of the body (*kāyavināśa*), and all the while not abandoning the dharmā-nature (*dharmatā*) of a bodhisattva and not definitively entering Nirvāṇa-without-a-remainder (*nirupadhiśeṣanirvāṇa*): this, O Dṛḍhamati, is what is called Śūraṅgamasamādhi.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>43</sup> At the level of the translation as a whole, this "discordance" amounts to a systematic editorial redaction of the text. The section titles, invented by Lamotte, the section numbers, and the speculatively reconstructed Sanskrit terms with which the text is larded, go a considerable way towards obscuring the text as transmitted by the Buddhist tradition in favour of a vision of it constructed by Lamotte.

<sup>44</sup> Lamotte speculates that Kumārajīva would not have omitted to translate a part of the text he had before him, but does not consider the possibility that he had to work from an incomplete text! This fuller list is that borrowed from the SSS by another text I shall discuss later, the *Praśāntaviniścayaprātihāryasamādhi Sūtra*, which was translated into Chinese in the seventh century C.E.

<sup>45</sup> Lamotte 1998, pp. 126–27 (Lamotte 1965, p. 140) n. 81. sems can mtha' yas pa / tshad med pa yongs su smin par byed pa dang / sems kyi skad cig sems kyi skad cig la dul ba'i sems can ji ltar yongs su smin pa la / mngon par rdzogs par byang chub pa dang / mam par grol ba ston pa dang / byang chub sems dpa' dag mngal du 'jug pa dang / btsas pa dang / mngon par

The SSS therefore conforms to the structural pattern observed in the SRS and PSS.

We therefore have three instances, each taken from a *samādhi* sutra, of a list of terms and phrases explicitly identified as a *samādhi* and known by a specific, unique name. Moreover, their narrative context is identical. In the *nidāna* of the sutra, a bodhisattva asks the Buddha how one might obtain a number of attainments. The Buddha replies that there is a single teaching (*dharma*) whereby these and, often, further qualities can be obtained, and that this is a *samādhi* given a specific name.<sup>46</sup> In almost identical passages, the *samādhi* in question is then introduced, recited, and the recitation concluded with an emphatic phrase of identification, “This, young man, is that *samādhi* for which the name . . . ‘x’ . . . is used.”

In previous work on these sutras, the real identity of these lists has not been understood and a variety of interpretations have been employed to explain them—or rather, explain them away. Thus, Lamotte understands the *śūramgama-samādhi* proper to be a list of “aspects” of a meditative attainment—as implied by the section title he provides for his translation. Otherwise he passes over the list as a whole in silence, remarking only upon incidental matters, such as the numbering which occurs only in the Chinese translation, differences in the Tibetan translation of individual terms, and so on.<sup>47</sup> Harrison takes the *pratyutpanna-samādhi* proper to be a second list of “attributes and attitudes” entailed by the *samādhi* as meditative state, a supplement to the list of attributes given by Bhadrāpāla in PSS 1J–1Y.<sup>48</sup>

’byung ba dang / dka’ ba spyod pa dang byang chub kyi snying por ’gro ba dang / bdud ’dul ba dang / byang chub mngon par rdzogs par ’tshang rgya ba dang / chos kyi ’khor lo bskor ba dang / mya ngan las ’da’ pa chen po dang / lus ’jig pa yang ston la byang chub sems dpa’i chos nyid de yang mi gtong zhing shin tu phung po med par yang mya ngan las mi ’da’ pa ’di ni blo gros brtan pa dpa’ bar ’gro ba’i ting nge ’dzin ces bya ste /

<sup>46</sup> The SSS expands this sequence, but the outline can still be seen there.

<sup>47</sup> See notes 43 and 81 to his translation (Lamotte 1998, pp. 119, 126–27).

<sup>48</sup> Harrison 1990, p. xxviii. This interpretation is undoubtedly influenced by the immediately following passage in chapter 3 which describes a form of *buddhānusmṛti* meditation. For the meantime, the relationship between the two kinds of *samādhi* appearing in chapters 2 and 3 of the PSS remains unclear. Since Harrison himself suggests that this sutra is self-consciously synthesising in its approach to *buddhānusmṛti*/Pure Land and *śūnyatā* teachings (Harrison 1978a), it may be that some further synthetic intent lies behind this juxtaposition of “*samādhi* as list” with “*samādhi* as altered state of consciousness.” Were the PSS the only supporting evidence for the present argument, I would certainly be more cautious in presenting it. However, it is not—and I suggest that the exact referent of *samādhi* throughout the PSS should now be closely reviewed. The distinction between the two senses of *samādhi* may even provide us with a tool for a provisional literary stratification in which we differentiate portions of text written with one or another *samādhi* in mind.

Regarding the SRS, Cüppers describes the *sarvadharmasvabhāvasamatāvipañcita-samādhi* as a list of “*samādhiguṇa*” without further specifying their relationship to the SRS.<sup>49</sup> Although, in each case, in the text itself the list is identified as the *samādhi* emphatically and unambiguously, previous commentators have simply ignored this explicit identification.

The treatment of the SRS in the study in Gómez and Silk is altogether more thought-provoking. In this case, I assume that it was the pressure of preconception that compelled the authors into a fictional contextualization of the *sarvadharmasvabhāvasamatāvipañcita-samādhi*. Seeking to identify the “leading themes” of the SRS, they introduce our *samādhi* as follows: “At the beginning of the *sūtra*, in reply to the questions of Candraprabha, the Buddha enters a *samādhi* called in the Sanskrit version ‘the *samādhi* that is manifested as the sameness of the essential nature of all *dharmas*’.”<sup>50</sup> From this altered state, the authors would have us believe, the Buddha recites the *samādhi* list to Candraprabha. I have already presented the cited passage in full, and, as the reader may have noticed, there is no reference to the Buddha entering *samādhi*. Nor is there any reference to the Buddha entering (or leaving!) *samādhi* at this point in any of the *samādhi* *sūtra* that I have or will discuss in this article. I take it that the authors had in mind more familiar scenes such as the following, the *nidāna* of the extended version of the *Heart Sūtra*:

Thus have I heard at one time. The Lord dwelled at Rājagṛha, on the Vulture Peak, together with a large gathering of both monks and Bodhisattvas. At that time the Lord, after he had taught the discourse on dharma called “deep splendour,” had entered into concentration.<sup>51</sup>

Or, alternatively, from the *nidāna* of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra*:

At that time, the Illustrious One, surrounded by the fourfold assembly, honoured, revered, venerated, thought much of, worshipped, esteemed and highly regarded [by them], uttered a discourse on the Teaching called The Great Exposition, a greatly

<sup>49</sup> Cüppers 1990, p. xxiv.

<sup>50</sup> Gómez and Silk 1989, p. 18.

<sup>51</sup> *Evam mayā śrutam ekasmin samaye. Bhagavān Rājagṛhe viharati sma Gṛdhra-kūṭa-parvate, mahatā bhikṣu-saṃghena sārddham mahatā ca bodhisattva-saṃghena. tena khalu punah samayena Bhagavān gambhīra-avabhāsaṃ nāma dharmaparyāyaṃ bhāṣitvā samādhim samāpannaḥ* (Conze 1967, p. 149; English version, Conze 1973, p. 140).

extended sutra, an exhortation for bodhisattvas, the property of all buddhas, [then] sat down right there on the great seat of teaching, crossed his legs, [and] entered a *samādhi* called The Foundation of Boundless Exposition [where he] remained with his body and his mind undisturbed.<sup>52</sup>

In both cases, the Buddha is described as entering a named *samādhi*. In both cases, since the Buddha is in *samādhi*, i.e., is experiencing an altered state of consciousness with which ratiocinative activity is incompatible, the burden of further discourse is taken up by a bodhisattva disciple: in the *Heart Sutra* by Avalokiteśvara, and in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* by Mañjuśrī. Before the Buddha can speak again, he is shown, in both cases, emerging from that *samādhi*: “Thereupon the Lord emerged from that concentration, and he applauded the holy Lord Avalokita, the Bodhisattva, the great being: ‘Well said, well said, son of good family! . . .’”<sup>53</sup> and “Thereupon the Illustrious One emerged mindful and aware from the *samādhi*. Having emerged, he addressed the venerable Śāriputra . . .”<sup>54</sup>

All such practicalities are absent in the *nidāna* of the SRS. The authors of this description have invented a context, familiar from other texts, that allows them to treat the present matter as something familiar and understood. They have then presented this fiction as a factual account of the *sarvadharmasvabhāvasamatāvīpañcita-samādhi* in the SRS. Yet there is no mention of it in their own translation in the same volume. No recension of the SRS describes such a meditative context. This invention in the face of that fact can only be understood as evidence of the need, when we come to the term *samādhi*, to understand it in relation to meditative states, even where no such states are implied. Following this, the same authors characterize the *samādhi* proper as, “the virtues or extraordinary qualities of this *samādhi*,” although further down the same page they describe the same list as, “some three

<sup>52</sup> tena khalu punaḥ samayena bhagavāms̄ catasr̄bhiḥ paṣṣadbhiḥ parivṛtaḥ puraskṛtaḥ satkr̄to gurukṛto mānitaḥ pūjito ’rcito ’pacāyito mahānirdeśam̄ nāma dharmaparyāyaḥ sūtrāntam mahāvaipulyam̄ bodhisattvāvavādam̄ sarvabuddhaparigrahaḥ bhāṣitvā tasminn̄ eva mahādharmāsane paryankam̄ ābhujyānantanirdeśapratīṣṭhānam̄ nāma samādhim̄ samāpanno ’bhūd̄ aniñjamānena kāyena sthito ’niñjaprāptena ca cittena (Dutt 1953, p. 3).

<sup>53</sup> Atha khalu Bhagavān̄ tasmāt̄ samādhē vyutthāya-Ārya-avalokiteśvarāya bodhisattvāya mahāsattvāya sādhuḥkāram̄ adāt̄. sādhu sādhu, kulaputra . . . (Conze 1967, p. 153; English version, Conze 1973, p. 141).

<sup>54</sup> atha khalu bhagavān̄ smṛtīmān̄ samprajānam̄ tataḥ samādhē vyutthito vyutthāyā-ṣuṣmantam̄ śāriputram̄ āmantrayate sma (Dutt 1953, p. 23).

hundred problematic words and phrases which seem to have been culled from various scriptural sources to define the merits and powers of the *samādhi*.”<sup>55</sup>

Regrettably, they make no identification of these sources, nor how they know that these terms have been “culled,” although this would constitute a major contribution to our understanding of the nature of such a *samādhi* and its milieu. Assuming the same possibility, I have searched in vain for such sources myself. On the following page, in their brief summary of the contents of the sutra, they further describe the *samādhi* proper as, “a list of approximately three hundred synonyms or attributes of this *samādhi*.” Finally, in a note to this last statement, the authors concede: “It is not clear whether the terms or epithets are meant as definitions or descriptions or if they are attributes of the *samādhi*, its causes or effects.”<sup>56</sup> Since these *samādhi* have invariably been seen as nothing more than lists, albeit inexplicable in an assumed meditative context, the explicit and unambiguous identification of them as *samādhi* in each sutra has been ignored.<sup>57</sup>

Having established what I understand is the intended referent of the term *samādhi* in three published *samādhi* sutras, it should be pointed out that this usage is not restricted to these alone. It occurs in at least two others. Thus, we can include in the same group the *Kuan ch'a chu fa hsing ching* 觀察諸法行經,<sup>58</sup> and the *Praśāntaviniścayaprātihārya-samādhi Sūtra*.<sup>59</sup> The *Kuan ch'a chu fa hsing ching* is a medium-length sutra (4 *chüan*) translated into Chinese in 595 C.E. by Jñānagupta. There is no Tibetan translation according to Lancaster's catalogue of the Korean canon, although Nanjio remarks laconically “It agrees with Tibetan.”<sup>60</sup> Since a Sanskrit title is not known for it, I suggest provisionally the full title \**Sarvadharmaniyatapravicayacaryā [-samādhi] Sūtra*. Here, the Buddha, responding to questions from the bo-

<sup>55</sup> Gómez and Silk 1989, p. 18.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18, n.13.

<sup>57</sup> Dr. Y-G An has drawn my attention to the interesting fact that Murakami (1970, p. 868) describes these lists as consisting of “good *dharma* or methods of practice.” Deleanu, apparently following the lead in Gómez and Silk, describes the SRS *samādhi* as “hundreds of qualifications and merits” of the *sarvadharmasvabhāvasamatāvipañcita-samādhi* (Deleanu 2000, p. 73).

<sup>58</sup> T 15, 727b–749b (#649). My attention was drawn to this sutra by Murakami 1970.

<sup>59</sup> T 15, 723a–727b (#648) 寂照神變三摩地經.

<sup>60</sup> See Lancaster 1979, p. 141 (K 405); Nanjio 1980, p. 103 (#424), title reconstructed as *Sarvadharmacaryā-dhyāna [?]-sūtra (sic)*. The Rev. Juo-Hsueh Shih has suggested \**Sarvadharmaniyataparikṣā-samādhi* (private communication, July 26, 1996).

dhisattva mahāsattva \*Priyarāja (喜王菩薩摩訶薩), explains that there is a *samādhi* called the \**sarvadharmaniyatapravicayacaryā-samādhi* 決定觀察諸法行三摩地.

Priyarāja, what is that which is known as the \**sarvadharmaniyatapravicayacaryā-samādhi*? It is known thus [\**yaduta*]: As one speaks, so one acts; as one acts, so one speaks; purification of the body; purification of speech; purification of the mind; to seek [one’s] benefit; not seeking [to fulfil one’s] desires; not abandoning compassion; not grasping *dharmas*, (10); [. . . and so on, up to a total of 535 items].<sup>61</sup>

The list is concluded once again with an explicit identification: “Priyarāja, this is what is known as the *sarvadharmaniyatapravicayacaryā-samādhi*.”<sup>62</sup>

The *Praśāntaviniścayaprātihārya-samādhi Sūtra* (hereafter, PVPS) has an even greater interest for us, as the *samādhi* which it transmits is in part taken from that in the SRS. The only Chinese translation of the PVPS was made by Hsüan-tsang in 663/4 C.E.,<sup>63</sup> suggesting that it is a later composition than the SRS, a deduction confirmed by internal evidence which I shall discuss shortly. Although Murakami, and following him Cüppers, refers to the PVPS as the *Praśāntaviniścayaprātihārya Sūtra*, this title is attested neither by the Chinese translation, which has \**Praśāntaviniścayaprātihārya-samādhi Sūtra*, nor by the Tibetan, which transliterates, *Āryapraśāntaviniścayaprātihārya-nāma-samādhi Mahāyāna Sūtra*. The Chinese text can be fruitfully compared in other respects with the Tibetan translation, made by Dānaśīla and Ye shes sde in the early ninth century C.E.<sup>64</sup> The Tibetan text takes up three fascicles (*bam po*), to the first of which the shorter Chinese text corresponds. Significantly, the final two *bam po* of the Tibetan work take Mañjuśrī as the interlocutor of the Buddha, whereas the first portion, i.e., the entire Chinese text and the first fascicle of the Tibetan translation, concerns the dialogue between the Buddha and a bodhisattva called Bhadrāpāla.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>61</sup> T 15, 728c27–729a1.

<sup>62</sup> T 15, 730c12–13.

<sup>63</sup> This information is taken from Lancaster 1979, p. 164 (K482) and Nanjio 1980, #522.

<sup>64</sup> Peking 32, 189b–228a (#797).

<sup>65</sup> This is an interesting parallel with the PSS, where the main interlocutor is also Bhadrāpāla. The likelihood is that this is not coincidence, in my view, although the PVPS is not borrowing verbatim from the PSS. However, compare PVPS: tshul khriims kyi phung po

This immediately suggests the possibility that the text is composite, an impression that is confirmed by a closer examination of the first part in itself. Here, a number of subsections are discernible. We have first the *nidāna*, an extended description of the congregation which has assembled to hear the Buddha teach.<sup>66</sup> Then Bhadrāpāla asks the Buddha a series of questions.<sup>67</sup> Finally, the Buddha replies to these questions, asserting the potency of the *samādhi*, and then recites some 76 terms as the *praśāntaviniścayaprātihārya-samādhi* itself:

Bhadrāpāla, what is the *praśāntaviniścayaprātihārya-samādhi*? It is comprehending all *dharmas* as they really are; thoroughly understanding [their] signs (*\*nimitta*); fully understanding the characteristics of delusion (*\*viparyāsa*) . . . [and so on, up to:] not consorting with householders or wanderers; staying in a solitary place; being free from desires; accepting emptiness, the absence of signs and the absence of intention in respect of phenomena (*dharmas*). Thoroughly understanding all *dharmas* in this way—this, Bhadrāpāla, is the *samādhi* called the *praśāntaviniścayaprātihārya*. The bodhisattva who learns this *samādhi* obtains an undefiled knowledge of all *dharmas*.<sup>68</sup>

Having apparently concluded the *samādhi*, however, the Buddha then carries on:

skyon med pa dang / ting nge 'dzin gyi phung po las mi gyo ba dang (Peking 197.7, sDe dge 363.1), with #52 and #53 in the PSS: tshul khriims kyi phung po la skyon med pa / ting nge 'dzin gyi phung po la gyo ba med pa (Harrison 1978b, p. 22).

<sup>66</sup> Peking 32, 189b.6–196a.4 (#797); T 15, 723a–725b.

<sup>67</sup> Peking 32, 196a.4–197a.4 (#797); T 15, 725b–726a.

<sup>68</sup> bzang skyong rab tu zhi ba mam par nges pa'i cho 'phrul gyi ting nge 'dzin gang zhe na / 'di lta ste / chos thams cad yang dag pa ji lta ba bzhin du khong du chud ba dang / mtshan nyid rab tu rtogs pa dang / phyin ci log gi mtshan nyid yang dag par 'joms ba dang / . . . [and so on, up to] khyim pa dang rab tu byung ba mams dang mi 'dre pa dang / dben pa la gnas pa dang / stong pa nyid dang mtshan ma med pa dang smon pa med pa dang chos mams la bzod pa dang / chos thams cad ji lta ba bzhin du rab tu rtogs pa ste / 'di ni bzang skyong rab tu zhi ba mam par nges pa'i cho 'phrul gyi ting nge 'dzin ces bya ba ste / ting nge 'dzin 'di la slob pa'i byang chub sems dpa' ni chos thams cad la sgrib ba med pas shes pa 'thob bo / (Peking 32, 197a.7–198a.5 [#797]; T 15, 726a.13–726b.10 [#648]). The figure of 76 is of necessity provisional. My work on the *samādhi* of the SRS has demonstrated the difficulty of determining the exact division of terms in such a list. I note that the sDe dge edition of the PVPS carries an abbreviated version of this list, marking the lost passage with an ellipsis (362.4).

Furthermore, Bhadrāpāla, [that] called the *praśāntaviniścaya-prātihārya-samādhi* is: the knowledge of the sameness in their essential nature of all *dharmas*; . . .<sup>69</sup>

whereupon begins the recitation of over 200 items borrowed from the *sarvadharmasvabhāvasamatāvipañcita-samādhi*.<sup>70</sup>

This is followed by the complete *śūraṃgama-samādhi* list. Following the final item taken from the SRS, the PVPS incorporates, without distinction, the *śūraṃgama-samādhi* from its second item onwards, including the final items occurring in the Tibetan translation of the SSS.<sup>71</sup> Once again the entire sequence is enclosed with what is recognizably the usual phrase of identification: “’di ni rab tu zhi ba mam par ñes pa’i cho ’phrul gyi tiñ ñe ’dzin ces bya’o” (It is this that is to be called the *praśāntaviniścayaprātihārya-samādhi*).

The significance of this extensive borrowing is fourfold: it confirms that the PVPS is composite, both in regard to its sections and to its *samādhi*; it confirms that there was known to the redactor of the PVPS a *samādhi* that dealt with the “sameness in their essential nature of all *dharmas*” that is substantially the *samādhi* of the SRS and which is quoted by him as a part of a supplementary definition of the *praśāntaviniścayaprātihārya-samādhi*; it also confirms that the *samādhi* list of the *Śūraṃgamasamādhi Sūtra* was understood as a *samādhi* by the redactor of the PVPS; and most significantly, it shows that the redactor knew of *samādhi* of this type and consciously manipulated these texts in order to produce another “textual” *samādhi* to which he assigned a new name, the *praśāntaviniścayaprātihārya-samādhi*. This editorial activity provides further, and I would say conclusive, confirmation of my proposition regarding *samādhi* in these sutras, for in the PVPS we see the work of an editor within the Buddhist tradition—but not, I assume, involved in the composition of our other *samādhi* sutra—who

<sup>69</sup> bzang skyong ga nan yang rab tu zhi ba mam par nges pa’i cho ’phrul gyi ting nge ’dzin ces bya ba ni ’di lta ste / chos thams cad mnyam pa nyid du shes pa dang . . .

<sup>70</sup> Peking 32, 198a.6–200a.7 (#797); T 15, 726b.11ff. (#648). It may not be coincidental that the borrowed passage from the SRS begins with #77 from the *samādhi* in chapter 1: *samatājñānam*. A general outline of this borrowing from the SRS is given in Murakami 1970.

<sup>71</sup> Lamotte 1965, p. 140 n. 81 (cf. Peking 32, 200a.7–202b.8 [#797], sDe dge, mdo sde da 372.4). As such, the PVPS is an important testimonial for the text of the SSS in the seventh century. Murakami (1970, p. 868) appears not to notice that the *śūraṃgama-samādhi* is used by the PVPS, presumably through over-reliance upon the Chinese translation, which cuts off part-way through this quotation.

nevertheless clearly understood the usage of the word *samādhi* to mean “collection of terms.”<sup>72</sup> This represents objective confirmation of a high order for the present thesis.

Not all Mahāyāna sutras with *samādhi* in the title are concerned with the transmission of a *samādhi* list. For example, a review of the Chinese and Tibetan translations of the lengthy *Sarvapūṇyasamuccayasamādhi Sūtra* has suggested that it does not belong to this genre. Similarly, at present, I would exclude both the *Māyopamasamādhi Sūtra* and the *Tathāgatajñānamudrāsamādhi Sūtra* from this group. For example, in the *nidāna* of the latter we find: “Then at that time the Illustrious One attained that *samādhi* called the *Tathāgatajñānamudrā*. As soon as he had attained the *samādhi*, the body of the Illustrious One disappeared; the characteristics (*lakṣaṇa*) of [his] body disappeared . . .”<sup>73</sup>; and later: “Then the Illustrious One, recollected, knowing [his] domain, roused (*vyutthāya*) from that *samādhi*. As soon as he had roused from it . . .”<sup>74</sup> In the interlude between these points the Buddha is silent. The pattern for *samādhi* as meditative state, already seen in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* and *Heart Sutra*, is followed here. At the same time, we should note that this sutra also contains extensive lists of terms. While this is suggestive in the light of the present discussion, I nevertheless restrict the category of *samādhi*-list sutra to those that explicitly identify the list as a named *samādhi*, and that lack any reference to the Buddha entering altered mental states. Clearly not to be included in this category is the *Māyopamasamādhi Sūtra*: “Padmaśrīgarbha, these two supreme beings have attained the *Māyopamasamādhi*. Remaining (*sthita*) in the *Māyopamasamādhi* . . .”<sup>75</sup> A review of the entire corpus of Mahāyāna *samādhi* sutras is a desideratum.

<sup>72</sup> My assumption that the redactor of the PVPS was not involved in the redaction of the other sutras discussed here, is based primarily on the highly faulty transposition of the *sarvadharmasvabhāvasamatāvipañcita-samādhi* from the SRS. This is not conclusive, of course, and may only reflect an indifference to the exact sequence and content of such a list.

<sup>73</sup> de nas de'i tshe bcom ldan 'das . . . de bzhin shegs pa'i ye shes kyi phyag rgya zhes bya ba'i ting nge 'dzin la snyoms par zhugs so / ting nge 'dzin la snyoms par zhugs ma thag tu / bcom ldan 'das kyi sku yang mi snang / sku'i mtshan ma yang mi snang . . . (*Tathāgatajñānamudrāsamādhi Sūtra* 86.3–87.3)

<sup>74</sup> de nas bcom ldan 'das dran pa dang ldan zhing mkhyen bzhin du ting nge 'dzin de las bzhengs so / bcom ldan 'das ting nge 'dzin las bzhengs ma thag tu . . . (*Tathāgatajñānamudrāsamādhi Sūtra* 95.1–2).

<sup>75</sup> pad ma'i dpal gyi snying po skyes bu dam ba 'di gnyis ni sgyu ma lta bu'i ting nge 'dzin thob pa yin te / 'di gnyis sgyu ma lta bu'i ting nge 'dzin la gnas nas / (*Māyopamasamādhi Sūtra* 441.1f.)

So far, in support of the contention that *samādhi* in the SRS is a reference to a list of terms, we have discovered a number of instances of the same usage in four other Mahāyāna sutras. This is in itself sufficient evidence to justify the understanding offered here, but there is also a varied body of interesting internal evidence from the SRS and other *samādhi* sutras which I shall now briefly explore.

The first of this internal evidence has already been reviewed in my discussion of the date of the SRS. There, I assemble a number of statements in the sutra which state or imply that there is a textual item called a/the *samādhi*.<sup>76</sup> The following is a selection:

dhāreti yaḥ śāntam imaṃ samādhiṃ  
[One who memorizes this tranquil *samādhi*] (2.27d)

samādhi śrutvā imu dhārayeyuḥ  
[Having heard this *samādhi* they should memorize it.] (2.28d)

dhārentu vācentu imaṃ samādhiṃ  
[they should memorize and recite this *samādhi*] (16.7d)

bahūnām ca buddhānām bhagavatām antikān mayā pravrajitvāyaṃ  
kumāra sarvadharmasvabhāvasamatāvipañcitaḥ samādhir vista-  
reṇa śruta udgrhītaḥ pṛṣṭo dhārīto vācītaḥ pravartitaḥ araṇābhāvanayā  
bhāvīto bahulikṛtaḥ parebhyaś ca vistareṇa saṃprakāśitaḥ  
[. . . and, having gone forth into the religious life in the company of  
many illustrious buddhas, young man, I have at length heard, re-  
ceived, questioned, memorized, recited, circulated, cultivated by  
bringing about freedom from defilement, propagated and ex-  
pounded at length to others this *samādhi* which is elaborated as the  
sameness in their essence of all phenomena . . .] (17; see Dutt and  
Sharma 1941, 1953, 1954, p. 220.4–7; and elsewhere)

ima vara śānta samādhi bhāsamāṇaḥ,  
[Relating this excellent tranquil *samādhi* . . .] (18.7d)

tatha vyākāromy aham anantamatim  
hastasmī yasya susamādhivaram  
[So I predict the boundless intelligence,  
of him in whose hand [is held] this excellent *samādhi* . . .]  
(29.82cd)

<sup>76</sup> Skilton, 1999a. There, I also present further statements from the PSS and the SSS.

ācāryu loke bhaviṣyati nityakālam  
 dhāritva śāntaṃ imu virajaṃ samādhiṃ  
 [Having heard this tranquil *samādhi* born of excellence,  
 he will be a teacher in the world through all time.] (32.172cd; and  
 as a refrain thereafter)

sa śroṣyate etu samādhi śāntam  
 [He will hear this tranquil *samādhi*] (36.38b)

Further similar statements are also adduced from the PSS and SSS. The PSS is particularly rich in passages that explicitly indicate the literary nature of its *samādhi*:<sup>77</sup>

. . . through desire for this *samādhi*, for the sake of making this *samādhi* endure for a long time and in order that this *samādhi* be preserved, copying it well and presenting it as a book . . . (4D.2)

On hearing this *samādhi*, experience joy,  
 And discard all the various spells of the world . . . (5E.8ab)

It is the same, Bhadrāpāla, with any sons of good family . . . to whose hearing such a precious *samādhi* as this has come: if on hearing it they do not copy it in book form, teach it, recite it, preserve it, read it, expound it, cultivate it, or put it into practice . . . (6A)

They recite and develop the excellent *samādhi* . . . (13L.3d, and similarly, vv.13L.4d, 6d and 11d; 14J.9, 10, 11 and 12)

And from the SSS:<sup>78</sup>

67. . . . Those who have not heard the Śūraṃgamasamādhi are certainly possessed by Māra (*mārādhiṣṭhita*), and those who have heard it are certainly protected by the Buddhas (*buddha-parigrhīta*). What then can be said (*kaḥ punar vādaḥ*) of those who, having heard it, repeat and practise it?

Bhagavat, the bodhisattva who wishes to penetrate the Buddha attributes (*buddhadharma*) and reach the other shore (*parā*), should listen attentively (*ekacittaśravaṇa*) to the Śūraṃgamasamādhi . . .

<sup>77</sup> Quoted from Harrison 1990.

<sup>78</sup> Quoted from Lamotte 1998.

76. . . . The devaputra said: It is those who hold this Śūram-gamasamādhi in their hands that the whole world with its gods and mankind (*sadevamanuṣya loka*) should venerate.

132. . . . But now that, from the lips of the Buddha, we have heard this *samādhi* . . .

173. . . . If a master of the Dharma (*dharmācārya*) writes down (*likhayati*), studies (*svādhyāyati*) or teaches (*uddeśayati*) the Śūramgamasamādhi . . .

174. . . . Dṛḍhamati, whoever writes down (*likhati*) and studies (*svādhyāyati*) this Śūramgamasamādhi . . .

While these quotations unambiguously demonstrate that *samādhi* is used in this and other texts to denote a text, we can only claim that this is a reference to the sutra as a whole if that is the only “text” under consideration. The existence of a “text within a text,” i.e., the *samādhi* list, opens up an ambiguity. I suspect that the majority of such references are in fact references to the *samādhi* list rather than the entire sutra; possible exceptions are those passages where explicit mention is made of hearing or learning verses of the *samādhi*. Since these *samādhi* lists are in prose in the five cases considered above, this could imply that the referent in those cases is a verse section of the sutra proper. Against this, we can argue that since the SRS *samādhi* is itself rendered into verse in chapter 17, even these references, in the case of the SRS, could be regarded as references to the *samādhi* list.

Alongside these, we have an interesting passage in chapter 4 of the SRS. Here, Candraprabha asks the Buddha for a definition of the term *samādhi*: “Illustrious One, the term ‘*samādhi*’ is being used. Of what phenomenon is *samādhi* the designation?”<sup>79</sup> The Buddha’s reply is to offer, in the same manner as before, another list, in this case of some 42 terms or phrases, again indistinguishable in general type from those we have already seen:<sup>80</sup>

<sup>79</sup> *samādhiḥ samādhir iti bhagavann ucyate. Katamasyaitad dharmasyādhivacanam samādhir iti* (Matsunami 1975 p. 195, lines 10–11). Cf. Gómez and Silk: “O Blessed One, the word ‘*samādhi*’ is often used. Exactly what thing (*dharma*) is designated by the word ‘*samādhi*’?” (1989, p. 75).

<sup>80</sup> In the PVPS, a portion of these terms from chapter 4 are imported into the midst of the redaction of terms from chapter 1.

Young man, the term *samādhi* is being used; that is to say: comprehension of the mind; not a state of rebirth; knowledge of non-rebirth; the state of having laid aside one's burden; knowledge of the Tathāgatas; . . . the protection of secret spells, harmlessness, the state of not oppressing those who are well behaved, the state of possessing subtle speech, the state of being free from the entire threefold world system, acceptance in conformity with emptiness in respect of all *dharmas*, a state of intense desire for the knowledge of the All Knowing; the term *samādhi* is being used thus, young man. Correct and not incorrect practice (*avi/pratipatti*) in respect of such items (*dharmas*) as these—it is this, young man, for which the term *samādhi* is used.<sup>81</sup>

There are several observations to be made on this passage. First, the question as to the meaning of the term *samādhi* in this discourse is answered with a list of terms entirely comparable with those from the main *samādhi* list in chapter 1, and thus confirms our understanding of *samādhi* in the SRS. This conclusion is supported by the phrasing, which is directly parallel to that used to conclude and identify the main *samādhi*. Second, the concluding sentence attempts some explanation of the phenomenon, by asserting that *samādhi* in this usage should be understood as the “correct practice” of the items in the list. Explanation is necessary when the usage is questionable, and reflects the expectation or experience that, at the time of composition of chapter 4, audiences may have been unsure of the meaning of the term in chapter 1. We seem not to have been the first to have been baffled over this

<sup>81</sup> *samādhiḥ samādhir iti kumārocyate yaduta cittasya nidhyaptiḥ, anupapattiḥ, apratisandhijñānaṃ, apahrtaḥārātā, tathāgatajñānaṃ . . . guhyamantrāṇām āraḥṣaṇā, avihimsā, śīlavatām anutpīḍitā, sūkṣmavacanatā, sarvatraidhātuke 'niśritatā, sarvadharmeṣu śūnyatānulomikī kṣāntiḥ, sarvajñajñāne tivracchandatā, samādhiḥ samādhir iti kumārocyate. yaiṭṣv evamrūpeṣu dharmeṣu pratipattir avipratipattir ayaṃ sa kumārocyate samādhir iti (Matsunami 1975, pp. 195 line 13–194 line 9). Cf. Gómez and Silk: “The actual practice of such *dharmas*—no contrary practice—young man, is called ‘samādhi’” (1989, p. 76). In a Buddhist context, it is the practice to translate *pratipatti* as “correct procedure” or “application . . . in practice,” thus rendering the semantic dimension stressed by Edgerton in his entry s.v. *pratipatti*, where he offers the translations, “behaviour, practice, performance, esp. good behaviour.” We should note that the primarily cognitive sense recorded for non-Buddhist Sanskrit (see, e.g., Monier-Williams’ dictionary, s.v. *pratipatti*), such as ‘knowledge’ or ‘understanding’, fits a number of the passages from Buddhist sources quoted by Edgerton well enough, and we should perhaps not exclude this meaning from consideration in Buddhist Sanskrit texts.*

matter. Third, the items that constitute the list are designated *dharmas*. Fourth, there is a similar passage in the PSS:

[18A] When this was said, the bodhisattva and mahāsattva Bhadrāpāla said to the Lord: “Reverend Lord, how should bodhisattvas cultivate this *samādhi*?” The Lord said: “Bhadrāpāla, if any sons or daughters of good family should wish to cultivate this *samādhi*, they should not rest in form, they should not rest in feelings, in thought or in *dharmas*; they should not rest in rebirth; they should not rest in any *dharmas*; they should not rest in emptiness, signlessness, or wishlessness; they should not rest in friendliness. What then, Bhadrāpāla, is *samādhi*? It is the application of these *dharmas* in practice (*pratipatti*), and not the misapplication (*vipratipatti*).”<sup>82</sup>

The modern translator has reconstructed as *pratipatti* and *vipratipatti* the likely Sanskrit terms translated into Tibetan as *nan tan* and *log pa'i nan tan*. This draws attention to the likelihood that the original Sanskrit of the framing sentences in this second passage was almost identical to that in the parallel passage from the SRS. In the first passage, from the SRS, the question about the usage of the term *samādhi* is answered positively, i.e., by giving a concrete example of the sort of thing designated by the term in this usage—another list of *dharmas*. In the second passage, from the PSS, the equivalent question is answered negatively, i.e., by saying what is not designated by the term. Here, the Buddha is shown explicitly excluding from consideration a collection of the most important meditative practices used and associated with the term *samādhi* in the Śrāvaka and Mahāyāna traditions: the *smṛtyupasthāna*, meditations on rebirth and *dharmas*, the *vimokṣamukha* and

<sup>82</sup> [18A] de skad ces bka' stsal pa dang / byang chub sems dpa' sems dpa' chen po bzang skyong gis bcom ldan 'das la 'di skad ces gsol //

btsun pa bcom ldan 'das / byang chub sems dpas ting nge 'dzin 'di ji ltar bsgom par bgyi // bcom ldan 'das kyis bka' stsal pa //

bzang skyong / rigs kyi bu 'am rigs kyi bu mo gang la la ting nge 'dzin 'di bsgom 'dod par gyur na / des gzugs la gnas par mi bya'o // tshor ba dang / sems dang / chos la gnas par mi bya'o // skye ba la gnas par mi bya'o // chos thams cad la gnas par mi bya'o // stong pa nyid dang / mtshan ma med dang / smon pa med pa la gnas par mi bya'o // byams pa la gnas par mi bya'o // bzang skyong / de la ting nge 'dzin gang zhe na / gang chos de dag la nan tan du byed kyi / log pa'i nan tan du byed pa ma yin pa'o // (Harrison 1978b, p. 155; English version, Harrison 1990, p. 144). As with the SRS passage, I wonder whether here we should read “correct understanding” for *pratipatti*.

*maitrībhāvanā*.<sup>83</sup> What could be more explicit than this? Even the terminology confirms this point. The term translated as “rest in,” *gnas par byed pa*, surely stands for a form cognate with *sthita*, such as is used in the passage from the *nidāna* of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* quoted above. The author is specifically excluding sustained experience of meditative practices/states such as are described there. Once again, the items of the list are designated *dharmas*.

The distinction between the two kinds of *samādhi* we are considering appears also to inform a passage in chapter 15 of the PSS:

[15K] Bhadrāpāla, who will have faith in this *samādhi*, apart from Tathāgatas, Arhats and Perfectly Awakened Ones, bodhisattvas and mahāsattvas incapable of regression, and śrāvakas who are direct witnesses (*kāya-sākṣin*)? Why is that, Bhadrāpāla? Because all foolish common people are in error as regards this bodhisattvas’ *samādhi* of Direct Encounter with the Buddhas of the Present. Why is that, Bhadrāpāla? Because, although one should concentrate on those very *dharmas*, and should see those very *dharmas*, and should concentrate on the Buddhas and Lords, and should see the Tathāgatas, and should hear the Dharma, one should not fixate on them.<sup>84</sup>

This English translation clearly reflects the understanding that *samādhi* must refer to the *buddhānusmṛti samādhi* of chapter 3. At this stage, I prefer a

<sup>83</sup> I suspect that this list has its own significance as evidence for the milieu in which the PSS was composed. It is highly reminiscent of such groupings found in meditation texts discussed by Demiéville (1954), and while I do not therefore mean to suggest that the milieu of the PSS is necessarily that of those texts (i.e., second century C.E. Sarvāstivādin Kashmir), I do think that to locate texts or traditions that recommend the practice of precisely these meditations may take us a step closer to it.

<sup>84</sup> [15K] bzang skyong / de bzhin gshegs pa dgra bcom pa yang dag par rdzogs pa’i sangs rgyas mams dang / byang chub sems dpa’ sems dpa’ chen po phyir mi ldog pa mams dang / nyan thos lus mngon sum du byed pa mams ma gtogs par ting nge ’dzin ’di la su zhig mngon par dad par ’gyur // bzang skyong / de ci’i phyir zhe na / da ltar gyi sangs rgyas mngon sum du bzhugs pa’i byang chub sems dpa’i ting nge ’dzin ’di la byis pa so so’i skye bo thams cad kyis ni ’khrul to // bzang skyong / de ci’i phyir zhe na / chos de dag nyid yid la bya / chos de dag nyid blta bar bya / sangs rgyas bcom ldan ’das dag kyang yid la bya / de bzhin gshegs pa mams kyang blta bar bya / chos kyang mnyan par bya ste / mngon par zhen par ni mi bya’o // (Tibetan text is from Harrison 1978b, pp. 130–31; English translation is quoted from Harrison 1990, p. 125 [section 15K]).

translation reflecting our new understanding of the usage of *samādhi* in these sutras. “Those very *dharmas*” of the final sentence are the items of the *samādhi*. The act of “reflecting” (*yid la byed, manasi karoti*) on them is being contrasted with reflection on the buddhas, the object of the *buddhānūsmṛti* meditation of chapter 3. I suspect that the two verbs *yid la byed* and *lta ba*, “attending to,” “investigating,” or simply “seeing,” are being used as near synonyms. “Investigating” or just “seeing” the Tathāgatas and hearing the Dharma are products of *buddhānūsmṛti*.<sup>85</sup>

Finally, one must beware of holding to fixed, incorrect views (*mngon par zhen pa, abhiniviśati*) regarding *samādhi*. Allowing for these considerations, the following revision is possible:

Bhadrapāla, who will have faith in this *samādhi*, apart from Tathāgatas, Arhats and Perfectly Awakened Ones, bodhisattvas and mahāsattvas incapable of regression, and śrāvakas who are direct witnesses? For, Bhadrapāla, all foolish common people misunderstand this bodhisattvas’ *samādhi* of Direct Encounter with the Buddhas of the Present. For, Bhadrapāla, it is those very *dharmas* on which one should reflect, and it is those very *dharmas* which one should investigate, [although] one should also reflect on the Buddhas and Lords, and also attend to the Tathāgatas, and also hear the Dharma. One should not hold to incorrect views.

With this reading the third and final sentence distinguishes between the items of the *samādhi* list in chapter 2 and the *buddhānūsmṛti samādhi* of chapter 3.

Turning again to the SSS, I have already pointed out that the Tibetan translation retains a fuller, and, I suggest, complete text for the *śūramgama-samādhi*. Curiously, in his note, Lamotte curtails his transliteration of the Tibetan text before the end of the paragraph, as is indicated by the semi-final particle, *ste*, at the end of the passage he transcribes. The full paragraph is concluded with the statement “‘di ni dpa’ bar ’gro ba’i tiñ ñe ’dzin gyi yul lo //,” which we may translate as: “This is the scope of the *śūramgama-samādhi*.” The implication here, that the *samādhi* encompasses the items of the foregoing list, is strengthened by the ensuing passage of Lamotte’s translation, where the sutra itself explains that the *śūramgama-samādhi* is a comprehensive container for numerous concepts, practices and attainments:

<sup>85</sup> One could make the case that the clauses concerning the *buddhānūsmṛti* are interpolations, but without an overview of textual stratification in this text, I am not inclined to do so at this stage.

[The Heroic Progress and Good Dharma]

§22 *Dr̥ḍhamati*, this *Śūraṃgamasamādhi* is not understood in the light of a single statement (*ekapada*), a single object (*ekālabana*), a single meaning (*ekārtha*): all the absorptions (*dhyāna*), attainments (*samāpatti*), liberations (*vimokṣa*), concentrations (*samādhi*), superknowledges (*abhijñā*), supernormal powers (*ṛddhi*) and penetrating knowledges (*pratisaṃvijjñāna*) are included (*samgrhīta*) in the *Śūraṃgamasamādhi*.

§23 Just as springs, streams, rivers, tributaries and water courses flow into the great sea (*mahāsamudra*), so all the bodhisattva possesses in the way of *dhyānas* and *samāpattis* is to be found in the *Śūraṃgamasamādhi*.

§24 Just as a noble Cakravartin king is accompanied everywhere by an heroic general (*śūrasenāpati*) and four army companies (*caturāṅgabala*), so, O *Dr̥ḍhamati*, all the *samādhimukhas*, *samāpattimukhas*, *pratibhānamukhas*, *vimokṣamukhas*, *dhāraṇīmukhas*, *abhijñāmukhas*, *vidyāvimuktimukhas* and *dharmamukhas* are included in the *Śūraṃgamasamādi*, and everywhere that bodhisattvas practise the *Śūraṃgamasamādi* they are accompanied by all the *samādhis*.

§25 *Dr̥ḍhamati*, just as a noble Cakravartin king, while travelling, is followed by his seven jewels (*saptaratna*), so, O *Dr̥ḍhamati*, the *Śūraṃgamasamādhi* is always followed by all the auxiliary dhar-mas of enlightenment (*bodhipākṣikadharmā*). That is why this *samādhi* is named 'Heroic Progress' (*śūraṃgama*).<sup>86</sup>

The Tibetan translation of §22 is particularly interesting:

blo gros brtan pa dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin ni bshad pa gcig tu mi blta / spyod yul gcig tu ma yin / mam pa gcig tu ma yin / dmigs pa gcig tu ma yin / don gcig tu las byung bar mi blta'o / de ci'i phyir zhe na / blo gros brtan pa ting nge 'dzin thams cad dang / snyoms par 'jug pa thams cad dang / mam par thar pa thams cad dang / rdzu 'phrul dang / mngon par shes pa dang / so so yang dag par rig pa'i shes pa de dag thams cad ni dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin gyi nang du 'dus shing chud par blta'o /<sup>87</sup>

<sup>86</sup> Lamotte 1998, pp. 127–28 (Lamotte 1965, p. 141).

<sup>87</sup> sDe dge 528.7–529.2.

[Dṛḍhamati, the *śūraṃgama-samādhi* should not be investigated through a single explanation; it is not a single sphere; it is not a single aspect; it is not a single object; it should not be investigated as arising from a single meaning. For, Dṛḍhamati, all *samādhi*, all *samāpatti*, all *vimokṣa*, and all *rddhi*, *abhijñā*, and *pratisaṃvid* are collected within the *śūraṃgama-samādhi*.]

This same point is also made by a passage from the PSS:

[24G] Bhadrāpāla, in the last time, the last age, when the great terror occurs and the True Dharma is destroyed, sons or daughters of good family who have set out in the Bodhisattvayāna, who wish to obtain the perfection of all *dharmas* and the perfection of omniscient cognition, and who wish to bring about the purification of their wholesome potentialities should strive to copy, give instruction in, and memorize this *samādhi*, and proclaim it in full to others. Why is that? The cognition of the knowledge of all *dharmas* in all their aspects, Bhadrāpāla, is condensed within this *samādhi*.<sup>88</sup>

The next body of internal evidence for understanding these *samādhi* as lists of terms, and probably the most telling, comes from the seventeenth chapter of the SRS. Here, in the context of a *jātaka*-type story, the Buddha-to-be is a newborn boy who is presented as reciting a series of some 70 verses in which the entire *samādhi* list (with occasional omissions and variants) is recapitulated. Several aspects of this passage should be emphasized. Each verse in this section has a refrain as its last *pāda*. The refrain varies; there are four or five altogether. However, that which both begins the section and recurs later (i.e., in a total of 18 verses), states explicitly that the terms being recited are *samādhi*. It reads, “kaccij jino bhāṣati taṃ samādhiṃ” (I hope the Conqueror teaches that *samādhi*). The identification is also explicit in the verses which introduce this section. Thus, verse 56 describes the *samādhi* as “the sole instruction for [all] the realms of existence”—*yo eku nirdeśu bhave*

<sup>88</sup> [24G] bzang skyong / byang chub sems dpa'i theg pa la zhugs pa'i rigs kyi bu 'am / rigs kyi bu mo chos thams cad kyi pha rol tu phyin pa dang / thams cad mkhyen pa'i ye shes kyi pha rol tu phyin pa thob par 'dod pa dang / dge ba'i rtsa ba mnam par dag pa thob par 'dod pas phyi ma'i dus phyi ma'i tshes 'jigs pa chen po 'byung ba / dam pa'i chos mnam par 'jig pa'i dus der ting nge 'dzin 'di yi ger bri ba dang / lung mnod pa dang / kha ton bya ba dang / gzhan dag la yang rgya cher yang dag par bsgrag par bya ba'i phyir sbyor bar bya'o // de ci'i phyir zhe na / chos thams cad kyi mnam pa thams cad mkhyen pa nyid kyi ye shes ni / bzang skyong / ting nge 'dzin 'di'i nang du 'dus so // (Tibetan, Harrison 1978b, p. 208; English translation, Harrison 1990, p. 193).

*gatinām*—which is the concluding item in the *samādhi* proper (#329).<sup>89</sup> The recitation of the *samādhi* over, the king, Dṛḍhabala, asks, “How came you to hear this *samādhi*?” (v. 131), to which the boy replies that he has asked for it from many previous buddhas and has devoted himself to it merely after hearing them recite it for him (vv. 132–134). Later the boy recounts the service performed for “those monks who memorized this *samādhi* and who recited it, and who set it out” (v. 149), and finally the Buddha Narendraghoṣa expounds the *samādhi* to the king, who hears it and renounces his kingdom (v. 161), and together with his retinue, learns, recites and illuminates the *samādhi* for the sake of others (vv. 162–164).

Parallel to this, we can align a similar treatment in the SSS. I have already mentioned the passage in the Tibetan that Lamotte designates a later addition to his §21 and leaves out of consideration, but which, on comparison with the SRS and PSS, I consider to be a part of the complete or original text. In his footnote, Lamotte transcribes and translates the final terms of the *samādhi* and the standard statement of identification, but cuts short the text at that point. Only by careful comparison with a footnote occurring several pages earlier are we likely to realize that the “extra” Tibetan consists of a considerably larger passage than that he transcribes for us.<sup>90</sup>

In fact, the passage consists not only of the four items from the list and the concluding phrase as provided by Lamotte, but also a considerable body of verse that covers five sides of the Peking edition of the Kanjyur. Examination of these verses reveals that, in parallel with the SRS, we are dealing with a re-presentation of the *śūraṃgama-samādhi* in verse. As there, the *samādhi* in question is recapitulated, with variations determined by metre, in due sequence, and at the conclusion is again emphatically identified as the *śūraṃgama-samādhi* by the Buddha: “blo gros brtan pa de ni dpa’ bar ’gro ba’i tiñ ñe ’dzin ces bya ste / de yañ dpa’ bar ’gro ba’i tiñ ñe ’dzin gyi yul yin no.” The variations in the translation of this identification passage show that it has not been mechanically transposed from the end of the *samādhi*, but was translated afresh at this point in the text.

Returning again to the SRS, of equal significance to the evidence of chap-

<sup>89</sup> For this and subsequent verses I use the numbering of Dutt’s edition.

<sup>90</sup> Folios 286b.5–289a.3 = sDe dge 524.4–528.7ff. (Lamotte 1998, p. 119 [Lamotte 1965, p. 131] n. 43). Curiously, he also describes this material as “partly versified” (partiellement versifié), although the only prose consists of the final identifying phrases which occupy less than two lines.

ter 17 is that of chapter 39. There, the sutra offers a simple commentary upon each of the items from the *samādhi* list. After the final gloss has been given, the chapter concludes: “This should be understood as the explanation of these three hundred items. This, young man, is that *samādhi* for which the name ‘elaborated as the sameness in their essence of all phenomena’ is used.”<sup>91</sup> Once again, a full recitation of the *samādhi* list is explicitly identified as the *sarvadharmasvabhāvasamatāvipañcita-samādhi*.

### Conclusions

I have presented the data largely without interpretation and allowed the texts to speak for themselves—a treatment I think they deserve. I make no attempt to address the many questions which may be raised regarding, for example, the possible origin and function of such *samādhi*, their role in the formation of sutra texts, and their links with other Mahāyāna sutras. These must be left to a separate discussion. Nevertheless, I would like to comment at this point on a few matters, starting with how such a usage of *samādhi* is possible. The sense of *samādhi* as one-pointedness of mind is derived from the sense of the verbal root and prefixes, *sam-ā-dhā*, “to collect” or “place together”—in this case the activities of the mind. Since we are dealing with what appears to be a collection of terms, the etymology of the term *samādhi* lends itself to this usage. I have found no recognizable precedent for it in the Śrāvaka canon. There are some seventeen *samādhi sutta* in the Pali canon, none of which employs a list of terms as the referent of the term *samādhi*.<sup>92</sup>

This appears to indicate that we are dealing with an exclusively Mahāyāna usage. It occurs in two sutras known to have been translated into Chinese in the late second century C.E. by Lokakṣema (PSS and SSS) and in a third, the SRS, which may also have circulated at that time.<sup>93</sup> We might argue that the usage was still current for Asaṅga in the fourth and Hsüan-tsang in the seventh centuries, but I would not go so far as this. Regarding Asaṅga, we can only say that he used the term *samādhi* to denote sutra texts that contained

<sup>91</sup> ayam eṣāṃ trayānāṃ padaśatānāṃ nirdeśo draṣṭavyaḥ / ayam sa ucyate kumāra sarvadharmasvabhāvasamatāvipañcita nāma samādhiḥ (Dutt 645.14–15).

<sup>92</sup> These are all in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (10) and *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (7). The exact number of *sutta* with such a name varies according to edition. Thus, the *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names*, relying upon the PTS edition, lists eleven *sutta* with that title (Malalasekara 1974, s.v. *samādhi sutta*). The *Sri Lanka Buddha Jayanti Tripitaka Series* edition however bestows the title on the seventeen to which I refer above.

<sup>93</sup> Skilton 1999a.

this term in their title. Of significance here is his inclusion with our *samādhi* texts of the *Sarvapūnyasamuccayasamādhi Sūtra*, which I have not been able to identify as a *samādhi* sutra of the type I have been discussing in this article. This indicates that his own usage of the term was concerned with titles only, and not with the specific usage of “*samādhi* as text.” In turn, this suggests the possibility that the intended meaning of *samādhi* in these particular texts was not current in his time, for we should surely expect a scholar of Asaṅga’s status to be aware of such usage if it were current. While suggestive, this argument is clearly not conclusive and I do not present it as such. Hsüan-tsang’s translation of the PVPS does not demonstrate in itself the currency of this usage, merely of a text that contains it. The redaction of the PVPS may have taken place centuries before his time, although the evidence of this particular text confirms that its redactor certainly knew of this usage of *samādhi*. As such, this is the only instance that I can cite at this stage of explicit acknowledgement of it by another author within the Buddhist tradition. If Asaṅga’s apparent ignorance of such usage reflects the general situation, we may tentatively conclude that the PVPS was redacted prior to his time.

In terms of chronology, we are dealing with a phenomenon that is located, by concrete evidence, in the second century C.E. It may have become obsolete by the fourth century, and to postulate any *terminus post quem* requires a speculative venture into that dark hinterland that we call “Mahāyāna origins.” I tend towards a view that, while individual recensions of a Mahāyāna sutra may well be the work of an individual redactor, the component elements that were redacted were very likely the product of several, even many, authors and in this sense that these sutra texts may be better understood as the product of communities rather than individuals.<sup>94</sup> If this is the case, then it also raises the possibility that the texts we have been discussing are the product of a localized community, and that the usage that they employ could thus be unknown to or ignored by the evolving “mainstream” of Mahāyāna Buddhist practice and scholarship. Perhaps this usage was just another option in early Mahāyāna that was rejected by those who eventually constructed the established Mahāyāna of the seminaries?<sup>95</sup> If this too were true, then although it undermines the chronological arguments regarding Asaṅga that I

<sup>94</sup> I regard this view as uncontroversial. It hardly needs repetition that a number of Mahāyāna sutras have been shown beyond dispute to be composite texts.

<sup>95</sup> See Schopen 2000 for a recent discussion of other such rejected options.

have outlined above, it has the effect of placing together our *samādhi* sutras, geographically and chronologically, as the literary output of a localized early Mahāyāna community.<sup>96</sup> Such a conclusion would have exciting implications, largely arising from the possibility that we could view this group of sutras as a related body of material reflecting the values, practices, circumstances, and so on, of a specific, if unidentified, community of early Mahāyānists. As such, their study could be invaluable for offering insights into the dynamics of a specific community and thus shed valuable light into the gloomy hinterland to which I have already referred. This could be an opportunity for research comparable to the historical potential of the Gilgit collection or the surviving translations of Lokakṣema. Whereas both of the last represent bodies of texts known to have been accepted, although not redacted, as scripture within a specific and dated milieu, these *samādhi* sutra texts would represent the scriptural output of a single community from the earliest datable period for Mahāyāna.<sup>97</sup>

This reassessment of the usage of the term *samādhi* in some early Mahāyāna sutras demonstrates the necessity for us to continue to take texts at face value, and allow them to say what they say. The power of expectation is always strong and sometimes acquires unexpected support in our modern academic environment in which, on occasion, interpretation seems to hold the attention better than explicit statement and concrete evidence. In the present case, the warning signs were that a number of texts consistently failed to make sense or to meet our expectations regarding a meditation text. We should also suspend any cynical assumptions that religious texts usually thus fail us somewhere along the line. Even if they sometimes do so, we must not allow such an assumption to determine our treatment of primary sources. To do otherwise is to hamper the enormous amount of detailed work still required to enable us to understand Mahāyāna sutra literature.

The general thrust of this investigation seems unavoidable—that the term *samādhi*, hitherto associated exclusively with meditative practice and experience (however these in themselves are interpreted) or with the fundamental psychological components of Abhidharma analysis, was used in some early Mahāyāna circles to denote not only an experience or transformed state of

<sup>96</sup> How such a community might be defined should be the subject of further research. I envisage anything from a single *vihāra* to a group of monasteries or even a geographically or perhaps politically delimited unit, such as a valley population or an isolated city or oasis state.

<sup>97</sup> Both the Gilgit collection and the Lokakṣema translations have been examined in this way, the former by Schopen (1979) and the latter by Harrison (1987 and 1993).

consciousness, but also a literary statement, whether written or oral: primarily a list of Buddhist concepts, practices and affects, and by extension a sutra in which such a list is embedded. In fact, it seems that such lists came to be so embedded not by chance, but were themselves the original, even if later misunderstood, foci of such sutras. As such, this observation identifies an unrecognized sub-genre of the Mahāyāna sutra, in which I number five members, a total which may be supplemented by other representatives as they are identified. At the least, we have established that a) the *samādhi* of the SRS, along with those of a few other *samādhi* sutras, has no direct concern with meditative states and practices, and b) the basis on which it is entitled a *samādhi* sutra.<sup>98</sup> Finally, just as the term *samādhi* is used to denote a “collected” state of mind, so, in the sutra discussed here, it denotes a “collection” of terms and should be translated as such. The *Samādhirāja Sūtra* thus becomes, “The Discourse on the King of Collections.”

<sup>98</sup> This conclusion contributes, albeit from an unexpected quarter, to the debate developed by Sharf concerning the disjunction between religious experience and rhetoric in accounts of Buddhist meditation practice (see Sharf 1995 and Faure 1991, pp. 295–97.) He proposes that much historical and doctrinal scholarship has been misled by the uncritical assumption that the technical terminology of Buddhist meditation always has an exclusively experiential referent.

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