

## The Employment and Significance of the Sadāprarudita Jātaka/Avadāna Story in Different Buddhist Traditions

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### ABSTRACT

*The jāataka story of the Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita (literally meaning 'ever weeping'), the most well known version of which is found in the Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra, is a story that has been used in different ways in various Buddhist traditions that flourished in India, Central Asia, China and Tibet. For example, it is quoted and discussed in several commentarial and biographical works in Sanskrit, Chinese and Tibetan and it is found in Candrakīrti's Prasannapadā, Śāntideva's Śikṣāsamuccaya, and works about the lives of eminent Tibetan masters, such as Marpa, Milarepa, Rechungpa. In some works Sadāprarudita is presented as the paragon of one who searches for prajñāpāramitā; in others he is the model for those who desire to serve their gurus. In China, moreover, during the early stage of the Pure Land tradition, Sadāprarudita was regarded as the preeminent exemplar of one practising the niànfósānmèi 念佛三昧 (concentration of recollecting the buddhas, \*buddhasmṛti or \*buddhānumṛti). This paper will examine the story of Sadāprarudita as it is preserved in different sources, and will address its significance and the possible reasons for its employment by different Buddhist traditions.*

### Keywords

Sadāprarudita, Dharmodgata, prajñāpāramitā, jāataka

### INTRODUCTION

In some prajñāpāramitā-sūtras there is a particular jāataka or avadāna narrative<sup>1</sup> that

1. From the perspective of ancient Indian Buddhists, this story may be described as belonging to different genres, such as vyākaraṇa, avadāna, jāataka or pūrva-yoga. A discussion of this story's genre is not relevant to this article. I will therefore leave this issue to another paper.

talks about the Bodhisattva<sup>2</sup> Sadāprarudita seeking *prajñāpāramitā* (perfection of wisdom) with many impressive episodes.<sup>3</sup> This story recounts events in the life of a bodhisattva called Sadāprarudita who seeks the teaching of *prajñāpāramitā*. With several revelations from gods and buddhas, who make them because of his weeping about the difficulties of learning *prajñāpāramitā*, Sadāprarudita comes to know that he will be able to find his teacher Dharmodgata, who will instruct him in this teaching in the city of Gandhavatī. He is impelled on his journey by a central question that occurred to him after one of the revelations: ‘Where have those Tathāgatas come from, and where have they gone?’<sup>4</sup> On the way, while resting in a small town, he decides to make a bodily self-sacrifice in order to obtain some valuables to honour his teacher. However, he encounters Māra’s obstruction of his efforts and Śakra’s conclusive test of his resolve.<sup>5</sup> While cutting flesh

2. It is notable that Gouriswar Bhattacharya (2010, 35–50) shows that the majority of epigraphy and manuscript readings he has investigated have *-satva-* with a single *-t-*. He also notes that in a few places the term has been written with a double *-tt-*, which, he proposes, may either be an error of the scribe or reflect actual usage at that period. However, he argues that there is no evidence to support the latter conjecture since in the Buddhist manuscripts of the later period the form *satva* has been written with a single *-t-*. Although he does not translate the term *bodhisatva* that is regarded by him as a Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit term in the article cited, it is likely that he treats it as equivalent to the Gāndhārī term *bodhisatva*, or the Pāli term *bodhisatta*, traditionally interpreted as ‘a being who aspires to Bodhi or Enlightenment’. (*Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names*, s.v. *bodhisatta*). It is also possible that Bhattacharya’s preferred reading corresponds to Norman’s (1990, 36) suggested interpretation of the term, ‘capable of enlightenment’ (*bodhisakta*), or that proposed by Williams (2005, 996), ‘directed toward enlightenment’ (*bodhisakta*). Both interpretations are based on sound etymological reasoning.
3. The following outline is primarily based on the various versions of the story that exist in Chinese and Sanskrit. Specific sources related to these episodes will be given and discussed below. This summary of the main episodes in the Sadāprarudita narrative is drawn from the following versions: *Aṣṭa* [ed. Wogihara 1932–1935] 927–988; T 220 1059a16–1073a8; T 221 141b19–146b24; T 223, 416a24–423c20; T 224 470c20–477b21; T 225 503c20–507c23; T 227 580a23–586b5; T 228, 668a21–676b12. For the story in the Tibetan translations of the *Aṣṭa*, *Aṣṭādaśasāhasrikā* and *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā*, see Peking 734: mi: 283b.3ff; Peking 732: phi: 199a.5ff; Peking 731: di: 254b.3ff, respectively.
4. *kutas te tathāgatā āgatāḥ kva vā te tathāgatā gatā* (*Aṣṭa* [ed. Wogihara 1932–1935] 944.4–5). According to the story, the answer to Sadāprarudita’s doubt is *na khalu kula-putra tathāgatāḥ kutaścīd āgacchanti vā gacchanti vā. acalitā hi tathatā yā ca tathatā sa tathāgataḥ. na hi kula-putrānūtpāda āgacchati vā gacchati vā yāś cānūtpādaḥ sa tathāgataḥ*. (*Aṣṭa* [ed. Wogihara 1932–1935] 963.5–8): ‘Indeed, O son of good family, those Tathāgatas come from nowhere, and nowhere do they go. Because True-nature does not move, and the Tathāgata is True-nature. Because non-origination, O son of good family, does not come nor go, and the Tathāgata is non-origination’. This is followed by the formula, ‘Because, O son of good family, the coming or going of x cannot be conceived, and the Tathāgata is x’. (trans. Changtzu, for an alternative translation by Edward Conze, see 1973, 291) The statement, for example, is *na hi kula-putra sūnyatāyā āgamaṇam vā gamaṇam vā prajñāyate yā ca sūnyatā, sa tathāgataḥ*. ‘Because, O son of good family, the coming or going of emptiness cannot be conceived, and the Tathāgata is emptiness’. (For details of the Sanskrit text, see *Aṣṭa* [ed. Wogihara 1932–1935] 963.9–18 ) For his translation of the Sanskrit *Aṣṭa* chapters (XXX–XXII) on Sadāprarudita, see Conze 1973, 277–300.
5. On the way to Gandhavatī, Sadāprarudita pauses to rest in a city and thinks to himself, ‘I am so poor that I cannot obtain a gift to honour the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata’. Subsequently he decides to sell his own body in order to purchase suitable gifts. Māra, however, is not pleased to see such meritorious behaviour, as it will make his realm decline. So, by using his great powers, Māra obstructs Sadāprarudita, preventing any citizen in that city from seeing or hearing Sadāprarudita’s attempts to sell his own body. When Sadāprarudita realises that he is unable to find a buyer for his body, he goes to one side and weeps for the final time. At this

from his own body, he is fortunately stopped by a merchant's daughter. She then helps him overcome his difficulties by providing him with riches and servants. Then with a large entourage, he proceeds to his destination. Having made extensive and elaborate offerings to the *Prajñāpāramitā* text and his teacher, he receives the answer to the question that arose at the outset of his journey and learns *prajñāpāramitā* from Dharmodgata.

The name *Sadāprarudita* literally means, 'ever weeping', which is transcribed as 薩波輪<sup>6</sup> (*Sàbōlún*), 薩陀波淪<sup>8</sup> (*Sātuóbōlún*), 薩陀波倫<sup>9</sup> (*Sātuóbōlún*), or 薩陀波崙<sup>10</sup> (*Sātuóbōlún*) in Chinese. The Chinese translations that correspond to this name are 常啼<sup>11</sup> (*Chángtí*, 'ever weeping'), 常悲<sup>12</sup> (*Chángbēi*, 'ever grieved'), 普慈<sup>13</sup> (*Pǔcí*, 'universal loving-kindness'), and 常歡喜<sup>14</sup> (*Chánghuānxǐ*, 'ever joy-

moment, the god Śakra appears and comes to test the bodhisattva's resolve. Assuming the form of a young man, he asks to buy *Sadāprarudita*'s heart, blood and marrow for a sacrifice. *Sadāprarudita* willingly agrees to the deal. In order to give his heart, blood and marrow to the young man in exchange for money to purchase gifts to honour his future teacher Dharmodgata, he takes out a sharp knife to cut up his own body and break his bones. From a nearby mansion, the daughter of a merchant, who was not under the sway of Māra, witnesses the incident. The sight of *Sadāprarudita* cutting up his body distresses and astonishes her to such an extent that she rushes out to stop him.

6. Examples of this transcription can be found in T 760 608b12.
7. All transcriptions of Chinese ideograms will be given in Pinyin in this paper.
8. Examples of this transcription can be found in T 441 275b27.
9. Examples of this transcription can be found in T 224 470c21.
10. Examples of this transcription can be found in T 227 580a24.
11. Examples of this transcription can be found in T 220 1059a23.
12. Examples of this transcription can be found in T 152 43a13.
13. This translated name is seen in *大智度論* (*Dà zhìdù jīng*, T 225 503c21), which is attributed to 支謙 (*Zhī Qiān*). It is quite different from the Sanskrit. Nattier (2008a, 136–137) points out that this text has two different portions, chapter one of this text (T225A), which is probably not *Zhī Qiān*'s work, and chapters two to thirty (T225B), which very likely was translated by him. The story of *Sadāprarudita* is included in T225B. It seems hard to conclude with certainty that *Zhī Qiān*'s translation here is based on a different Indic term rather than '*sadāprarudita*'. Yet, as Nattier (2008a, 137) states, 'he is known to have played an active role in revising existing translations by Lokakṣema'. Hence, it appears fair to say that here, *Zhī Qiān* has transformed Lokakṣema's transcription of the name 薩陀波倫 (*Sātuóbōlún*, *Sadāprarudita*) into the translation 普慈 (*Pǔcí*, universal loving-kindness), although this translation is unique with no correspondence to the meaning of '*sadāprarudita*'. *Zhī Qiān* may have thought that 'weeping' was so negative that it did not suit a bodhisattva, and thus translated the name *Sadāprarudita* in accordance with the bodhisattva's character. This seems to be supported by an account in the *大智度論* (*Dà zhìdù lùn*, \**Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa*). When explaining why the bodhisattva is called *Sadāprarudita*, the treatise states that because he had cultivated great compassion and his mind had been sympathetic, he always wept when he saw those who were poor, old with illness and grieved from the chaos of the world. Accordingly, people called him *Sadāprarudita* (T 1509 732a14–17). Therefore the translation of the name to *Pǔcí* may be influenced by the bodhisattva's quality of compassion or lovingkindness.
14. The Chinese translation 常歡喜 (*Chánghuānxǐ*) is seen in the title of chapter thirty of the *佛說佛母寶德藏般若波羅蜜經* (*Fóshuō fómǔbǎodézàng bānrùobōluómì jīng*, a Chinese parallel to the *Prajñāpāramitārātnaḡuṇasaṃcayagāthā*, T 229 683c6), translated by Dharmabhadra. Apparently the meaning of this translated term is opposite to the meaning of '*sadāprarudita*', ever weeping. According to Edward Conze (1952, 251), this text *Prajñāpāramitārātnaḡuṇasaṃcayagāthā* is written in so-called Buddhist Sanskrit (or Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit). The chapter title, according to Yuyama Akira's recension, is *Sadāprarudita*, which means 'ever weeping' (1976, 122). Both Ji Xiānlín 季羨林 (1995, 215–216) and Choong Yoke-Meei 宗玉熾 (2009,

ful'). The Tibetan translation is *rtaḡ-par rab-tu ngu-ba*<sup>15</sup> or *rtaḡ-tu-ngu*,<sup>16</sup> which means 'ever weeping'. According to 大智度論 (*Dà zhìdù lùn*, \**Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa*,<sup>17</sup> T 1509), a commentary on the *prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* of twenty two thousand ślokaś, this story is used to encourage beginner bodhisattvas to learn the in-depth teaching of emptiness. The treatise recounts, 'As long as one can be wholeheartedly diligent and not value one's body and life, [and] seeking with such a wholehearted mind, one then will be able to attain [the teaching]'.<sup>18</sup> Accordingly, if they hear the story, they may become confident and think to themselves, 'Since that person can attain it, I should [be able to] attain it too'.<sup>19</sup>

The story was clearly a popular one and spread throughout much of the Buddhist world, being used as didactic material for promoting the Buddha's teachings. For example, both of the remarkable Indian masters, Candrakīrti and Śāntideva quote several episodes of the story in their works, *Prasannapadā* and *Śikṣāsamuccaya* respectively,<sup>20</sup> in which Sadāprarudita is regarded as a paragon of a Buddhist practitioner. In Central Asia, moreover, there is a Uighur version of the story of Sadāprarudita. This version has been edited by a Uighur specialist, Şinasi Tekin, under the title *Die uigurische Bearbeitung der Geschichte von Sadāprarudita und Dharmodgata Bodhisattva* ('The Uighur version of the story of Sadāprarudita and Dharmodgata Bodhisattva').<sup>21</sup> Quite a few pieces of work about the lives of

42–44) point out that there are at least two extant Sanskrit versions of this text. She further states that the version that Dharmabhadra used may be different from the extant two. In the case of the version used by Dharmabhadra, the exact wording is unclear. However, one possible interpretation might be that the chapter title, if in Sanskrit, is not Sadāprarudita but something like Sadāpramada, which means 'ever joyful'.

15. For instance, the Tibetan translation is seen in the *shes-rab-kyi pha-rol-tu phyin-pa stong-phrag-nyi-shu-lnga-pa*, Peking 731: di: 254b.6.
16. This Tibetan translation is seen, for example, in the *'phags-pa shes-rab-kyi pha-rol-tu phyin-pa brgyad-stong-pa*, Peking 734: mi: 283b.4.
17. Katō (2003, 7) indicates that the title of the commentary on the *prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* of 22,000 ślokaś, based on the inference by Demiéville (1950, 375–395) and Lamotte (1970, vii–viii), is probably \**Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa*. In Inokuchi's (1980, XXV, XXVII, XXVIII) publication regarding discovered manuscripts in Central Asia, several fragments of manuscripts of this commentary, discovered in Kucha, possess the title, *Móhēbānrūòbōlūómíyōubōtíshè* 摩訶般若波羅蜜優波提舍, which is probably the transcription of \**Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa*. On the other hand, according to a colophon by one of the members of the translation team Sēngrì 僧叡, the title of this commentary is 摩訶般若波羅蜜經釋論 (T 1509 57a3). A recontraction of this title in Sanskrit may be \**Mahāprajñāpāramitāsūtrapadeśa*, in which the word 'sūtra' is included. It seems that the title without the word 'sūtra' is more preferable, and the form \**Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa* is used in this paper accordingly.
18. '但能一心勤精進不惜身命。作如是一心求便可得' See T 1509 731c1–3.
19. '彼人能得我亦應得' See T 1509 731c5–6.
20. As for the quotations by Candrakīrti and Śāntideva, see *Prasannapadā* [ed. de La Vallée Poussin 1903–1913] 378.12–381.11, and *Śikṣāsamuccaya* [ed. Bendall 1897–1902] 37.19–41.13 respectively.
21. This work is collected in *Buddhistische Uigurica aus der Yüan-Zeit*, published in 1980. In his work, Tekin provides readers with clear images of the Uighur manuscript, a transliteration, a German translation, an overview, a glossary and so forth. After Tekin's edition of the full Uighur text published in 1980, there have been some other editions and reviews. There are two full editions by Barutçu (1988, PhD dissertation, unpublished) and Nūri (2009, PhD dissertation, unpublished) respectively. Apart from these editions of the full Uighur text, Zieme (1991) and Shōgaito (1995) respectively published their partial editions of the Uighur version of the story of Sadāprarudita. In addition, de Jong (1983) and Laut (1984) reviewed Tekin's work. To

eminent Tibetan masters, such as Marpa,<sup>22</sup> Milarepa,<sup>23</sup> and Rechungpa,<sup>24</sup> possess accounts of the story that convey an ideal model of the relationship between master and disciple. Among them, Tsongkhapa specifically composed an alternating verse-prose commentary on this story.<sup>25</sup>

In China, *Sadāprarudita* was once regarded as an exemplar of one who practises the recollection of buddhas.<sup>26</sup> In addition to the employment of the story in Dharma teachings, the narrative of *Sadāprarudita* is also depicted in wall paintings<sup>27</sup> and in manuscript illustrations.<sup>28</sup>

The story of *Sadāprarudita* has been discussed by a number of scholars, mostly in the context of research on *prajñāpāramitā* or *jātaka* literature, and generally as part of larger investigations, such as the origins and ideology of the Mahāyāna. This is particularly so with works published before the 1980s.<sup>29</sup> No work to date investigates how this story is used in different Buddhist traditions. This paper will examine the story of *Sadāprarudita* as it is preserved in different sources, and will address its significance and the possible reasons for its employment by different traditions. In order to limit the discussion, the focus of this paper will be on textual sources in the Indian, Tibetan and Chinese Buddhist traditions. An overview of these traditions will highlight how aspects of the *Sadāprarudita* story are used to emphasise the key concepts of devotion to buddhas, Dharma or gurus.

#### THE VALUE OF DHARMA IN THE INDIAN TRADITION

In the *Prasannapadā*,<sup>30</sup> a commentary on Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, Candrakīrti<sup>31</sup> refers to *Sadāprarudita* as a paragon of one who abandons life to

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a certain extent, they modified or corrected some of Tekin's findings concerning this Uighur text. For detailed information on these pieces of work, see Nūri (2009, 6).

22. For the details, see Heruka, Trungpa and Nālandā translation committee trans. (1982, 26 201).
23. See Milarepa, compiled by Heruka, Chang trans. (1977, 480) for the details.
24. See Roberts (2007, 128) for the details.
25. This Tibetan commentary has been translated into English by Pema Gyatso and Geoff Bailey (2008).
26. **The account of *Sadāprarudita* as a paragon of one who practises recollecting buddhas is preserved in the 廣弘明集 (*Guǎng hóngmíng jí*, 'A Further Collection [of Essays] to Promote [Buddhism] and Enlighten [Sentient Beings]', abbreviated as 'A Further Collection of Essays on Buddhism' hereafter), composed by 道宣 (*Dào xuān*). See note 67 and T 2103 351c18–352a9.**
27. See Luczanits (2010, 567–578).
28. As for the details on the illustrations regarding *Sadāprarudita* on manuscripts, see Jinah Kim (2009, 255–272).
29. Discussions regarding the story of *Sadāprarudita* are seen in Edward Conze (1952, 252–253; 1978, 49–50), Étienne Lamotte (1954, 381–386), Hikata Ryūshyō 干瀾龍祥 (1961, 26 29 44; 1978, 79 94), Yinshùn 印順 (1980, 669–673), Akanuma Chizen 赤沼智善 (1981, 382–387), Fujita Masahiro 藤田正浩 (1990, 26–31), Tiāncháng 天常 (1992, 98–104; 1998, 96–100), Katsuzaki Yūgen 勝崎裕彦 (1995, 30–34; 2001, 47–85), Okada Mamiko 岡田真美子 (1995, 143–155), and Itō Chikako 伊藤千賀子 (2006, 149–154). Recently, there have also been two doctoral dissertations concerning the story. They are Rāzija Nūri 熱孜娅·努日 (2009, unpublished doctoral dissertation); Bill Mak 麦文彪 (2009, unpublished doctoral dissertation).
30. The discussion of the quotation in the *Prasannapadā* will be based on the edition by Louis de La Vallée Poussin, 1903–1913, under the title *Madhyamakavṛttih: Mūlamadhyamakakārikās (Mādhyamikasūtras) de Nāgārjuna avec la Prasannapadā commentaire de Candrakīrti* (abbreviated as *Prasannapadā* hereafter).
31. Candrakīrti is a remarkable Indian thinker of the Madhyamaka philosophy, who was active in

seek *prajñāpāramitā* (commentary on verse 12 of Chapter 18).<sup>32</sup> In summary, the *ṛtti* explains the *kārikā* and elaborates on how liberation is attainable by *pratyekabuddhas* (self-awakened ones) during periods when there are no buddhas (perfectly awakened ones) existing. According to it, accomplishment of the essence of the Dharma is still possible despite the lack of association with a buddha.<sup>33</sup> It then quotes in detail four episodes from the story as evidence.<sup>34</sup> They are where:

1. the Buddha advises Subhūti to seek *prajñāpāramitā* as did Sadāprarudita;
2. Sadāprarudita is in the wilderness and hears a voice in the air admonishing him to go east without paying attention to his needs and personal gain;
3. Sadāprarudita sells his own body to obtain riches for honouring the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata but encounters Māra's obstruction and the god Śakra's acid test,
4. Dharmodgata teaches Sadāprarudita *prajñāpāramitā*.

In short, Candrakīrti uses this story to admonish Buddhists to realise the truth, as did Sadāprarudita.

Another great Indian master, Śāntideva<sup>35</sup>, uses the story of Sadāprarudita to show the importance of self-preservation.<sup>36</sup> In his work on moral theory, *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, Śāntideva dedicates a chapter on the importance of 'self-preservation',<sup>37</sup> and what this entails, *kalyāṇamitrānutsargeṇa sūtrāntadarśanena*

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the seventh century (ca. 600–650), and his interpretation of the philosophy has been regarded as one of the most authoritative. See Hirakawa Akira 平川彰 (1979, 202–203) and Jackson (2004, 111) for more details about Candrakīrti.

32. For the details, see *Prasannapadā* [ed. de La Vallée Poussin 1903–1913] 378.7–381.11.

33. *tasmād asaṃsargād dhetoḥ pratyekabuddhānām asaṃbuddhake 'pi kāle yasmād bhavaty eva dharmatattvādhiḡamaḥ, tasmād avandhyā siddhir asya saṃbuddha-mahāvaidya-rāja-praṇītasya sa dharmatattvāmṛtabhāṣajasyeti vijñeyam. yataś ca etadevam, ato 'rhati prājñāḥ prāṇān api parityajya saddharmatattvaṃ paryeṣitumiti. yathoktaṃ bhagavatā āryāṣṭasāhasrikāyāṃ bhagavatyaṃ. (Prasannapadā [ed. de La Vallée Poussin 1903–1913] 378.12–379.4): 'At a time when there was no Perfectly Awakened One, there was indeed the attainment of the Reality of the Dharma for the *pratyekabuddhas*, because of non-association, and therefore it should be understood, "The efficiency of the ambrosial medicine [conductive] to the Reality of the True Dharma dispensed by the King of Great physicians, the Perfectly Awakened One, is productive". Because of that, where that is so, [one should know:] "An intellectual, having abandoned [his] lives, is able to seek out the Reality of the True Dharma". [This is] as said by the Bhagavat in the *Noble [Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra of] Eight Thousand [Ślokas]*'.*

34. For the Sanskrit text on the following episodes, see *Prasannapadā* [ed. de La Vallée Poussin 1903–1913] 379.4–381.11.

35. Śāntideva (ca. seventh to eighth century CE) was an Indian Buddhist Mādhyamika scholar at the Buddhist monastic centre of Nālandā in northern India, and author of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, on the Mahāyāna bodhisattva ideal. For more information about Śāntideva, see Mrozik (2005, 8109–8110) and Williams (2003, 749).

36. As for the discussion on self-preservation, see *Śikṣāsamuccaya* [ed. Bendall 1897–1902] 34.10–44.15. See also Bendall's English translation (1922, 37–45).

37. In Bendall's English translation, he gives the title 'The duty of self-preservation' to Chapter 2 of the *Śikṣāsamuccaya* according to the motif of this chapter (Bendall 1922, 37). The wording used by Śāntideva, for example, is *ātmā rakṣitavyaḥ* (*Śikṣāsamuccaya* [ed. Bendall 1897–1902] 34.14), which literally means 'self should be preserved'.

ca,<sup>38</sup> by “never leaving the good friend” and “study of the scriptures”. One aspect of never leaving good friends is illustrated by acts of paying homage to one’s ‘good friend’ (*kalyāṇa-mitra*). Here Śāntideva presents details of Sadāprarudita’s acts of self-sacrifice in order to revere his appointed good friend, Dharmodgata, as examples.<sup>39</sup> The actual episodes used as illustrations are where:

1. Sadāprarudita sells his own body to obtain riches for honouring Dharmodgata but encounters Māra’s obstruction and Śakra’s acid test;
2. Sadāprarudita sprinkles his blood on the ground to clean away dust, preventing Dharmodgata from being soiled.<sup>40</sup>

Based on the examples that Śāntideva gives, ‘self-preservation’ here means to preserve one’s Dharma practice rather than the physical body. According to Śāntideva’s explanation, bodhisattvas should value the Dharma and the teachers who teach the Dharma beyond all things. He further states, “thus by this [phrase], “not leaving the Good Friend”, and “study of the Scriptures”, is implied the whole acceptance of the law’.<sup>41</sup> In this context, we can see that the Dharma carries a greater weight than teachers. Although these two examples are limited and significant conclusions cannot be drawn from them, it is noteworthy that both these Indian examples employed the story when trying to stress the priority of the Dharma.

#### THE VALUE OF THE GURU IN THE TIBETAN TRADITION

In the Tibetan tradition, teachers from different periods have utilised the story of Sadāprarudita. They have made use of it by comparing certain practitioners and their experiences with that of Sadāprarudita.

In the text *The Life of Marpa the Translator*,<sup>42</sup> it is described how joyful Marpa<sup>43</sup> was when he finally met Maitripa and this joy was compared to Sadāprarudita’s

38. *Śikṣāsamuccaya* [ed. Bendall 1897–1902] 41.13.

39. For details of the quotation concerning the story, see *Śikṣāsamuccaya* [ed. Bendall 1897–1902] 37.19–41.13.

40. According to the quotation concerning this episode, Sadāprarudita hears a divine voice saying that on the seventh day Dharmodgata will emerge from meditaion. Having heard this, Sadāprarudita then plans to clean the environment around Dharmodgata’s Dharma seat prior to him coming out of his house. Due to Māra’s obstruction, he cannot find any water to clean away the dust. Accordingly, Sadāprarudita sprinkles his blood on the ground to prevent Dharmodgata from being soiled by rising dust.

41. *tad anena kalyāṇamitrānūtsargaṇa sūtrāntadarśanena ca sarvaḥ saddharmaparigraho bhavati* (*Śikṣāsamuccaya* [ed. Bendall 1897–1902] 41.12–13). The English translation, with slight amendment, follows Bendall’s (1922, 43) rendition.

42. The quotations concerning Marpa here are from *The Life of Marpa the Translator*, an English translation of the *Sgra-bsgyur mar-pa lo-tsa’i rnam-thar mthong-ba don-yod* by Chögyam Trungpa and the Nālandā translation committee, published in 1982 by Prajñā Press. An edition of this Tibetan text is available, the information of which is shown below: Gtsang smyon Heruka. 1990. *Sgra bsgyur mar pa lo tsā’i rnam par thar pa mthong ba don yod*. Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang. The Tibetan text of Marpa’s biography was composed by Tsang Nyön Heruka (Tib. gtsang smyon heruka ,1452–1507 CE). For the details about Tsang Nyön Heruka, see Larsson, Stefan. 2009. *The Birth of a Heruka: How Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan became gTsang smyon Heruka: A Study of a Mad Yogin*. Stockholm: Institutionen för etnologi, religionshistoria och genusstudier.

43. Marpa (1002/1012–1097 CE) was a remarkable translator and lay Buddhist master who was credited with the transmission of many Buddhist teachings to Tibet from India, including the

joy at meeting Dharmodgata. It recounts that he felt great joy, ‘just like that of the bodhisattva Sadāprarudita when he met the bodhisattva Dharmodgata’.<sup>44</sup> This refers to the episode after Sadāprarudita acquired the answer to his query, ‘Where have those Tathāgatas come from, where have they gone?’<sup>45</sup> from Dharmodgata, when he experienced a supreme and sublime feeling of zest and joy:

*atha khalu sadāprarudito bodhisattvo mahāsattvaḥ paramodāreṇa prītiprāmodyena samanvāgato 'bhūt.*<sup>46</sup>

Then the Bodhisattva Sadāprarudito, the great being, attained to the most wonderful joy and bliss.

When we examine the two more closely, we can find slight differences. In the case of Marpa, his joy arises at the point of meeting Maitrīpa. On the other hand, Sadāprarudita’s joy comes after he hears the teachings from Dharmodgata. There is another case in this work, which also briefly mentions the story of Sadāprarudita. It recounts:

In the expanded *Mother of the Victorious Ones*<sup>47</sup>, it is said, ‘Some bodhisattvas need a father and mother, but do not need a wife. Some bodhisattvas need a father, mother and a wife, but do not need any sons or daughters. Some bodhisattvas need a father, mother, wife, sons, daughters, servants, and all desirable things.’ It is said that Marpa was like this last example. He worked for the benefit of sentient beings in the same way as the noble bodhisattvas Dharmodgata and Sadāprarudita. (Heruka, Trungpa and Nālandā translation committee trans. 1982, 201)<sup>48</sup>

In this context, Dharmodgata and Sadāprarudita’s possession of servants and valuables is highlighted.

Another example where the name Sadāprarudita is mentioned is in *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*.<sup>49</sup> This piece contains a verse that describes

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teachings and lineages of Vajrayāna and Mahāmudrā. For more information about Marpa, see Decler (2005, 5715–5716) and Quintman (2003, 513–514).

44. Heruka, Trungpa and Nālandā translation committee trans. 1982, 26. The original Tibetan text is as follows: *byang chub sems dpa' rtag tu ngu byang chub sems dpa' chos 'phags dang mjal ba lta bu'i dga' ba chen po skyes nas brkyang phyag lan bdun btsal* / (He-ru-ka 1970, 33.3–7)
45. *kutas te tathāgatā āgatāḥ kva vā te tathāgatā gatā* (Aṣṭa [ed. Wogihara 1932–1935] 944.4–5).
46. Aṣṭa [ed. Wogihara 1932–1935] 978.14–15.
47. There is information given in a footnote on page 201 of the book by the translator, which states that the expanded *Mother of the Victorious Ones* (Tib. *Rgyal-ba'i yum rgyas-pa*) is the *Śatasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*. On the other hand, it is interesting that the story of Sadāprarudita is not found in the Sanskrit *Śatasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* and in its Tibetan translation (Peking ed., No. 740). This is pointed out by Conze (1978, 45) and Bu-ston (see Obermiller tr. 1986, 50) respectively.
48. The Tibetan text is as follows: *rgyal ba'i yum rgyas pa las / byang chub sems dpa' ga' zhid la ni pha dang ma dgos la / chung ma mi dgos pa yod do // byang chub sems dpa' gang zhid la ni pha ma dang chung ma dgos la / bu dang bu mo mi dgos pa yod do // byang chub sems dpa' ga' zhid la ni / pha ma dang / chung ma dang / bu dang bu mo dang / 'khor la sogs pa'i 'dod yon thams cad dgos pa yod do // zhes gsungs pa'i don phyi ma dang mthun pa dang / gzhan yang byang chub sems dpa' 'phags pa chos 'phags dang / rtag tu ngu dang mdzad spyod mthun pa'i sgo nas sems can gyi don mdzad pa lags so //* (He-ru-ka 1970: 247.12–248.8)
49. The quotation regarding Milarepa here is from *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*, translated from the Tibetan text *Mi-la'i mgyur 'bum* into English by Garma C. C. Chang. This work was compiled by Tsang Nyön Heruka (Tib. gtsang-smyon he-ru-ka, 1452–1507 CE). A Tibetan



Gampopa's<sup>50</sup> emotions when he searched for his guru. The verse compares this experience to that of the 'Ever-crying' Bodhisattva, also known as Sadāprarudita, when he was searching for his teacher. The verse is:

The first time I heard your name  
I was filled with joy and inspiration  
With great earnestness, and disregarding  
Hardship, I set out to seek you —  
As did the Ever-Crying Bodhisattva.<sup>51</sup>

(Milarepa, compiled by Heruka, Chang trans. 1977, 480)<sup>52</sup>

In the verse, the significance of meeting one's guru is emphasised using the Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita as a comparison.

Moreover, in his biography, Rechungpa<sup>53</sup> describes his journey from Tibet to India to search for his teacher Varacandra. His teacher identifies him as Padmāka, who is considered the most important figure in the introduction of Buddhism into Tibet, and further lauds him as 'a jewel of the teachings', 'a lamp of the Dharma' and compares him to the long-suffering bodhisattva, that is, Sadāprarudita (Roberts 2007, 128).<sup>54</sup> Here the story of Sadāprarudita is mentioned in the sense of demonstrating a paragon of a spiritual guru.

Another example is seen in the book, *The Words of my Perfect Teacher*,<sup>55</sup> written by Patrul Rinpoche<sup>56</sup>. In this work, there is a section that highlights the importance of a spiritual friend with all the requisite qualities, which states:

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edition of this text is available: Gtsang-smyon He-ru-ka compiled. 1983. *Mi-la'i mgur 'bum*. Gangtok: Sherab Gyaltsen.

50. Gampopa (1079–1153 CE) was the figure most responsible for systematising the doctrines and founding the Kagyu school, one of the four major schools of Tibetan Buddhism today, as an institution. For more information about Gampopa, see Jackson (2005, 8254–8256).
51. The 'Ever-Crying Bodhisattva' is the translation of *rtag du ngu*, which is the Tibetan translation of the Sanskrit name Sadāprarudita and the translator also regards this bodhisattva as the Sadāprarudita mentioned in *prajñāpāramitā-sūtras* (Milarepa, compiled by Heruka, Chang trans. 1977, 497 note 17).
52. / *mtshan de yi snyan pas phyogs nram khyab /*  
/ *de thos kho bo spro ba skyas /*  
/ *shar skar ma smin drug 'og nas snyogs /*  
/ *lus tsha grang yid la byis te /*  
/ *rtag tu ngu yi nram thar bzhin /* (Mi-la-ras-pa 1983, 641.20–642.3).
53. Rechungpa (1084–1161 CE) was a Tibetan master of the Kagyu lineage, one of the principal traditions of Buddhism in Tibet. For more information on Rechungpa, see Roberts, 2007.
54. These two quotations are translated by Roberts based on Rechungpa's biography composed by Götsang Repa (1470–ante 1543 CE) in around 1531 CE (Roberts 2007, 122). Information about Rechungpa's biography by Götsang Repa is shown below: rGod-tshang Ras-pa, sNa-tshogs Rang-grol. 1992. *rje-btsun Ras-chung-ba'i rnam-thar*. Xining: mTsho-sngon Mi-rigs dPe-skrun-khang.
55. The quotations concerning the story of Sadāprarudita are from *The Words of my Perfect Teacher*, an English translation of the *Kun-bzañ bla-ma'i zhal-lung* by the Padmakara Translation Group. There is a published edition of this Tibetan text available: Patrul Rinpoche (Tib. rdza dpa-sprul rin-po-che), 1992. *Kun-bzang bla-ma'i zhal-lung*. Rum-btegs: Karma-pa'i-chos-sgar.
56. Patrul Rinpoche (1808–1887 CE) was a prominent teacher and author of the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism. See Patrul Rinpoche, Padmakara Translation Group trans. (1994, xxxi–xxxix) for the details.

Once you have met a noble spiritual friend with all the requisite qualities, follow him without any concern for life or limb – just as the Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita followed Bodhisattva Dharmodgata, the great paṇḍit Nāropa followed the supreme Tilopa, and Jetsun Mila followed Marpa of Lhodrak. (Patrul Rinpoche 1994, 153)<sup>57</sup>

This statement is followed by the whole story of Sadāprarudita given as one of the examples to support this aspect.<sup>58</sup> In particular, the episodes of the story mentioned are where:<sup>59</sup>

1. Sadāprarudita is in the wilderness and hears a voice in the air admonishing him to go east without paying attention to his needs and personal gain;
2. A magically created Buddha figure appears before him and gives him instructions on the direction, distance and name of the place;
3. Sadāprarudita enters various *samādhis* for the first time;
4. Sadāprarudita sells his own body to obtain riches for honouring Dharmodgata but encounters Māra's obstruction and Śakra's acid test;
5. Dharmodgata answers Sadāprarudita's query, 'Where have those buddhas come from and where have they gone?';
6. Sadāprarudita sprinkles his blood on the ground to settle dust, preventing Dharmodgata from being soiled before Dharmodgata emerges from the *samādhis*;
7. Dharmodgata teaches Sadāprarudita *prajñāpāramitā* and then Sadāprarudita enters various *samādhis* for the second time.

In his work, *Great Treasury of Merit*, Kelsang Gyatso,<sup>60</sup> stresses the value of one's spiritual teacher over the buddhas themselves, and uses the story of Sadāprarudita as evidence. In this context he states:

In the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in Eight Thousand Lines* the story is told of a great Bodhisattva called Sadaparudita who relied sincerely upon his Spiritual Guide, Dharmodgata, regarding him as more precious than his own life, and more important than all the Buddhas. (Gyatso 1992, 9)

Finally he concludes:

If a great meditator such as Sadāprarudita, who was able to receive instructions directly from Buddhas, still needed to rely upon a Spiritual Guide, it goes without saying that we must find a qualified Spiritual Guide and rely upon him or her sin-

57. *des na dge ba'i bshes gnyen dam pa yon tan thams cad dang ldan pa myed nas / de nyid bsten pa'i dus su lus dang srog la mi lta bar byang chub sems dpa' rtag tu ngus byang chub sems dpa' chos 'phags bsten pa dang / pan chen nā ro pas skyes mchog te lo pa bsten pa dang / rje btsun mi las lho brag mar pa bsten pa ltar dgos te /* (Patrul Rinpoche 1992, 116b.6–117a.2)

58. Patrul Rinpoche, Padmakara Translation Group trans. 1994, 153–157.

59. See Patrul Rinpoche 1992, 117a.2–121a.5 for the quotations of the following episodes of the Sadāprarudita narrative.

60. Kelsang Gyatso (1931–) is a modern-day leading Tibetan figure and founder of the 'New Kadampa Tradition'. He is a Buddhist monk, meditation master, scholar, and author of many books based on the teachings of the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism. See Kay (2004, 56–61) for more information about Kelsang Gyatso.

cerely. (Gyatso 1992, 11)

The episodes that Kelsang Gyatso mentions are where:<sup>61</sup>

1. Sadāprarudita sees all buddhas in the ten directions;
2. Sadāprarudita sells his own body to obtain riches for honouring Dharmodgata but encounters Māra's obstruction and Śakra's acid test;
3. Sadāprarudita together with the merchant's daughter and her entourage meet the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata and acquire the teaching on the *prajñāpāramitā*.

In summary, these Tibetan masters have all used the story to stress the importance of the guru and of following the guru.

With regard to the last example, which stresses that a spiritual guru is 'more important than all the Buddhas' (Gyatso 1992, 9), there is a different interpretation to that of Kelsang Gyatso. In the *\*Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa*, a question is raised, 'Since the buddhas appear before him, why do they not enlighten him directly but assign him to Dharmodgata?'<sup>62</sup> The answer given is because Sadāprarudita and Dharmodgata have a strong karmic connection, established through aeons of lives. On account of this, it is most appropriate that Sadāprarudita is enlightened by Dharmodgata.<sup>63</sup>

There is an account in the *Xiányú jīng* 賢愚經 ('The *Sūtra* on the Wise and the Foolish'), which proposes the same idea. It recounts that an old man called Śrīvardhin wanted to go forth, but all the monks he met declined his request. Having understood his situation the Buddha directed Maudgalyāyana to provide Śrīvardhin with the opportunity for ordination. He explains to Maudgalyāyana that sentient beings only attain enlightenment with the guidance of someone with whom they have a good karmic connection. If some have good karmic connections with the Buddha and no other teachers, then only the Buddha's guidance can enlighten them. If some have good karmic connections with other masters and not the Buddha, then only these masters' guidance can enlighten them rather than the Buddha.<sup>64</sup> In short, the *\*Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa* tends to emphasise the significance of karmic connection.<sup>65</sup> From the perspective of the

61. See Gyatso (1992, 10–11) for details of the quotation concerning the following episodes.

62. 佛既現身何以不即度。方遣至曇無竭所 T 1509 735c11–12.

63. 佛所以不即度者。以其與曇無竭世世因緣應當從彼度故。有人應從舍利弗度。假使諸佛現身不能令悟 T 1509 735c15–17. 'The reason why the buddhas do not enlighten him is because of the aeons of karmic connection between Dharmodgata and him. Therefore [he] should be enlightened by him. [For example,] If there is someone who should be enlightened by Śāriputra, even though all buddhas appear before that person, they are not able to enlighten that person'.

64. 告大目犍連。令與出家。何以故。眾生隨緣得度。或有於佛有緣。餘人則不能度。於餘人有緣佛則不能度。於舍利弗有緣。目連。迦葉。阿那律。金毘羅等。一切弟子。則所不度。如是展轉。隨其有緣。餘人不度 T 202 377b16–20.

65. Kelsang Gyatso's statement may also have a link to the idea of karmic connection. If we further query, 'Among the qualified spiritual guides, why is it that only a certain one can enlighten us well, but not another?', the reason may be karmic connection. However, the statement as read above gives the impression that buddhas are excluded from the spiritual guides that one should rely upon.

path to enlightenment that is intended for the audience, both the Buddha and other masters should be equally valued.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF ACCOMPLISHING THE SAMĀDHI OF RECOLLECTING BUDDHAS IN THE CHINESE PURE LAND TRADITION

Lastly the discussion will turn to Chinese Buddhism and its use of the story. The story is quoted by various schools of Chinese Buddhism, but in order to limit the discussion, the focus in this paper will centre on the early Pure Land tradition.<sup>66</sup> In 'A Further Collection of Essays on Buddhism',<sup>67</sup> there are some hymns under the collective title, 'Poetry anthology on the *samādhi* of recollecting buddhas', composed by Huiyuǎn 慧遠<sup>68</sup> or Wáng Qízhī 王齊之 in around the fourth century CE.<sup>69</sup> Three hymns are about Sadāprarudita and one is about Dharmodgata.

The first hymn on the narrative of Sadāprarudita is called 'A Hymn on Sadāprarudita'.<sup>70</sup> Next to the heading, there is an account in brackets that provides the reason why these hymns were composed.<sup>71</sup> The explanation does not seem very clear but appears to convey information about some wall paintings at the Prajñā *vihāra*, which is located on a tableland and the paintings are about the story of Sadāprarudita. The style of the paintings is called 變 (*bian*), literally

66. Other Chinese schools of Buddhism have utilised the story differently. The example here of the Pure Land tradition is limited and not necessarily representative of all, but is nevertheless a useful illustration of how the story has been used. A detailed discussion of the issue related to other Chinese schools is beyond the scope of this paper.

67. The Chinese title is 廣弘明集 (*Guǎng hóng míng jí*), composed by a *vinaya* master 道宣 (*Dào xuān*) in the Tang Dynasty. This is a collection of essays written as a defence against non-Buddhists' criticisms. According to the explanation of the title given by the author, 廣弘明者。言其弘護法網開明於有識也 ([As for] '*guǎng hóng míng*', it means to promote and protect the net of Dharma, and to enlighten (sentient beings), it may be translated as 'A Further Collection [of Essays] to Promote [Buddhism] and Enlighten [Sentient Beings]'. See T 2103 335b9.

68. Huiyuǎn was a significant leader of the Buddhist community in the south of China around the fourth century (334–416/417 CE.). See Robinson (1976, 96–114) for the details about Huiyuǎn.

69. Lài Péngjǔ 賴鵬舉 (1997, 76) attributes these hymns to Wáng Qízhī but provides no rationale. On the other hand, in the table of contents at the beginning of the 30th fascicle of 'A Further Collection of Essays on Buddhism', there are two pieces of information that show that the composer of the hymns may be Huiyuǎn rather than Wáng Qízhī:

晉沙門釋慧遠念佛三昧詩序(并佛菩薩讚)

The preface of poems on the *samādhi* of recollecting buddhas by the *śramaṇa* Shì Huiyuǎn in the Jin Dynasty (together with the hymns on buddhas and bodhisattvas).

晉王齊之念佛三昧詩

The poems on the *samādhi* of recollecting buddhas by Wáng Qízhī in the Jin Dynasty.

According to them, it is Huiyuǎn who wrote the preface and the hymns concerning Sadāprarudita and Dharmodgata. Wáng Qízhī was merely the composer of the poems concerning the *samādhi* of recollecting buddhas. See T 2103 349a27–29 for the information shown above. Some contradictory information regarding authorship is present in two editions. The message in brackets '并佛菩薩讚' in the Song 宋 edition and Ming 明 edition is placed after the account on Wáng Qízhī, which suggests that Wáng Qízhī is the author of the hymns.

70. '薩陀波倫讚' T 2103 351 c18.

71. The Chinese account in the brackets is 因畫波若臺隨。變立贊等。The punctuation that the *Taishō* edition gives here is incorrect. It should be read as 因畫波若臺。隨變立贊等, which means, 'on account of paintings on [the wall of] the Prajñā [vihāra on a] tableland, the hymns are composed in accordance with the [paintings on the] transformation'.

meaning ‘transformation’.<sup>72</sup> So it appears that the explanation is referring to the paintings on the wall of the *Prajñā vihāra* on a tableland, and that the hymn has been composed in accordance with these paintings on magical transformation:

Serene is the great sage.

His wondrous deeds inscribed into history.

[The great Dharma] like a dragon diving and hidden in a deep lake, [is beyond his reach].

Still yet is he to connect with the glorious virtue [of the Three Jewels].

Fate brings him significant revelations,

A god points out his path, [‘you should seek the great Dharma’].

The revelations in dreams that flowed from sincerity,

Enlightens this honourable sage.<sup>73</sup>

The information, though elegant and poetic, is imprecise in relation to the alluded episode. However, given that this hymn mentions ‘a god’ and ‘dream’, it may be referring to the account where **Sadāprarudita, in a dream, receives a revelation from a god, which is found only in the two earliest Chinese translations of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* by Lokakṣema and Zhī Qiān.**<sup>74</sup>

The second hymn is called ‘A hymn on Sadāprarudita heading to a [barren] mountain in search of Dharma’.<sup>75</sup>

His lamenting spreads throughout the barren mountain.

He exerts himself with endless sincerity [to seek the Dharma].

The voice in the air [that said, ‘Go east!’] still rings in his ears.

Dawn comes, excited with joy, he sets off seeking the Dharma.

Following the admonishment [from the Buddha figure of transformation], by night he heads off [to Gandhavatī].

All doubts concerning the journey disappear.

Because he made his resolution so sincerely,

The [Buddha figure of] transformation accordingly manifests.<sup>76</sup>

Again, though the specific episode of the story is not absolutely clear, given its content, this hymn may cover the following episodes:

1. Sadāprarudita is in the wilderness and hears a voice in the air admonishing him to go east without paying attention to his needs and personal gain;
2. A Buddha figure appears before him and gives him instructions on the direction, distance and name of the place.

72. This English translation is proposed by Mair. Having reviewed all interpretations by other scholars, he argues that the term *biàn* is etymologically related to a Buddhist technical term meaning ‘transformation’. For more details, see Mair (1983, 1–7; 1989, 36–72).

73. 密哉達人。功玄曩葉。龍潛九澤。文明未接。運通其會。神疏其轍。感夢魂交。啟茲聖哲 T 2103 351c19–20.

74. The account is seen in T 224 470c27–28 and T 225 503c25–26.

75. 薩陀波倫入山求法讚 T 2103 352a1.

76. 激響窮山。憤發幽誠。流音在耳。欣躍晨征。奉命宵遊。百慮同冥。叩心在誓。化乃降靈 T 2103 352a2–3.

The third hymn is named ‘A hymn on Sadāprarudita when he attains realisation and attempts to make offerings to the great master’.<sup>77</sup> The hymn recounts as follows:

The path to the ultimate is about to start.  
 The gate to the essence [will] open once again.  
 Hard to attain are such wonderful deeds.  
 His self-sacrifice brings forth great benefit.  
 From confidence in the Dharma, no attachments [to body] has he.  
 The unexpected encounter [with a merchant’s daughter] yields a pleasant reward.  
 If it is not him [the Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita], the great sage,  
 Who else can achieve this extraordinary approach?<sup>78</sup>

This hymn, too, does not specifically indicate which episode(s) it covers. The title of the hymn points to Sadāprarudita’s attempts to make offerings to the great master Dharmodgata. It seems to describe the episodes where Sadāprarudita sells his own body to obtain riches for honouring Dharmodgata but encounters Māra’s obstruction and Śakra’s acid test, and finally meets a merchant’s daughter who helps him obtain riches to fulfil his aim.

The fourth hymn is called ‘A hymn on the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata’.<sup>79</sup> It reads as follows:

What an inexhaustibly diligent and knowledgeable sage.  
 His skills are wonderful; his approaches are the upmost,  
 Just like a valley,  
 Channelling hundreds and thousands of rivers [to the sea].  
 On the bank, no one awaits the boat,  
 On the road, no cart returns.  
 The three streams, the origin [of defilement],  
 All cease entirely here.<sup>80</sup>

The hymn praises Dharmodgata for his skilful means in enlightening numerous beings. This seems to be a sort of general praise regarding how great Dharmodgata is. On the other hand, if we read the story closely, this hymn could refer to a specific account:

At that moment when Dharmodgata elaborates on the body of buddhas, forty eight thousand bodhisattvas obtain the cultivation of complete confidence, a hundred billion bodhisattvas all attain *dhāraṇīs*, two hundred billion bodhisattvas attain [the power of] no hindrance, and four hundred bodhisattvas attain the *avivartin* bodhisattva [stage]...<sup>81</sup>

77. 薩陀波倫始悟欲供養大師讚 T 2103 352a4.

78. 歸塗將啟。靈關再闢。神功難圖。待損而益。信道忘形。歡不期適。非伊哲人。孰探玄策 T 2103 352a5-6.

79. 曇無竭菩薩讚 T 2103 352a7.

80. 寔寔淵匠。道玄數盡。譬彼大壑。百川俱引。涯不俟津。塗無旋軫。三流開源。於焉同泯 T 2103 352a8-9.

81. 是時曇無竭菩薩說佛身時。四萬八千菩薩即解得盡信之行。百億菩薩悉得諸陀鄰尼法。二百億菩薩得無所望礙問皆能報。四百億菩薩皆得阿惟越致菩薩... (T 224 477a28-b2)

In short, the content of the hymns praises the bodhisattvas' efforts and the achievements in their practice. As mentioned above, these hymns were composed in accordance with some paintings on the wall of the *Prajñā vihāra*, which are based on the story of *Sadāprarudita*. It is noteworthy that the *Prajñā vihāra* is where Huìyuǎn practised the *samādhi* of recollecting buddhas.<sup>82</sup> This seems to suggest that the paintings and hymns on the wall of the *Prajñā vihāra* may have played a key role in encouraging the parishioners of the *vihāra* to regard *Sadāprarudita* as an exemplar of practising the *samādhi* of recollecting buddhas. Given this point and that these hymns are under the collective title, 'Poetry anthology on the *samādhi* of recollecting buddhas', it seems that the early Pure Land tradition in China used the story to emphasise the importance of achieving the practice of seeing buddhas.

### CONCLUSION

In this short paper it has not been possible to present an exhaustive investigation of all instances of the use of the story. However, the examples discussed are sufficient to provide a general indication of the diverse ways in which the *Sadāprarudita jāataka/avadāna* has been employed, and of its importance to a variety of Buddhist communities. The current brief survey of texts from India, Tibet and China highlights how well known, respected and widely used the story of *Sadāprarudita* was over a large geographical region and span of time right up to the present. It is evident from the examples discussed here that there are regional differences in the use of the story. It seems clear that the approach of the two Indian masters, Candrakīrti and Śāntideva, focused on the value of learning and practising the Dharma. By contrast, the Tibetan masters have used the story to highlight the significance of a guru and of following the guru, while the Chinese hymns that praise *Sadāprarudita* and Dharmodgata have emphasised recollecting buddhas. Of course, further investigation is needed to verify these conclusions which are based on a rather limited number of examples.

The diversity of ways in which the story has been employed must in part be a product of the complexity of the story: the various and diverse episodes and elements allowing a teacher or author to tap into the story to illustrate the point at hand. Noteworthy is the reference by all traditions investigated in this paper to the episode where *Sadāprarudita* sacrifices himself in order to fulfil his own vow. This may well reflect the ultimate sacrifice that a human can make for buddhas, their guru, and the Dharma. As such it parallels the Buddha's own self-sacrifice during his long career as a bodhisattva.

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82. There is an account in Huìyuǎn's biography, which recounts that one day when emerging from meditation at the *Prajñā vihāra*, he saw the figure of the Amitābha Buddha pervading the sky. For the details of the account, see T 1969A 192c2-3.

## ABBREVIATIONS

Aṣṭa Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra

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