The Buddha's Words and Their Interpretations in Vasubandhu's *Vyākhyāyukti*

Makio Ueno

Introduction

The *Vyākhyāyukti* (VyY) is a work by Vasubandhu that deals with the method for commenting on the Sarvāstivāda Āgamas for future Dharma-preachers (*dhārmakathika*). This work is not found either in the original Sanskrit or a Chinese translation but is preserved only in a Tibetan translation.

The VyY has five chapters. Chapters 1 to 4 consist of a five-point method, i.e., *prayojana*, *piṇḍārtha*, *padārtha*, *anusandhi* and *codyaparihāra*.[1] The principle of commentary is composed in the *saṃgrahaśloka* 1 of the VyY and is quoted in the Sanskrit text of Abhayākaragupta's *Āmnāyamañjarī*:[2]

> *prayojanaṃ sapiṇḍārthaṃ sapadārthānusandhikaṃ |*
> *sacodyaparihārañ ca vācyaṃ sūtrārthavācibhiḥ ||*[3] (ĀM ms 3v2-3)

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[1] Skilling (2000: 318) has wrongly stated that *codyaparihāra* is located only in Chapter 3, but Chapter 4 of the VyY is the 15th *parihāra* by Vasubandhu, aiming toward the proof of the authenticity of the Mahāyāna. See note 6.

[2] The verse was transcribed by Tomabechi Tōru. See Tomabechi (2017: 105, 125). The Sanskrit text of Abhayākaragupta's ĀM is based on the *Rare and Ancient Tibetan Texts collected in the Tibetan Regions Series*, compiled by the Institute of the Collection and Preservation of Ancient Tibetan Texts of Sichuan Province 藏区民間所蔵蔵文珍稀文献叢刊, 2015, Beijing: Sichuan Nationality Publishing House 四川民族出版社.

[3] Skilling (2000: 318), Verhagen (2005: 574) and Nance (2012: 250, n. 8) discuss the VyY's *saṃgrahaśloka* 1 quoted in Haribhadra's *Abhisamayālaṃkārālokā*, which belongs to a different tradition from the ĀM:

> *prayojanaṃ sapiṇḍārthaṃ padārthaḥ sānusaṃdhikaḥ* * |
> *sacodyaparihāraś ca vācyaḥ sūtrārthavādibhiḥ ||*
> (AAĀ, Wogihara 15.24-27; Vaidya 277.16-19; Tucci 18.21-22)
> *Tucci: *padartham ānusaṃdhikaḥ*

The verse is also quoted in Haribhadra's *Ratnaguṇasañcayagāthāvyākhyā*. See *Dhīḥ*, *Rare Buddhist Texts Research Unit* 47, 2009: 122.11-12.

The purpose, together with the meaning of [the sutra's] summary, the meaning of the [Buddha's] words, the connection [between the previous sentence and the following one, as well as the word order], the objections and responses [on canonical interpretations] should be explained by those who preach the contents/meaning of the sutras.

In comparison with the *Nettipakaraṇa* in Pāli, the VyY's methodology is simplified in various ways, resembling the *Viniścayasaṃgrahaṇī*, **Vyākhyāsaṃgrahaṇī* of the *Yogācārabhūmi* and the *Abhidharma-samuccayabhāṣya*.[4]

1. Is it possible to define the Buddha's words?

In Chapter 4 of his VyY, Vasubandhu opens with a discussion about "What is the definition of the Buddha's word (*buddhavacana*)?" He writes, "And again, [if a Śrāvakayānist states that] Mahāyāna is not the Buddha's word, [we] should discuss and investigate 'What is the definition of the Buddha's word?'"[5] After the investigation into the definition,[6] Vasubandhu concludes, "Therefore, there is no definition that proves that the Mahāyāna is not the Buddha's word."[7]

Regarding the question of doctrinal authenticity, Vasubandhu answers that "there is no definition" that excludes the Mahāyāna. The answer, at least, means that he admits to the traditional Sarvāstivāda definition of the Buddha's words, i.e., the Great Instruction (*mahāpadeśa*), which is, for example, in his *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkārabhāṣya* described as follows:

The Buddha's words have a definition: [If a teaching or text] (1) accords with the sutras, (2) agrees with the rules of the Vinayas, and (3) is not against the law (*dharmatā*) [then it can be accepted as authoritative].[8]

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[4] Except for the method of the *Viniścayasaṃgrahaṇī* (VinSg, D zhi 281a5ff.); see Nance 2012.

[5] VyY IV 226.8-9: *gzhan yang theg pa chen po sangs rgyas kyi gsung ma yin no zhes zer na sangs rgyas kyi gsung gi mtshan nyid ci yin zhes brgal zhing brtag par bya'o ||*

[6] On Vasubandhu's proof of the authenticity of the Mahāyāna and his views on the definition of the Buddha's word, see Horiuchi 2009, which contains the Tibetan text of Chapter 4 of Vasubandhu's *Vyākhyāyukti* and Guṇamati's *Vyākhyāyuktiṭīkā*.

[7] VyY IV 227.15-16: *de lta bas na gang gis na theg pa chen po sangs rgyas kyi gsung ma yin par 'grub par 'gyur ba'i mtshan nyid de med do ||*

[8] MSABh 4.25-26: *buddhavacanasyedaṃ lakṣaṇaṃ, yat sūtre 'vatarati vinaye saṃdṛśyate, dharmatāṃ ca na vilomayati.*

Based on this third condition, ultimately, the decision whether or not a discourse is not against the law (*dharmatā*)[9]—in other words, the decision whether a certain word is the Buddha's or not—depends on the value judgment of each individual Buddhist. This stance demands that Buddhists individually determine the [real] intention (*abhiprāya*) of the Buddha's words. The VyY method of exegesis systematically focuses on this point.

2. How should one interpret the Buddha's words? A single word with multiple meanings

When dealing with the *padārtha*, i.e., the meaning of the [Buddha's] word, in Chapter 1 of the VyY, Vasubandhu divides it into two categories: first, a single word with multiple meanings; second, multiple words with a single meaning. As for the first, he gives fourteen examples,[10] each of which is illustrated by a brief citation from scripture. For example, the treatment of the term *dharma* is as follows. This example of the term *dharma* is well known for being quoted by Bu ston rin chen grub in his *Chos 'byung*, The Chronicle of the Buddhisms in India and Tibet.[11] This section of the VyY has been translated by Richard Nance, but I want to point out that all the citations from scripture are intentionally limited to the Sarvāstivāda Āgama and Vinaya.

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[9] As is pointed out by Honjō 1989, the proofs of the authenticity of the Mahāyāna that are described in the MSABh, the VyY and Bavya's *Tarkajvālā* are common to the proofs of the authenticity of the Abhidharma (a theory that the Abhidharma is the word of the Buddha) described in the *Mahāvibhaṣā* and Saṅghabhadra's **Nyāyānusāriṇī*, based on three arguments: 1. the *dharmatā*; 2. a theory of the "hidden" sutra (*bahulāni sūtrāny antarhitāni*); 3. the *abhiprāya*.
1. The addition of the third condition to the Great Instruction. 2. A theory of the "hidden" (*antarhita*) sutra. 3. A theory to distinguish between *nītārtha* and *neyārtha*, based on the *abhiprāya* submitted by Vasubandhu in Chapter 4 of the VyY is originally the argument that the Vaibhāṣikas used for the proof that the Abhidharmas were the Buddha's words as opposed to the Sautrāntika theory. In this way, the Vaibhāṣikas created a theory regarding the Abhidharma as the word of the Buddha against an attitude regarding only the Āgamas as being such. This can be confirmed from the *Mahāvibhāṣā* to the **Nyāyanusāriṇī*. Honjō 1989 pointed out that Vasubandhu diverted it to the proofs of the authenticity of the Mahāyāna.

[10] Skilling (2000: 338, Appendix 3), Verhagen (2005: 582, n. 82) and Nance (2012: 138ff.) wrongly state that the number of examples is thirteen, but Vasubandhu deals with fourteen. These terminological examples are *vigata*, *rūpa*, *anta*, *agra*, *loka*, *āmiṣa*, *bhūta*, *pada*, *dharma*, *prahāṇa*, *nyāya*, *karmānta*, *skandha* and *saṃgraha*. These reconstructed Sanskrit words are presumed, each of which is illustrated by a brief citation from scripture. See Ueno 2010, 2012.

[11] See Obermiller 1931: 18-19.

[VyY][D shi 36a4-b2; P si 40b2-41a2; L 21, 5-22, 3][12]

The term *dharma* [pertaining to the Āgama and the Vinaya is] 1. that which is knowable, 2. path, 3. nirvāṇa, 4. an object of mind, 5. merit, 6. [present] life, 7. scriptural teaching, 8. occurrence, 9. admonition, 10. custom. (*saṃgrahaśloka* 12)

1. The word *dharma* pertains to that which is knowable (*jñeya) in phrases such as "dharmas may be either conditioned or unconditioned, freedom from afflictions is said to be the best among them." (*ye kecid dharmāḥ saṃskṛtā vāsaṃskṛtā vā virāgas teṣām agra ākhyāyate*)[13]

2. It pertains to path (*mārga) in phrases of explication such as "Monks! Wrong view is not the path (*adharma*). Correct view is the path (*dharma*)."[14]

3. It pertains to nirvāṇa in phrases such as "[I] take refuge in the dharma." (**dharmaṃ śaraṇaṃ gacchāmi*)[15]

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[12] The Tibetan text of this section can be found in Appendix 1. This section of the VyY is translated into English in Nance (2012: 143-44). In Nance (2012: 138-48) the note number in the text and the notes themselves do not correspond. Note 41 on p. 147 corresponds to note 42 at the annotation on p. 252, because there are two notes 25 on p. 138, but the gap strangely disappears with the absence of note 47 on p. 148. Moreover, Nance 2012 contains some misunderstandings. For example, in the fourth example of the term *pada*, Vasubandhu quotes a brief scriptural passage: *yud tsam la ni sems yud tsam yud tsam la ni yi chad cing rnam par rtog pa rnams kyi dbang du song zhes'byung ba lta bu'o ||* (VyY, L 20.21-22). This passage corresponds to the older version of the *Udānavarga* = Uv(N) 128:

> *kathañ careya śrāmaṇye cittañ ca na nivārayet |*
> *pade pade viṣīdantaḥ saṃkalpānaṃ vaśaṃ gatāḥ ||*

As is evident from Uv(N) 128, the Tibetan translation *yud tsam yud tsam la* corresponds to *pade pade* (step-by-step), but Nance (2012: 143) presumes that *muhūrtamuhūrtam was probably the basis for Mvy(IF) 8174 or J.S. Negi's *Tibetan Sanskrit Dictionary*. Nance's assumption of the original Sanskrit shows that he did not comprehend the intention of Vasubandhu, because this section of the VyY intends to prove that the canonical word *pada* had multiple meanings, and *muhūrtamuhūrtam was not combined with any examples.

[13] This phrase is a quotation from the *Saṃyuktāgama* 雜阿含經, sutra no. 903, T 99.02: 225c27-28: 如是一切法有爲無爲, 離貪欲法最爲第一. It is also quoted in the *dhātunirdeśa* of the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (AKBh 93.4-5). See Chung 2008: 154-155.

[14] *Saṃyuktāgama* 雜阿含經, sutra no. 782, T 99.02.02: 202c4-6: 爾時, 世尊告諸比丘: 有非法、是法。諦聽, 善思, 當為汝説。何等為非法、是法?謂邪見非法、正見是法, 乃至邪定非法、正定是法。

[15] In his *Pratītyasamutpādavyākhyā* (PSVy), Vasubandhu categorizes dharmas into three types: dharma as result (*phaladharma*); dharma as practice (*pratipattidharma*); dharma as teaching (*deśanādharma*). The first category is glossed as *nirvāṇa* by Vasubandhu himself (PSVy, D chi 57b3; P chi 67a1: *chos la bstod pa 'dir rnam pa gsum ste | 'bras bu'i chos 'di mya ngan las 'das pa'o | sgrub pa'i chos 'di lam mo | bshad pa'i chos ni de 'chad pa'o ||*). Yaśomitra's *Sphuṭārthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā* and Vīryaśrīdatta's *Arthaviniścayasūtranibandhana*

4. It pertains to an object of mind (*manogocara*)[16] in phrases such as "the activity fields of ideas" (*dharmāyatana*), those things that are precisely objects—and objects solely of the mind—but are not supported.

5. It pertains to merit (*puṇya*) in phrases of explication such as "[King!] Practice the merit (*dharma*), together with the queens and princes of [your] family and the retinue of young women."[17]

6. It pertains to present life[18] (*aihika*) in phrases such as "in the present life, there is experienceable [karma] (*dṛṣṭadharmavedanīya*)"[19] and "the foolish dearly stick to the present life (*dṛṣṭadharma*)."

7. It pertains to scriptural teaching[20] (*pravacana*) in phrases such as "in this [life], a monk who knows the teaching (*dharma*), i.e., the sutra, the geya, ..." (*iha bhikṣur dharmaṃ jānātīti tadyathā sūtraṃ geyam . . .*).[21]

8. It pertains to occurring (*bhāvin*) in phrases such as "substance of formations has this nature (*dharma*)" and "this body has the nature (*dharma*) of growing old."[22]

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follow these usages, and they cite respectively a passage or passages to illustrate the first category. Cf. AKVy 652.19: *tathā dharmaṃ śaraṇaṃ gacchetety atra phaladharmo nirvāṇam ityādi*; AVSN 277.1-2: *tathā dharmaṃ śaraṇaṃ gacchāmīty phaladharmo nirvāṇam.*

[16] Nance (2012: 143) assumes that the original Sanskrit of *yid kyi yul* is *manoviśaya* (sic!).

[17] This phrase is a quotation from the *Udayanasūtra* and is also quoted in the *Viniścayasaṃgrahaṇī*. Cf. VinSg, D zhi 162b2-3; P zi 170a5-7: *rgyal po chos dang ldan zhing chos la dga' chos la gnas la btsun mo'i 'khor dang gzhon nu rnams dang gros grogs rnams dang khrom gyi ru sna dang grong rdal gyi mi rnams dang yul gyi mi rnams dang lhan cig tu sbyin pa dag sbyin pa dang bsod nams dag byed pa dang bsnyen gnas la gnas pa dang tshul khrims yang dag par blangs nas 'dug pa gang yin pa de ni de'i bsod nams phun sum tshogs pa zhes bya'o*；『摂決択分中有尋有伺等三地』(T 1579.31: 642c21-24: 若諸國王任持正法名爲法王。安住正法名爲大王。與内宮王子群臣英傑豪貴國人共修惠施。樹福受齋堅持禁戒。是王名爲功德圓滿。(= *Wangfa zengli lun* 王法正理論 (T 1615.31: 859c26-29).

[18] Nance (2012: 144) mistakes "present life" (*tshe 'di*) for "admonition" (*nges pa*).

[19] Cf. SWTF s.v. *dṛṣṭadharma-vedanīya*.

[20] Nance (2012: 144) is inconsistent with the translation of *gsung rab* (*pravacana*). In the *Uddāna*, he translates it as "scriptural texts," but in the prose he translates it as "instruction."

[21] This phrase is a quotation from the *Madhyamāgama* 中阿含經, sutra no. 1, *Shanfa jing* 善法經 (T 26.01: 421a17-18: 云何比丘爲知法耶。謂比丘知正經。歌詠。); AN IV 113.14-15: *idha bhikkhave bhikkhu dhammaṃ jānāti suttaṃ geyyaṃ. . . .* This phrase is also quoted in the last part of Chapters 2 (VyY, L 158.12-159.1) and 5 (VyY, L 269.17-270.2) of the VyY. See Horiuchi 2016: 197-204.

[22] *Saṃyuktāgama* 雜阿含經, sutra no. 1240, T 99.02: 340a5-6: 此身亦復然 遷移會歸老 唯如來正法 無有衰老相.

9. It pertains to admonition (*niyama) in phrases such as "the four rules of śramaṇas" (catvāraḥ śramaṇakārakā dharmāḥ)[23] and "Monks! Killing is an injustice (adharma), and the abandonment of killing is justice (dharma)."[24]

10. It pertains to custom (*nīti) in phrases such as "the law (dharma) of a locale, the law of a tribe . . . "[25]

Here, Vasubandhu has enumerated ten meanings of the term dharma, and in Chapter 5 of the VyY, another two examples are added. One is the same as number 7, scriptural teaching, while the other (making the eleventh example) is dharma as meaning "reason":

[VyY][D shi 120a7-b2; P si 140a3-5; L 269.16-270.6][26]
Furthermore, 7. scriptural teaching (*pravacana) is also called dharma in phrases such as "in this [life], a monk who knows the teaching (dharma), i.e., the sutra, the geya, ... "
11. Reason (*yukti) is also [called the dharma] in phrases such as "a robe is required by reason, is not required by unreason." (*dharmeṇa cīvaraṃ paryeṣate nādharmeṇa)[27]

In this discussion, Vasubandhu focuses on collectively collating all-inclusive examples and indicating the proper meaning of the canonical words that conform to each context, so that future Dharma-preachers might determine the meaning of important canonical usages of words such as dharma. From a different point of view, this method shows that canonical words are polysemic and the correct meaning is left to the individual interpreter. We should also note that the scope of the brief citations from scriptures is limited to the Sarvāstivāda Āgama and Vinaya. That is, Vasubandhu is working on the assumption that one should interpret the Buddha's words by the Buddha's words. For him, the proper meaning of the canonical words is determined by the canonical sentences and their contexts.

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[23] Madhyamāgama 中阿含經, sutra no. 130, Jiao tan mi jing 教曇彌經, T 26.01: 619b24-25; Mvy(IF) 8648-8652. See Horiuchi 2016: 145, n. 983.

[24] Saṃyuktāgama 雜阿含經, sutra no. 1060, T 99.02: 275c17-20: 爾時世尊告：諸比丘、有非法、有正法。諦聽善思、當爲汝説、何等爲非法、謂殺生、乃至邪見、是名非法。何等正法、謂不殺生、乃至正見、是名正法。Cf. Mv II 99.5-6: prāṇātipāto adharmo prāṇātipātavairamaṇo dharmo.

[25] Cf. Divy 625.13-15: tadyathā deśadharme vā nagaradharme vā grāmadharme vā nigamadharme vā śulkadharme vāvāhadharme vā vivāhadharme vā pūrvakarmasu vā.

[26] The Tibetan text of this section can be found in Appendix 2.

[27] Madhyamāgama 中阿含經, sutra no. 31, Fenbie shengdi jing 分別聖諦經, T 26.01: 469b11-13: 但以法求衣、不以非法。亦以法求食床座、不以非法。是名正命。Cf. ŚrBh I, 38*.27-39*.2.

3. What is the purpose contained in the Buddha's words? Multiple words with a single meaning

3.1. The purposes of "the meaning of synonyms"

As for multiple words with a single meaning, Vasubandhu deals with three types:

- Meaning to be expressed in each individual [term] (*so so re re la brjod par bya ba'i don*)
- Summarized meaning (*bsdus pa'i don*)
- **Meaning of the purpose** (*dgos pa'i don*)

Regarding the third type, Vasubandhu divides "the purpose" that is contained in the Buddha's words into two groups: the purposes of "the meaning of synonyms" and of "the meaning of numerical discourses." First of all, in Chapter 1 of his VyY, in the section on *prayojana* (purpose), he enumerates eight purposes of "the meaning of synonyms" as follows (the running numbers are given by the author):

> [VyY][D shi 31b7-32a3; P si 35a7-b3; L 10.3-19][28]
> There are said to be eight purposes [that the Bhagavat] has used synonyms, due to the diversity of the trainees (*vineya).
> 1. In order to cause a person to grasp [the Bhagavat's statement] at that time or at a subsequent time,
> 2. In order to teach the [same] meaning (*artha) of that [statement] using synonyms, by [repeating] the same statement to those who are distracted at that time, since others [who are concentrating] might disparage [the Bhagavat for repeating the same statement in vain],[29]
> 3. In order that inattentive persons will not forget [the Bhagavat's statement] by setting forth the [same] meaning over and over again,
> 4. In order to eliminate ideas that bear on alternative meanings, or in cases in which a single phrase may possess multiple meanings,
> 5. In order to rightly comprehend the meaning [of the Bhagavat's statement] with other nouns, as in the *Nighaṇṭu*,
> 6. In order that Dharma-preachers use skillful means in expounding the meaning [of the statement] and causing [its] comprehension,

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[28] The Tibetan text of this section can be found in Appendix 3. In his PSVy, Vasubandhu repeats the same statement that there are eight purposes of "the meaning of synonyms." See Appendix 4.

[29] Cf. AVSN 110.10-11: *tatkālavikṣiptānāṃ paryāyeṇa tadarthaśravaṇārtham. tenaivābhidhānenānyeṣām avagataṃ syād ityevamādīni bahūni prayojanāni granthabhārabhayāt nocyante.*

7. In order to demonstrate that [the Bhagavat him]self possesses the discrimination of the Dharma (*dharmapratisaṃvid*),

8. In order to arouse those seeds [for the discrimination of the Dharma] in others.[30]

Moreover, in the section on *padārtha*, another five purposes are documented.

[VyY][D shi 38b6-39a1; P si 43b6-44a1; L 28.21-29.3][31]

Regarding these, the rest [of the purposes] should be expounded over and above what has been previously stated.[32]

9. Firstly, as in the case of summary words (*uddeśavacana*), which cause one to memorize the meaning explained by the sutras, [synonyms are used] in order that the meaning of a full explanation can be memorized through a detailed exposition alone (*samāsena vistarārthāvadhāraṇārthaṃ sūtreṇa vṛttyarthāvadhāraṇavat*[33]),

10. In order to benefit those trainees who understand (by) a condensed statement / highly intelligent persons (*udghaṭitajñānāṃ vineyānām anugrahārtham*[34]),

11. In order to build up the capacity to understand (by) a condensed statement in others [who can only understand based on a full explanation (*vipañcitajña*) and who can only memorize the words of a teaching

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[30] Interestingly, these eight purposes are quoted in the *Nettipakaraṇa-aṭṭhakathā* by Dhammapāla, and these eight purposes are translated into Pali. Nett-a 10.37: *kasmā pana bhagavā ekaṃ dhammaṃ anekapariyāyehi niddisatīti. vuccate -*

1. *desanākāle āyatiñ ca kassaci kathañci tadatthapaṭibodho siyāti pariyāyavacanaṃ,*

2. *tasmiṃ khaṇe vikkhittacittānaṃ aññavihitānaṃ aññena pariyāyena tadatthāva-bodhanatthaṃ pariyāyavacanaṃ.*

3. *teneva padena puna vacane tadaññesaṃ tattha adhigatatā siyāti mandabuddhīnaṃ punappunaṃ tadatthasallakkhaṇe asammosanatthaṃ pariyāyavacanam.*

4. *anekepi atthā samānabyañjanā hontīti yā atthantaraparikappanā siyā,*

5. *tassā parivajjanattham pi pariyāyavacanaṃ seyyatthāpi nighaṇṭu satthe.*

6. *dhammakathikānaṃ tanti atthupanibandhanaparāvabodhanānaṃ sukhasiddhiyāpi pariyāyavacanaṃ.*

7. *attano dhammaniruttipaṭisambhidāppattiyā vibhāvanatthaṃ.*

8. *veneyyānaṃ tattha bījāvāpanatthaṃ vā pariyāyavacanaṃ bhagavā niddisati.*

[31] The Tibetan text of this section can be found in Appendix 5.

[32] Vasubandhu's statements are quoted in Haribhadra's AAĀ. Haribhadra testifies that the quotation comes from *ācāryavasubandhu*. See note 37.

[33] AAĀ, W 202.24-26; V 359.30-31: *uddeśavacanānāṃ nirdeśāt pṛthag abhidheyārtho nāstīti kimarthaṃ uddeśavacanam iti cet. ucyate. samāsena vistarārthāvadhāraṇārthaṃ sūtreṇa vṛttyarthāvadhāraṇavat.*

[34] AAĀ, W 203.1; V 359.31-32: *udghaṭitajñānāṃ vineyānām anugrahārtham.*

(*padaparama), as well as] for future generations (anyeṣām āyatyām udghaṭitajñatāhetūpacayārtham[35]),

12. In order to indicate [the meaning of the Bhagavat's statement] to those who have the ability to understand (by) a condensed statement and to understand (through) a full explanation (samāsavyāsanirdeśava-śitāsaṃdarśanārtham[36]),

13. In order to plant the seeds [of understanding (by) a condensed statement] to others by repeatedly acting in the same way as [described] above (anyeṣāṃ tathābhyāsena tadbījāvaropaṇārtham[37]).

According to Vasubandhu's methodology, each of the Buddha's words has a particular purpose. The Buddha's preaching is directed toward different kinds of trainees (vineya). He uses many synonyms, hoping that one of them will make the trainee understand what he wants to say, and as a result the trainee will have the courage (vīrya) to start walking the path to become a buddha. In the academic field of Buddhist Studies in Japan, this feature of the Buddha's preaching is called taiki-seppō 対機説法 (preaching the Dharma in accordance with the [trainee's] abilities). The Buddha has preached the discourse most suitable for each individual in response to the ability (indriya), the time (kāla), and the personality (pudgala) of the trainee. In the dhātunirdeśa of his Abhidharmakośabhāṣya, Vasubandhu stated that there are 80,000 groups of dharma-discourses (dharmaskandha) to counteract (vipakṣa) the [trainee's] acts (carita[38]), such as attachment (rāga), hatred (dveṣa), delusion (moha), conceit (māna) and so on.[39]

Also in Chapter 1 of the VyY, Vasubandhu states that the purpose (prayojana), one of the principles of the commentary, refers to the Buddha's preaching the Dharma in accordance with the [trainee's] abilities. For example, he says that in the phrase bhagavān . . . . . . anekaparyāyeṇa dhārmyayā kathayā saṃdarśayati samādāpayati samuttejayati saṃharṣayati ("In manifold ways,

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[35] AAĀ, W 203.1-2; V 359.32: anyeṣām āyatyām udghaṭitajñatāhetūpacayārtham.

[36] AAĀ, W 203.2-3; V 359.32-360.1: ātmanaḥ samāsavyāsanirdeśavaśitāsaṃdarśanārtham.

[37] AAĀ, W 203.3-4; V 360.1: anyeṣāṃ tathābhyāsena tadbījāvaropaṇārthaṃ cety ācāryavasubandhuḥ. Also AAĀ, W 203.5-8; V 360.2-4 is a quotation from VyY, D shi 38b7-39a2; P si 43b7-44a3; L 28.23-29, 8.

[38] The carita in this context means the tendency of the dominant desires and so on in each sentient being.

[39] AKBh 17.17-19 ad AK 1.26cd:
caritapratipakṣas tu dharmaskandho 'nuvarṇitaḥ ||AK 1.26cd||
evaṃ tu varṇayanty aśītiś caritasahasrāṇi satvānāṃ rāgadveṣamohamānādicaritabhedena. teṣāṃ pratipakṣeṇa bhagavatā 'śītir dharmaskandhasahasrāṇy uktāni.

does the Blessed One . . . . . . with the Discourse, expound, motivate, inspire, delight").[40] The four verbs *saṃdarśayati*, *samādāpayati*, *samuttejayati* and *saṃharṣayati* are aimed at trainees who are ignorant (*sammūḍha), who are lazy (*pramatta), who are dispirited (*saṃlīna) and who practice properly (*samyakpratipanna), respectively. In other words, (1) the Buddha expounds [the Dharma] for trainees who are ignorant, (2) motivates trainees who are lazy, (3) inspires trainees who are dispirited, (4) delights trainees who practice properly. To repeat, Vasubandhu considered that synonyms appear frequently in the sutras because there are many kinds of trainees. These thirteen purposes focus on the trainees' diversity.[41]

3.2. The purposes of "the meaning of numerical discourses"

The above thirteen points are the purposes for which synonyms are used in the sutras. Furthermore, Vasubandhu expounds that the numbers, such as the five aggregates or the six sense-fields and so forth, have definite purposes:

> [If the dharma-numbers used in] the five aggregates and the six internal sense-fields and so on [can] also be comprehended [by the trainee], [we] must expound the significance of [the Bhagavat's] purposes for mentioning numbers [in the sutras].[42]

Although eight purposes "for mentioning numbers in the sutras" are expounded in the VyY, they are not enumerated collectively but instead interspersed with many scriptural examples. Therefore, below I have selected Vasubandhu's descriptions of the eight purposes of "numerical discourse" (*grangs gsungs pa*) from the VyY and enumerated them as follows:

> Numbers are stated so:
> 1. A certain [statement] is in order to limit [the dharma-number] that is countable. (*saṃkhyeyāvadhāraṇārtham*[43])

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40 As for this stock phrase 示教利喜, see *Mochizuki bukkyō daijiten* 望月佛教大辭典, p. 1753. SWTF s.v. *saṃ-dṛś (caus.)*, *sam-ā-dā (b)*, *samu-ut-tij*, and BHSD 568.

41 On this point, see Ueno 2017.

42 VyY, D shi 38b3-4; P si 43b2-3; L 28.8-11: *ji skad du phung po lnga rnams dang nang gi skye mched drug rnams zhes bya ba de lta bu la sogs pa grangs gsungs pa lta bu dag kyang de dag gi brjod par bya ba'i don mi go ba ni ma yin na ci'i phyir grangs gsungs pa'i dgos pa'i don yang brjod dgos so ||*

43 AAĀ, W 9.4; V 273.1: *saṃkhyeyāvadhāraṇārtham*; VyY, D shi 39a2-3; P si 44a3; L 29.9-10: *grangs gsungs pa ni kha cig ni bgrang bar bya ba nges par gzung ba'i phyir te |*

2. A certain [statement] is in order to make it easy to grasp [the Bhaga-vat's discourses] (*sukhāvabodhārtham*[44]), since one will not forget by referring to the numbers.

3. A certain [statement] is in order that people who do not try to listen to [the sutras], which ought to be expounded in detail, [and those who] are afraid that there is much to be listened to and memorized will hear [the teaching] attentively. (*bahuśravaṇagrahaṇabhīrūṇāṃ śrotrāvadhānārtham*[45])

4. A certain [statement] is in order to arouse the fortitude (**utsāha*) of the people who fear that they will have many duties. (*kha cig ni bya ba mang pos 'jigs pa dag spro ba bskyed pa'i phyir te*[46])

5. A certain [statement] is in order to expound a single summary with one [phrase]. (*kha cig ni gcig gis gcig bsdu ba bstan pa'i phyir te*[47])

6. A certain [statement] is in order to inform about the quantity. (*parimāṇajñāpanārtham*[48])

7. A certain [statement] is in order to inform that [two affairs are] one affair [since] two dharmas are related in terms of action (**kṛtya*), sustenance (**āhāra*) or counteraction (**vipakṣa*). (*kha cig ni dngos po gcig tu shes par bya ba'i phyir chos gnyis kyi bya ba dang zas dang gnyen po mtshungs pa'i phyir*[49])

8. A certain [statement] is in order to indicate that [the Bhagavat him]self possesses in advance the discrimination [of the Dharma]. (**[dharma-]pratisaṃvid*) (*kha cig ni nyid la snga nas so so yang dag par rig par gyur pa'i don gsung ba nyid du yang dag par bstan pa'i phyir te*[50])

From Vasubandhu's perspective, a characteristic feature of a sutra discourse is that it uses many synonyms and numerical categories. From another point of view, a sutra that uses both types of discourses is recognized as *nītārtha* (definitive teachings or doctrines that can be taken literally), and a sutra that

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[44] AAĀ, W 9.5; V 273.1: *pūrvaṃ prabhūtārthasya samāsasaṃkhyāgrahaṇāvismaraṇāt sukhāvabodhārtham*; VyY, D shi 39a3; P si 44a3-4; L 29.12-13: *grangs smos pas mi brjed pa'i phyir kha cig ni bde blag tu gzung ba'i phyir te |*

[45] AAĀ, W 9.5-6; V 273.1-2: *bahuśravaṇagrahaṇabhīrūṇāṃ śrotrāvadhānārtham*; VyY, D shi 39a4-5; P si 44a5-6; L 29.18-19: *kha cig ni gang dag rgyas par bshad par dgos pas nyan par mi byed pa mang du mnyan pa dang gzung bas 'jigs pa nyan du gzhug pa'i phyir te |*

[46] VyY, D shi 39a5; P si 44a6-7; L 29.23.

[47] VyY, D shi 39a6; P si 44a7-8; L 30.1.

[48] AAĀ, W 9.6-7; V 273.3: *atha vā parimāṇajñāpanārtham upāttam*; VyY, D shi 39a6-7; P si 44a8; L 30.5: *kha cig ni tshad shes par bya ba'i phyir te |*

[49] VyY, D shi 39a7; P si 44b1-2; L 30.8-11. Cf. AKBh 318.7-319.4.

[50] VyY, D shi 39a7-39b1; P si 44b2; L 30.12-13.

does not is *neyārtha* (non-definitive teachings or doctrines that cannot be taken literally).[51]

Conclusion

As shown in Sections 2 and 3, Vasubandhu's methodology from scripture finds that one should interpret the Buddha's word by the Buddha's word. When we consider that the range of collation of examples is intentionally limited in the Sarvāstivāda Āgama and Vinaya, it is clear that Vasubandhu intended that the meaning of the Buddha's word should be extracted from within these scriptures. The Buddha's words contain not just one single meaning but multiple ones. The answers to questions of how one should extract the single, correct meaning from the Buddha's words, possessing multiple meanings, or how one should interpret the Buddha's words that are intended to maintain polysemy, are left up to each Dharma-preacher. From Vasubandhu's perspective, the reason that the Buddha's words possess multiple meanings is that he was preaching to a variety of trainees with a variety of capacities.

Abbreviations

AAĀ   *Abhisamayālaṃkārālokā* (Haribhadra): W = U. Wogihara, ed., Tokyo 1932-1935;
       V = P. L. Vaidya, ed., Darbhanga 1960; G. Tucci, ed., Baroda 1932.
AK   *Abhidharmakośakārikā* (Vasubandhu): See AKBh.
AKBh   *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (Vasubandhu): P. Pradhan, ed., Patna 1967.
AKVy   *Sphuṭārthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā* (Yaśomitra): U. Wogihara, ed., Tokyo 1932-
       1936.
AVSN   *Arthaviniścayasūtranibandhana* (Vīryaśrīdatta): N.H. Samtani, ed., Patna 1971.
BHSD   F. Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, vol. II: Diction-
       ary. New Haven 1953.
D   Derge(sDe dge) blockprint edition of the Tibetan Tripiṭaka.
Divy   *Divyāvadāna*. E. B. Cowell and R. A. Neil, eds., Cambridge 1886.
MSABh *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkārabhāṣya* (Vasubandhu): S. Lévi, ed., Paris 1907.
Mv   *Mahāvastu*. E. Senart, ed., Paris 1882-1887.
Mvy(IF) *Mahāvyutpatti*. Y. Ishihama and Y. Fukuda, eds., Tokyo 1989.
Nett-a *Nettipakaraṇa-aṭṭhakathā* (Dhammapāla): Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana (Ed.).

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[51] See Muroji 2006. Muroji has shown that in five instances the term *utsūtra* refers to a devia-
tion from the sutra (mainly from the *Saṃyuktāgama*), as used in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*.
From these five instances, Muroji extracted the requirements that the sutra should have.

P   Peking (Kangxi 1717/20) edition of the Tibetan Tripiṭaka held at Otani University, Kyoto.
PSVy   *Pratītyasamutpādavyākhyā* (Vasubandhu): D no. 3995; P no. 5496.
ŚrBh I   The *prathamaṃ yogasthānam* of the *Śrāvakabhūmi*. Śrāvakabhūmi Study Group, ed., Tokyo 1998.
SWTF   Heinz Bechert et al., *Sanskrit-Wörterbuch der buddhistischen Texte aus den Turfan-Funden und der kanonischen Literatur der Sarvāstivāda-Schule*. Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1973-2018.
T   *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō*.
Uv(N)   *Udānavarga* (Subasi). H. Nakatani, ed., Paris 1987.
VinSg   *Viniścayasaṃgrahaṇī*. D no. 4038; P no. 5539.
VyY   *Vyākhyāyukti* (Vasubandhu): D no. 4061; P no. 5562; L = Lee 2001.
VyY IV   Chapter 4 of the VyY: See Horiuchi 2009.
VyYṬ   *Vyākhyāyuktiṭīkā* (Guṇamati): D no. 4069; P no. 5570.

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Appendix 1. Tibetan text of the *padārtha* section of the term *dharma* in the VyY

[VyY][D shi 36a4-b2; P si 40b2-41a2; L 21.5-22, 3]

      chos ni (1) shes bya (2) lam dang ni ||
      (3) mya ngan 'das dang (4) yid kyi yul ||
      (5) bsod nams (6) tshe dang (7) gsung rab dang ||
      (8) 'byung 'gyur (9) nges dang (10) chos lugs la'o ||

chos kyi sgra (1) shes bya[52] la ni chos gang la la 'dus byas sam 'dus ma byas sam de rnams kyi mchog ni 'dod chags dang bral ba yin par bshad do zhes 'byung ba lta bu'o ||

(2) lam la ni dge slong dag log pa'i lta ba ni chos ma yin la yang dag pa'i lta ba ni chos yin no zhes rgyas par 'byung ba lta bu'o ||

(3) mya ngan las 'das pa la ni chos la skyabs su song ba zhes 'byung ba lta bu'o ||

(4) yid kyi yul la ni chos kyi skye mched ces 'byung ba lta bu ste | de ni yid kho na'i yul yin zhing yul kho na yin gyi rten ni ma yin no ||

(5) bsod nams la ni btsun mo'i 'khor dang gzhon nu[53] rnams dang lhan cig tu chos spyod ces rgyas par 'byung ba lta bu'o ||

(6) tshe 'di la ni mthong ba'i chos la myong bar 'gyur ba dang | byis pa ni mthong ba'i chos gces par 'dzin pa yin zhes 'byung ba lta bu'o ||

(7) gsung rab la ni 'di la dge slong chos shes pa ni 'di lta ste | mdo'i sde dang | dbyangs kyis bsnyad pa'i sde dang zhes rgya cher 'byung ba lta bu'o ||

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[52] shes bya] VyY(L); zhes bya ba VyY(DP)
[53] nu] VyY(P); nu ma VyY(DL). Cf. VinSg, D zhi 162b2: btsun mo'i 'khor dang gzhon nu rnams dang.

(8)'byung bar 'gyur ba la ni 'du byed kyi rdzas rnams ni de'i chos so zhes 'byung ba dang de ltar 'di lta ste lus 'di ni rga ba'i chos yin no zhes 'byung ba lta bu'o ||

(9) nges pa la ni dge sbyong[54] gi chos bzhi rnams zhes[55] 'byung ba lta bu[56] dang de bzhin du dge slong dag srog gcod pa ni chos ma yin la srog gcod pa spangs pa[57] ni chos yin no zhes rgya cher 'byung ba lta bu'o ||

(10) chos[58] lugs la ni yul chos dang rigs chos zhes 'byung ba lta bu'o ||

Appendix 2. Tibetan text of the meanings of the term *dharma* in Chapter 5 of the VyY

[VyY][D shi 120a7-b2; P si 140a3-5; L 269.16-270, 6]
gzhan yang (7) bstan pa yang chos zhes bya ste | ji skad du | ji ltar na dge slong chos shes pa yang yin zhe na | 'di la dge slong chos shes pa ni 'di lta ste mdo sde dang | dbyangs kyis bsnyad pa'i sde dang zhes rgya cher gsungs pa lta bu'o ||

(11) rigs pa yang yin te | ji skad du chos kyis gos[59] tshol bar byed de | chos ma yin pas ma yin no zhes 'byung ba lta bu'o ||

Appendix 3. Tibetan text of the eight purposes of the synonyms contained in the Āgamas in the VyY

[VyY][D shi 31b7-32a3; P si 35a7-b3; L 10.3-19]
dgos pa dag ni brgyad de | rnam grangs gsungs pa ni 'dul ba tha dad pa'i phyir te |

1. de'i tshe dang phyir dang | phyi ma'i tshe kha cig la la[60] las khong du chud par bya ba'i phyir dang |

2. de'i tshe rnam par g-yengs pa rnams la brjod pa de nyid kyis[61] ni gzhan dag gis[62] smad par 'gyur bas[63] rnam grangs kyis de'i don bstan par bya ba'i phyir dang |

3. yid mi gzhungs pa rnams la yang dang yang du de'i don yang dag par mtshon pas mi brjed par bya ba'i phyir dang |

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[54] sbyong] em.; slong VyY(DPL). This emendation is indicated by Horiuchi (2016: 145, n. 983).
[55] rnams zhes] VyY(DL); rnam shes VyY(P)
[56] lta bu] VyY(DL); om. VyY(P)
[57] spangs pa] VyY (DL); spang ba VyY(P)
[58] chos] VyY(DP); 'chos VyY(L). Cf. Mvy(IF) 4959: nīti = chos lugs.
[59] kyis gos] em.; kyis chos VyY(DL); kyi gos VyY(P)
[60] la la] VyY(DL); la VyY(P)
[61] kyis] VyY(PL); kyi VyY(D)
[62] gis] VyY(DL); gi VyY(P)
[63] bas] VyY(DP); pas VyY(L)

4. tshig gcig la don du ma byung bas don gzhan du rtog pa bsal ba'i phyir dang |

5. gzhan du ming de rnams kyis de'i don yang dag par bsgrub pa'i phyir sgra nges par sbyor ba lta bu dang |

6. chos sgrogs pa rnams don gyi bshad sbyar dang go bar byed pa gnyis la thabs mkhas pa nyid du bsgrub pa'i phyir dang |

7. nyid[64] la chos so sor[65] yang dag par rig pa mnga' bar bstan pa'i phyir dang |

8. gzhan dag la de'i sa bon bskyed pa'i phyir te |

Appendix 4. Tibetan text of the eight purposes of the synonyms contained in the Āgamas in the PSVy

[PSVy][D chi 10a3-6; P chi 10b8-11a4]
rnam grangs kyi bye brag brjod pa yang ci'i phyir zhe na |

1. 'ga' zhig ji ltar yang de'i don khong du chud par bya ba'i phyir dang |

2. de'i tshe rnam par g-yengs pa rnams de'i don thos par bya ba'i phyir ro ‖ de nyid brjod na ni gzhan dag gis dpyad[66] par 'gyur ro ‖

3. yid rtul po dag kyang yang nas yang du de'i don rtogs pas mi brjed par bya ba'i phyir dang |

4. sgra gcig la don du ma yod pas don tha dad par rtogs pa bsal ba'i phyir dang |

5. ming de dag gis gsung rab las byung[67] ba'i don de rtogs par bya ba'i phyir te | sman gyi rnam grangs kyi ming bzhin no ‖

6. chos smra ba rnams kyis de'i don thob par bya ba dang tshig nye bar sbyar ba gnyis dang rjes su mthun par bya ba'i phyir dang |

7. bdag nyid chos so so yang dag par rig pa yin par brjod par bya ba'i phyir dang |

8. gzhan dag la de'i sa bon gzhag[68] par bya ba'i phyir ro ‖

Appendix 5. Tibetan text of the purposes of the numerical discourses contained in the Āgamas in the VyY

[VyY][D shi 38b6-39a1; P si 43b6-44a1; L 28.21-29, 3]
de la rnam grangs gsungs pa dag gi dgos pa'i don ni sngar bshad par zad kyi lhag ma rnams brjod par bya ste | re zhig

[64] nyid] VyY(DP); nying VyY(L)
[65] so sor] VyY(DL); so so VyY(P)
[66] dpyad] D; dpyas P
[67] byung] D; 'byung P
[68] gzhag] D; bzhag P

9. bstan pa'i tshig ni mdos 'grel pa'i don 'dzin par byed pa bzhin du bstan pa tsam gyis de bshad pa'i don 'dzin par bya ba'i phyir dang |

10. gdul bya[69] mgo smos pas go ba rnams rjes su gzung[70] ba'i phyir dang |

11. de las gzhan pa rnams la tse[71] phyi ma la mgo smos pas go ba nyid kyi rgyu[72] bsags pa'i phyir dang |

12. bsdu ba dang rgyas par bshad pa la mnga' ba dang ldan pa yang dag par bstan pa'i phyir dang |

13. gzhan rnams de lta bu la goms pa las de'i sa bon bskyed pa'i phyir ro ||

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[69] bya] VyY(DL); ba VyY(P)
[70] gzung] VyY(D); bzung VyY(PL)
[71] tse] VyY(PL); om. VyY(D)
[72] kyi rgyu] VyYṬ(DP); kyis VyY(DLP). Cf. AAĀ, W 203.2: udghaṭitajñātāhetu.