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III

E. FRAUWALLNER

ON THE DATE
OF THE BUDDHIST MASTER
OF THE LAW VASUBANDHU



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DI

GIUSEPPE TUCCI

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TO
PROFESSOR GIUSEPPE TUCCI
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

ON THE DATE OF THE BUDDHIST MASTER OF THE LAW VASUBANDHU *)

The date of the famous Buddhist philosopher Vasubandhu belongs to the most discussed questions of the history of Indian literature and philosophy. And indeed it wields a particular importance, because on its solution depend not only the correct chronological setting, but also the right understanding of one of the most important periods of Indian philosophy. In spite of this, and although the controversy about this question has lasted already about 60 years, it has not yet been possible to reach a satisfactory solution. In the last years nearly complete silence has enveloped it. But it is not the peace which arises out of the general acceptance of the solutions pro-

*) I have endeavoured to utilize in this monograph everything that has been published on the subject. The bibliography is given at the end. I shall quote the works listed in it by the number of the list preceded by a *B*; thus B 1, B 2 etc. In the monograph itself I have discussed only such material as is relevant to the demonstration of my statements. Everything that agrees without difficulty with my results, that makes no difference to the demonstration, or that has been wrongly brought to bear on the question, will be briefly discussed in an appendix, in order not to pass it wholly under silence. I regret that no copy of the Tangyur was available to me at the time of writing, because it can be surmised that, as in Yaśomitra's *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*, so also some useful elements may be found in the numerous commentaries to the *Abhidharmakośa*, which are preserved in Tibetan only. I hope, however, that my demonstration may be convincing even without that. Also the Japanese literature on the subject was not available to me.

posed; it is rather that sort of resignation which sets in when all endeavours at a solution have failed. As a matter of fact, two opinions continue as before to hold the field; the first one places Vasubandhu at the beginning of the 4th century A. D., the second considers the middle or the second half of the 5th century as the epoch of his life. Both opinions can rely upon weighty evidence in their favour, but neither of them has succeeded in refuting the arguments of the opposite party. Eventually it has even been suggested that there were two bearers of this name, without however explaining how this can help to eliminate the existing difficulties ¹⁾. And thus this much discussed problem still remains unsolved.

And yet I believe that the problem is not so insoluble as it appears to be. But we must openly confess that an error, which bars the way to a solution, has been committed again and again: scholars have always tried to push aside or to interpret away all those pieces of evidence, which appeared to place difficulties in their path and to go against their opinions. And thus no final result could be reached. As a matter of fact the available evidence, if impartially sifted, speaks a clear language and leads to a result which eliminates all difficulties. This shall be shown in the present monograph.

The starting point for my investigation is the most complete and painstaking work existing on the subject, i. e. N. Péri's article "À propos de la date de Vasuban-

¹⁾ Attention has been often drawn to the fact, attested by Yaśomitra, that there was an earlier Vasubandhu besides the author of the *Abhidharmakośa* (B 30; B 34); occasionally the possibility has been considered, that a confusion had taken place (B 29, p. 156; B 39, p. xxxii; B 40, p. 32, n. 2). But nobody ever attempted to reach the solution of the problem by this way, and still less to bring the facts of the tradition in agreement with this suggestion.

dhu" (B 18), and more precisely the direct information there collected on the date of Vasubandhu (L 18, pp. 355-361 = 17-23). As shown by Péri, the tradition gives three different dates for Vasubandhu. The most diffused date, which eventually came to be generally accepted, is 900 years after the Nirvāṇa (A. N.). Beside it, however, there are two other dates, viz. 1100 and 1000 years A. N.

1100 A. N. is the date given by the Indian Paramārtha, who was born 500 A. D. in Ujjayinī, came to China in 546 and died in 569 in Canton. It is found in the following places: ¹⁾

1. Originally it stood, as shown by Péri himself (Op. cit., p. 357 = 19) in the biography of Vasubandhu by Paramārtha, where the narrative introduces for the first time the Sāṃkhya teacher Vindhyavāsin (T 2049, p. 189 b, 24 f.; cf. Hui-chao 惠沿, *Ch'êng wei shih lun liao i têng*, T 1832, ch. 2, p. 688 b, 5 ff.).

2. It is given by Hui-k'ai 慧愷 in his preface to Paramārtha's translation of the *Abhidharmakośa* (T 1559, p. 161 a, 15 f.; cf. K'uei-chi 窺基, *Ch'êng wei shih lun shu chi*, T 1830, ch. I, p. 231 b, 28 f.). Since Hui-k'ai was a personal disciple of Paramārtha, worked together with him at the exposition of the *Abhidharmakośa* and died even before him during the progress of the work, this element too can be traced back to Paramārtha.

3. It is given by Tao-chi 道基 in his preface to Paramārtha's translation of Vasubandhu's *Mahāyāna-*

¹⁾ All quotations from Chinese texts are given according to the Tai-shō edition of the Tripiṭaka by J. Takakusu and K. Watanabe, Tōkyō 1924-1929. The corresponding numbers in Nanjo and in the Tripiṭaka editions of Tōkyō 1880-1885 and Kyōtō 1902-1905, supplement 1905-1912, are conveniently to be found in the catalogue, which has been published as Fascicule annexe to the *Hōbōgirin*, Tōkyō 1931.

saṃgrahabhāṣya (T 1595, p. 152 b, 1). Tao-chi lived, it is true, in a somewhat later period (576–637), but he belongs to the tradition of Paramārtha.

1000 A. N. is the date given by the famous Chinese pilgrim Hsüan-tsang, who travelled in India during the years 629–645 A. D. It is found

1. In the book of travels of Hsüan-tsang; while describing the antiquities of Ayodhyā, Hsüan-tsang inserts a short account of Asaṅga and Vasubandhu (T 2087, ch. 5, p. 896 b, 27).

2. In the corresponding passage of the biography of Hsüan-tsang (T 2053, ch. 3, p. 233 c, 16).

We are thus confronted with the following situation. There is a widely diffused chronology of Vasubandhu, which has eventually gained general acceptance. Beside it, two other dates are handed down, though in a few texts only; and these two dates are based on the witness of our most respected and trustworthy authorities. How is this situation to be explained?

Péris has decided in favour of the most widely accepted date of 900 A. N., and tries to explain away the other items of the evidence. But his demonstration is unsatisfactory. Concerning Paramārtha, he points out the fact that another date is also handed down under the name of Paramārtha, viz. the usual one of 900 A. N. This is correct. This date too is given, and is expressly attributed to Paramārtha. It was found

1. According to K'uei-chi, in Paramārtha's commentary to Maitreyanātha's *Madhyāntavibhāga* (see *Ch'êng wei shih lun shu chi*, T 1830, ch. I, p. 231 c, 2–3)¹⁾.

¹⁾ I am convinced, on internal evidence, that the *Madhyāntavibhāga*, the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra* and several other works are not due to Asaṅga, but to

2. In another work of Paramārtha, quoted by Hui-hsiang 慧祥 (7th century) in his *Fa hua ching chuan chi* (T 2068, ch. I, p. 52 c, 25 ff.).

Two different chronologies are therefore actually handed down under the name of Paramārtha. Péri suggests in this connection (Op. cit., p. 357 f. = 19 f.) that Paramārtha has taken the date 1100 A. N. in the biography of Vasubandhu from some original text; the date 900 A. N., on the contrary, is found in a commentary, i. e. in a work of Paramārtha himself. The latter would therefore represent the personal opinion of Paramārtha, and should accordingly be accepted by us. This conclusion is highly doubtful. It is based on the wholly unproved assumption that Paramārtha translated the biography of Vasubandhu from an original and that he took over from it a date which went against his own conviction. Against this we have the witness of Hui-k'ai, who too gives the date 1100 A. N. Or else are we to assume that Hui-k'ai, who worked during the lifetime of Paramārtha and in close contact with him, copied from the Life of Vasubandhu into his preface to the *Abhidharmakośa* a date which did not agree with the opinions of his master? And even if Péri were right in his conclusion, there remains unshaken the fact that Paramārtha knew of a second date for the life period of Vasubandhu and found it worthy to be handed down. Thus we cannot lightly put aside this date, and it is our duty to account for it.

an earlier author. For the sake of simplicity I use for this writer the name of Maitreyanātha, without however suggesting herewith anything on the person of the author. This is not the place for a discussion of the many questions connected with the name of Maitreya.

Still less acceptable is the manner in which Péri tries to gloss over the date given by Hsüan-tsang. First he points out that the school of Hsüan-tsang has generally accepted the date of 900 A. N. This may be correct; but nevertheless the fact remains that the highest authority of the school gives the other date. Péri says about this (Op. cit., p. 358 = 20) that the date of 1000 A. N. has found its way in the Travels and in the Life of Hsüan-tsang, because Hsüan-tsang heard of it in India, and that Hsüan-tsang's school did not accept it because they recognised that the number 1000 had in this case that prophetic meaning which was attributed to it by several Buddhist texts. According to Péri, this number of years represents a period in the development of the Law prophesied by the Buddha, and this period includes Vasubandhu and Asaṅga, their contemporaries and even their forerunners. These statements can be hardly upheld. When a period oscillates between 900 and 1100 years, it is but natural that the number 1000 too should appear among the various numbers mentioned; nor is it necessary on this account to dub it a prophetic number. If one wants to do so, he must bring serious proofs for it. But what has Vasubandhu to do with the prophetic number 1000? Where do we read that his activity is put into relation with the end of a 1000-years period of the Law? Nowhere. There is nothing that could give us a shadow of reason for interpreting the number 1000 in a prophetic sense. And in the end even Péri (Op. cit., p. 358 f. = 20 f.) has nothing else to call in support to his contention but the fact that the number 900 is foremost in the Tibetan tradition too, and that therefore the number 1000 is bound to have that prophetic meaning. This means that the number 1000

must be explained away, because it contradicts to the other date. It is utterly uncritical to slide in such a manner over the evidence of one of our foremost authorities; in this way we shall never reach a trustworthy result.

We are confronted as before with the fact that, beside the most commonly accepted date of 900 A. N., our most trustworthy authorities give two other dates for the life-period of Vasubandhu, viz. 1100 and 1000 A. N. It is our task to give an explanation of this striking fact.

Before we try, however, to give this explanation, we must answer one more question. It is well known that the date of the Nirvāṇa in Buddhist tradition widely oscillates, and for every Nirvāṇa-date we must first determinate to which Nirvāṇa-era it belongs. The same question must be asked in the case of the date of Vasubandhu. For the moment I shall leave out of consideration the date of 900 A. D.; as it is found not only in Paramārtha and Hsüan-tsang, but is also otherwise widely diffused, it must derive from an older text, which must yet be determined. But how about the two numbers that are peculiar to Paramārtha and Hsüan-tsang?

Concerning Paramārtha's number, Péri had already found the basis for its interpretation. He showed (Op. cit., p. 360 f. = 22 f.) that Hsüan-tsang's pupil P'u-kuang 普光 in his commentary to *Abhidharmakośa*, IV, v. 110 d (T 1821, ch. 18, p. 282 a, 15 f.) quotes a sentence of Paramārtha to the effect that 1265 years have passed from the Nirvāṇa to the present day. It is true that we do not know when Paramārtha wrote this sentence. But the period that can be taken into consideration is short. Paramārtha's activity in China covers the years from

546 to 569 A. D. Therefore, one of these years must be meant, and more probably one of the years between 563 and 569, in which Paramārtha worked on the translation and explanation of the *Abhidharmakośa*. If we count back from this date, we obtain for the year 1100 A. N. nearly exactly the year 400 A. D. The date in the Life of Vasubandhu, in the form given by Hui-chao, runs as follows 佛滅後一千一百餘年 *fu mieh hou i ch'ien i pai yü nien*, «more than 1100 years after the Nirvāṇa of the Buddha». Nearly the same expression is found in Hui-k'ai's preface to the *Abhidharmakośa* 佛滅度後千一百餘年 *fu mieh to hou ch'ien i pai yü nien*. In both cases it is stated that Vasubandhu lived after 1100 A. N. Thus we accept the 5th century A. D. as the date of Vasubandhu according to Paramārtha.

For the determination of the Nirvāṇa-era of Hsüan-tsang we have no such clear data available as was the case with Paramārtha¹⁾. Still, there is sufficient evidence to show how we must understand his date of Vasubandhu. In his philosophical opinions Hsüan-tsang is mainly a follower of the school of Vasubandhu. One of his most significant works, the *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi* (T 1585), is a commentary on Vasubandhu's *Trimśikā Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi* and gives a comprehensive summary of the expositions of this work, as they were offered by Vasubandhu's school. He depends on the works of ten

¹⁾ Hsüan-tsang in his *Hsi yü chi* (T 2087, ch. 6, p. 903 b, 24-27; St. Julien II, p. 335) lists all the various opinions on the date of the Nirvāṇa, without deciding in favour of any of them. He says: "The different schools calculate variously from the death of the Buddha. Some say it is more than 1200 years since then. Others say, more than 1300 years. Others say, more than 1500. Others say that 900 years have passed, but not yet full 1000 years". According to our preceding discussion, he seems however to have followed the first opinion.

Indian commentators. Two of them were contemporaries of Vasubandhu. The remaining eight who formed his chief source, – the foremost among them was Dharmapāla, revered by Hsüan-tsang as his highest authority, – belonged to a later period, having flourished after 1100 A. N., as stated by the disciples of Hsüan-tsang (cf. e. g. K'uei-chi, *Ch'êng wei shih lun shu chi*, T 1830, ch. I, p. 231 c. 4 千一百年後 *ch'ien i pai nien hou*). We are able to tell with absolute certainty how this date is to be understood. In India Hsüan-tsang was able to come into contact with personal pupils of these men; from the information he got from them it appears clearly that those eight scholars lived all of them in the 6th century. In the case of Dharmapāla we can even calculate his exact dates as 530–561 A. D. The statement “1100 years A. N.” refers therefore to the 6th century A. D. If now Hsüan-tsang, on the basis of the information he collected in Ayodhyā, the living place of Vasubandhu, tells us that Vasubandhu lived “within 1000 years” after the Nirvāṇa (— 千年中 *i ch'ien nien chung*)¹⁾, it follows that Vasubandhu lived 100 years earlier than those commentators. We obtain therefore the 5th century A. D. as his date according to Hsüan-tsang.

1) In the interpretation of these words I follow J. Takakusu, who takes them to mean the time from 1000 to 1100. But even following the interpretation of Péri, who understands them as 900–1000, no difference is made to our demonstration; because, as Péri himself admits (Op. cit., p. 385 = 46), the expressions “after X years” and “within X years” are employed as synonymous. Cf. e.g. the synonymous expressions in Péri p. 378 = 40 “après les 1100 ans” and p. 381 = 43 “dans les 1100 ans”. The interval between Vasubandhu and his commentators, on which our argument is based, remains in any case the same. On the question of the meaning of this Chinese expression, see also O. FRANKE, *The Five Hundred and Nine Hundred Years*, in *JRAS*, 1914, pp. 398–401, and J. TAKAKUSU, *The Date of Vasubandhu in the “Nine Hundreds”*, *ibid.*, pp. 1013–1014.

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In this way we have reached a very important result. It has come to the light that Paramārtha and Hsüan-tsang give no different dates for Vasubandhu. Their numbers are merely based on different Nirvāṇa-eras; but in reality they refer to one and the same date, viz. the 5th century A. D. There are therefore not three dates for Vasubandhu, but only two: the usual date 900 A. N., about which for the moment we can only say that it points to a time prior to 400 A. D., and Paramārtha's and Hsüan-tsang's date, which refers to the period 400-500 A. D.

The facts that we have got to explain are thus the following. We have two dates for Vasubandhu; a widely diffused earlier one, and a later one which suddenly emerges, but after some time is displaced again by the earlier one, which henceforward is alone valid. The tradition of the two dates is such, that we cannot lightly reject either of them. We cannot reject the earlier one, because of its wide diffusion and of the general recognition it met everywhere; nor the later one, because it reposes on the evidence of our two best and most trustworthy authorities. But how are we to account for this striking fact?

All difficulties disappear at once, if we admit that the tradition really concerns two different persons, who later were confused with each other and thrown together. It is but natural that at first only the date of the earlier person is current; then the date of the later one is added. When the confusion begins, we can observe a constant effort to bring into agreement and to eliminate one of the two dates. Of course the older one wins, as it has already stricken deeper roots.

This assumption would thus make everything clear. But the decisive question is whether it finds support in the tradition. I think that the reply is in the affirmative. Our next task is therefore to examine the available evidence from this new angle. We must, however premise a remark, which may seem obvious enough, but which has been very often acted against. In this and similar cases it is not enough to collect pieces of evidence and to marshal them together, because in this way we should only get lost in a confused maze of conflicting statements. We must scrutinize them as to their age and their value and we must utilize them accordingly. Time above all plays an outstanding role, in view of the particularities of Indian tradition. Thus, of our two chief authorities Paramārtha and Hsüan-tsang, it is Paramārtha who carries the greater weight by far. It is true that both are personally trustworthy. But Hsüan-tsang is later by a century, and we can see at every pace what sort of deformation tradition underwent during these hundred years. We may point out, e. g., how Paramārtha's simple and credible account of the discussion between Saṃghabhadra and Vasubandhu (T 2049, p. 190 c, 2-12; in Takakusu, B II, p. 45) has grown into the fantastic unlikely narrative of Hsüan-tsang (T 2087, ch. 4, p. 891 c, 16-892 b, 3 and T 2053, ch. 2, p. 232 c, 21-233 a, 3; in St. Julien, II, pp. 222-228 and I, p. 107 f.)¹⁾. In such conditions Paramārtha must be accepted as the chief witness, and therefore in my discussion I start from his data.

Here I must lay stress on the following fact. We have four texts, of which we may consider Paramārtha

¹⁾ Cf. also the account of the development of the Asaṅga legend in SYLVAIN LÉVI, *Mahāyāna-Sūtrālamkāra*, tome II, Introduction pp. 1-7.

himself to be the original authority; of them, the two containing the date of 1100 A. N. refer to Vasubandhu the author of the *Abhidharmakośa*. The date in the Life of Vasubandhu is found at the point where the story of the antecedents of the *Abhidharmakośa's* compilation is at an end, and where, with the appearance of Vindhyavāsin, Vasubandhu himself enters the scene. The date in Hui-k'ai's preface to the *Abhidharmakośa* refers naturally to the author of that work. On the other hand, the date 900 A. N. refers beyond any doubt to Vasubandhu the brother of Asaṅga. About the *Madhyāntavibhāga*, the unanimous tradition¹⁾ says that the poetic text was communicated by Asaṅga to his brother Vasubandhu, and that the latter wrote the commentary thereto. In the passage quoted by Hui-hsiang we have the clear mention of Asaṅga's and Vasubandhu's common father Kauśika. It is also noteworthy that K'uei-chi expressly characterizes the date of 900 A. N. as a Mahāyāna tradition (*Ch'êng-wei-shih lun shu chi*, T 1830, ch. I, p. 231 c, 1 f. 今依大乘几百年間天親菩薩出世 *chin i ta ch'êng chiu pai nien chien t'ien ch'in p'u sa ch'u shih*), which points towards an antagonism to the tradition about the author of the Hinayānic work *Abhidharmakośa*.

Are we therefore compelled to distinguish between Vasubandhu the author of the *Abhidharmakośa*, and Vasubandhu the brother of Asaṅga? It is a certain fact that there were two bearers of the name Vasubandhu.

¹⁾ This tradition, which is based on Vasubandhu's introductory stanza, is found in Sthiramati's *Madhyāntavibhāgatika*, ed. S. Yamaguchi, P. 2, 1 ff. It is also attested for the Indian commentator Candrapāla (cf. K'UEI-CHI, *Wei shih êrh shih lun shu chi*, T 1834, p. 1009 c, 2 ff.) and was accepted also by the Chinese authors.

Yaśomitra, the author of a commentary to the *Abhidharmakośa*, about whom we shall have occasion to speak later, clearly states that there was an older Vasubandhu, who lived before the author of the *Abhidharmakośa*. We need only to identify this older Vasubandhu with the brother of Asaṅga, and everything becomes clear. As we shall see, all the difficulties, with which we were confronted in ascertaining the date of Vasubandhu, disappear as well.

It may, however, seem that some insuperable objections bar the way to this theory. Our oldest and best authority, Paramārtha, in his biography of Vasubandhu treats the brother of Asaṅga and the author of the *Abhidharmakośa* as one and the same person. Is it conceivable that Paramārtha, separated as he is from the author of the *Abhidharmakośa* by such a short length of time, should have confused him with another, older writer?

In front of this, we must first ask a counter-question: Is such a confusion really inconceivable? Let us recall to our minds the data of the case. Paramārtha is born 500 A. D. Vasubandhu, the author of the *Abhidharmakośa*, lies for him so far back, as for us a man who was born in the time of Napoleon I and died at an old age in the time of Bismarck. And the question which we have to decide, is whether it is possible that he should have mistaken this man for a contemporary of Frederick the Great. I think that those who know the ways of Indian tradition, will hold such a confusion as very possible. How remote are already from our generation the times of Bismarck! Besides, Paramārtha most probably drew his information from oral tradition. He and his age lacked that solid historical frame, in which we are wont to insert every event. And, last but not least, in

the decades between him and Vasubandhu the Hunnic storm had thundered over India. What such a disaster means, we are able to gauge if we think of what the last ten years have brought upon Europe. With all this, should not Paramārtha have mixed up two persons, of whom the younger was already dead since more than a generation ?

But general considerations of this sort may help to clear our judgement, but are not decisive in scientific questions. We must therefore go back to the sources, and the first thing to do is a closer examination of the above-mentioned biography of Vasubandhu by Paramārtha.

This biography (*P'o-sou p'an tou fa shih chuan*, T 2049; translated by J. Takakusu, T'oung Pao V, 1904, pp. 269-296, and *BEFEO*, IV, 1904, pp. 40-47) begins with a legend on the name of Vasubandhu's native city Puruṣapura (Peshāwar) and goes on telling of his family, of his father, the Brahman Kauśika, and of the three sons Asaṅga, Vasubandhu and Viriñcivatsa. Then follows a new section, which could be called the story of the antecedents of the compilation of the *Abhidharmakośa*. The text gives an account of the great council in Kāśmīr, in which the Abhidharma of the Sarvāstivāda school was collected and the *Mahāvibhāṣāśāstra* was composed, and narrates how the knowledge of this work reached Ayodhyā. Then the narrative passes on to Vasubandhu. We read of the arrival of the Sāṃkhya teacher Vindhyavāsin, his victory over Vasubandhu's teacher Buddhāmītra during Vasubandhu's absence, of Vasubandhu's return and of the composition of the *Paramārthasaptatikā*, in which he confuted Vindhyavāsin. Then follows the composition of the *Abhidharmakośa*, Vasubandhu's dispute with the

grammarians Vasurāta and the appearance of Saṃghabhadra, who polemizes against Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya* and challenges its author to a disputation, but meets with a refusal by Vasubandhu, who alleges his own very old age. Now enters Asaṅga and converts to Mahāyāna his brother Vasubandhu, who after this develops a great literary activity in favour of Mahāyāna. The account closes with a list of the Mahāyāna works of Vasubandhu and a short mention of his death.

The whole account is clearly divided into three parts. The first part, a sort of introduction, treats of Vasubandhu's family. The second, largest part gives a biography of Vasubandhu, centering round the composition of the *Abhidharmakośa*. It begins with the antecedents of the *Abhidharmakośa*, culminates with the composition of the work and ends with the attack by Saṃghabhadra, to which Vasubandhu refuses to react on account of his old age. The third part contains Vasubandhu's conversion to Mahāyāna and his activity in favour of his new faith. The division between the single parts is so accentuated that we can almost speak of a break in the narrative. Particularly the transition from the second to the third part has always stricken the attention of the scholars¹⁾. Vasubandhu stands at the end of a glorious career and has just refused a disputation with Saṃghabhadra on account of his old age. And now we are requested to believe that the old man is converted by his brother and develops yet a far-reaching activity at the service of Mahāyāna. No wonder that scholars should have considered very sceptically this part of the narrative.

8) Cf. e.g. B 39, pp. xxvi f., or E. LAMOTTE, *Le Traité de l'Acte de Vasubandhu*, in *Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques*, IV (1935-1936), p. 179.

The difficulty disappears once we admit that the author of the *Abhidharmakośa* and the brother of Asaṅga are different from each other, and that we have here accounts which originally concerned different persons and which were welded together only on account of the confusion between these persons. With the second part, the biography of Vasubandhu the author of the *Abhidharmakośa* is at an end. Only a short mention of his death is still lacking. To this, a piece from a biography of Vasubandhu, the brother of Asaṅga, has been added. Apparently it was preceded by an account of Asaṅga. Now his brother Vasubandhu is brought in, and an account of his conversion and his activity for Mahāyāna is given. And nothing forbids us to admit that the brother of Asaṅga was in the full force of his age at the time of his conversion, so that there are no objections to his widespread activity for Mahāyāna. The following is also worthy of notice. This section begins with the words (T 2049, p. 190 c, 12; Takakusu, B II, p. 46): “The Teacher (Vasubandhu) had earlier completely mastered the teachings of the 18 schools (of Hīnayāna). He understood the Hīnayāna in the best of manners and professed the Hīnayāna: he did not believe in Mahāyāna, because he did not hold Mahāyāna to be the utterance of the Buddha. When the master Asaṅga saw that this younger brother of his was superior in intelligence to mankind, that his spirit was deep and comprehensive and that he understood both the inner and the outer, he became afraid that he might write a book and confute Mahāyāna, ecc.”. In this manner no person is ever introduced, whose life has just been narrated for the greater part and of whose exceptional attainings mention has been already made at length. This is rather

the typical introduction of a new personage, and fits perfectly the brother of Asaṅga, whose activity for Hīnayāna was extolled, but whose Hīnayāna works were forgotten¹⁾, while his Mahāyāna works represented the essential content of his life and laid the foundation for his real fame. Lastly, I should like to point out that there is not a single word about Asaṅga in the whole of the second part of the biography, which treats of the author of the *Abhidharmakośa*, while on the contrary he plays an outstanding role in the life of his brother Vasubandhu, where his absence would be unthinkable.

A minute consideration of Paramārtha's life of Vasubandhu shows, therefore, that it is not at all opposed to the assumption that there were two bearers of the name Vasubandhu, who were confused only at a later time. The conditions of the tradition in the biography can be understood only upon this supposition.

One thing more. It goes against the grain, above all, to lay to the door of Paramārtha such a confusion. But goes this confusion really back to Paramārtha? As we have seen, the Life of Vasubandhu is composed of several parts, which are essentially independent and appear to be only loosely knit together. This state of fact has led Takakusu (B 11, p. 52) to the statement that the Life is not an unitary work translated by Paramārtha, but that it "represents a sort of mosaic, composed of materials which he took from different books or also from the memory of events with which he became acquainted when he was still living in India"²⁾. To this we may

1) Cf. the evidence of Chi-tsang, to be discussed later (p. 49 f.).

2) Takakusu (B 12, p. 38) expresses himself in similar terms: His "Life of Vasubandhu" is not a translation of another's work, as is generally consi-

add a peculiar piece of evidence, on which emphasis was laid already by Takakusu (Op. cit., p. 47, n. 6). At the end of the biography of Vasubandhu there are the following sentences (T 2049, p. 191 a, 13 ff.): "All the above up to this point contains records of Vasubandhu, his elder and his younger brother. From now on follows the record of the travels of the Master of the Tripiṭaka (Paramārtha) from the city of T'ai (Nanking) in the east as far as Kuang-chou (Canton), of the revision of the translations of the Mahāyāna works and of the events after his death, in order to hand them down to posterity". This sentence, if we do not wish to reject it out of hand as incredible and impossible to explain, allows of only one interpretation: The Life of Vasubandhu is no personal work of Paramārtha, but has been pieced together by someone among his disciples on the basis of information hailing from him. This conclusion in its turn places within the realm of possibility the assumption, that the confusion of the two Vasubandhus in the Life is not at all to be attributed to Paramārtha, but is due to a mistake by his pupils. In favour of this assumption there is in any case the wholly exterior connection of the information about the two Vasubandhus in the Life, as we have seen above. Another point in its favour is the fact that Paramārtha, as I have set forth above, in his data about the living period of Vasubandhu draws a distinction between the brother of Asaṅga and the author of the *Abhidharmakośa*. In this

dered, but seems to be a memorandum patched together from his own recollections of incidents and of traditions, or it may be a note taken down by his oral transmissions. That it is not a translation can safely be asserted from the fact that it originally included in the text an account of his own travels in China, which was, however, struck out by a later hand, perhaps with the purpose of giving the work an appearance of a more sacred character.

connection I would point out another particular. In the chronological data given by Hui-hsiang it is said (T 2068, ch. I, p. 52 c, 29 ff.): “In the 900 years Vasubandhu, the son of the great Brahman Kauśika, royal teacher of Puruṣapura, wrote in Northern India a work on the lotus of religion (*Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*) etc.”. Here we have Vasubandhu indicated with greater precision through the mention of the name of his father. This is unusual and striking. What sense would have such an addition, if there was only one famous and widely-known person of this name? If on the contrary Paramārtha knew of two persons of the same name, whom he wished to distinguish in this way, then the addition is justified and proper. Posterity, which knew of only one Vasubandhu, found such additions unnecessary. Now, if we admit that Paramārtha in his dates distinguishes between the brother of Asaṅga and the author of the *Abhidharmakośa*, then we can hardly suppose that he confused the two in his oral account, which was the basis of the biography. Of course we cannot attain here absolute certainty, on account of the loss of most of the works of Paramārtha, which could have given us further information. In any case, we must concede a great probability in favour of the supposition, that his pupils are to be made responsible for the confusion in the biography.

The result of our critic of the information on Vasubandhu due to Paramārtha can be summarized as follows. In his statements about the date of Vasubandhu, Paramārtha distinguishes between two bearers of this name, viz. Asaṅga's brother, as whose date he gives 900 A. N., and the author of the *Abhidharmakośa*, whom he places about 1100 A. N. In the Life of Vasubandhu

these two personages are thrown together, and the information about them is welded into an unity. This connection is however wholly external. The confusion is apparently only at its beginnings, and it is very probable that it goes back not to Paramārtha, but to his pupils. Paramārtha's evidence is therefore in favour of drawing a distinction between Vasubandhu, the brother of Asaṅga, and Vasubandhu, the author of the *Abhidharmakośa*.

So far the data of our earliest authority Paramārtha. Concerning the following period, the confusion of the two Vasubandhus has gradually become general in the school of Paramārtha. This is shown by Tao-chi's date of Vasubandhu (see above p. 3), which has not yet been discussed. Tao-chi refers the date 1100 A. N. to Asaṅga and his brother Vasubandhu. The same can be said of another witness, not mentioned by Péri, i. e. of T'an-ch'ien, the foremost representative of the school of Paramārtha, who lived 542–607 A. D. He too in his preface to the *Mahāyānasamgrahabhāṣya* (T 1595, ch. I, 153 b, 10 f.) commits the same mistake as Tao-chi.

In the school of Hsüan-tsang the confusion is general. The tradition has reached here a stage, which in India is regularly met with after a certain time. Truth and legend are inextricably mixed together in such a way, that we still can utilize some of its elements with the help of other pieces of information, but it is impossible to build up a scientific demonstration upon this material alone. In our case too we find in Hsüan-tsang and his school the two dates of Vasubandhu side by side, and we can recognize their meaning with the help of the clarity we have gained from other sources. But it would be utterly impossible to draw certain conclusions from this material alone.

Nevertheless, we have another witness, besides Paramārtha, who distinguishes between Vasubandhu the brother of Asaṅga, and Vasubandhu the author of the *Abhidharmakośa*. It is Yaśomitra, a younger contemporary of Paramārtha¹⁾ and the author of the *Sphuṭārthā*, a commentary to the *Abhidharmakośa*. Yaśomitra nowhere speaks directly of Vasubandhu, as his work does not give him the occasion for it. Still, we find with him some data, which show that he was conscious of the diversity of the two bearers of this name.

First, in three passages of his work (*Sphuṭārthā*, ed. U. Wogihara, p. 35, 20; 289, 6; 347, 9) Yaśomitra mentions an older Vasubandhu (*vṛddhācārya-Vasubandhuḥ* and *sthaviro Vasubandhuḥ*) as supporter of an opinion quored in the *Abhidharmakośa*. In a place (p. 289, 6) he characterizes him also more precisely as the teacher of Manoratha. Thus he knows, besides the author of the *Abhidharmakośa*, also an older bearer of the same name.

Furthermore, in a passage where Vasubandhu speaks of *pūrvācāryāḥ*, "teachers of yore" (p. 281, 27 on *Abhidharmakośa*, III, v. 15 c), he explains this expression as "Asaṅga etc." (*pūrvācāryā Yogācārā āryāsaṅgaprabhṛtayaḥ*)²⁾. Asaṅga was therefore for him an old teacher in comparison with the author of the *Abhidharmakośa*. This is expressed even more clearly in a second passage

1) At the beginning of his work Yaśomitra mentions as his forerunners Guṇamati and his pupil Vasumitra, two men who were comparatively insignificant and whose works were soon forgotten. On the other hand he does not mention Sthiramati, the much more important and famous disciple of Guṇamati. This determines his date.

2) What Vasubandhu means with the expression *pūrvācāryāḥ*, is another question. The opinions of the commentators widely differ in each case. This does not, however, touch our argument, for which the only important thing is that Yaśomitra sees in Asaṅga such an old master.

(p. 140, 11). Here he characterizes an opinion expressed in the *Abhidharmakośa* as *ācāryamatam*, as opinion of the teacher, i. e. as personal opinion of the author Vasubandhu. Two lines later he cites in support the old teachers and quotes a formulation which derives from Asaṅga¹. It again appears, therefore, that according to him Asaṅga belonged to a considerably earlier time than the author of the *Abhidharmakośa*; and thus he cannot possibly have considered the latter as the brother of Asaṅga.

The attempt has been made to invalidate this piece of evidence, by maintaining that Yaśomitra merely wished to indicate the school of the old masters by its most famous name, without having the intention of saying that Asaṅga was earlier than Vasubandhu². To this we may oppose the fact that Asaṅga is the founder of the Yogācāra school. He is preceded only by his teacher Maitreya-nātha, who very soon vanished in the shadows behind him. Neither we nor the Indian tradition know

¹ It concerns the definition of *vitarka* and *vicāra*. Yaśomitra writes (p. 140, 13 ff.): *atra Pūrvācāryā āhuḥ vitarkaḥ katamaḥ? cetanāṃ vā nīśrītya prajñāṃ vā paryeṣako manojalpo ('nabhyūhābhyūhāvasthayor yathākramam) sā ca cittasyaudārikatā. vicāraḥ katamaḥ? cetanāṃ vā nīśrītya prajñāṃ vā pratyavekṣako manojalpo ('nabhyūhābhyūhāvasthayor yathākramam) sā ca cittasūkṣmateti*. This the definition according to Asaṅga's *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, cf. T 1605, ch. I, p. 665b, 22–25. The words *anabhyūhābhyūhāvasthayor yathākramam*, which I have enclosed into brackets, are an addition by Yaśomitra, as shown by the same quotation in Haribhadra's *Abhisamayālamkāraḥ*, ed. U. WOGIHARA, Tōkyō 1932–35, p. 29, 3. The corresponding definition in Vasubandhu's *Pañcaskandhaka* (T 1612, p. 849b, 27–29), also preserved by Yaśomitra, p. 64, 25 runs as follows: *vitarkaḥ katamaḥ? paryeṣako manojalpaḥ cetanāprajñāviśeṣaḥ, yā cittasyaudārikatā. vicāraḥ katamaḥ? pratyavekṣako manojalpas tathaiḥvā yā cittasya sūkṣmatā*. Here too Yaśomitra adds the words *anabhyūhāvasthāyāṃ cetanā, abhyūhāvasthāyāṃ prajñeti vyavasthāpyate*.

² N. PÉRI in *La Vallée Poussin, L'Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu*, Louvain 1931, Introduction p. xxvii, and *Vasubandhu et Yaśomitra, troisième chapitre de l'Abhidharmakośa*, London 1914–1918, p. ix, n. 2.

of other old teachers. Shall we invent such masters, merely in order not to accept what the words of Yaśomitra clearly and evidently mean, if impartially considered? ¹⁾

We are thus confronted with the fact that Yaśomitra distinguishes between two bearers of the name Vasubandhu: the author of the *Abhidharmakośa* and an earlier Vasubandhu; besides, he considers Asaṅga as an earlier teacher in comparison with the author of the *Abhidharmakośa*, and therefore cannot possibly have considered him as the latter's brother. The consequence is that, for Yaśomitra, Vasubandhu the author of the *Abhidharmakośa*, and the brother of Asaṅga were different persons. And nothing is more natural than to look upon the brother of Asaṅga as that earlier Vasubandhu.

On the ground of the preceding discussion we reach thus the following result: The nature of the tradition on the date of Vasubandhu and the formation of the biography that has come to us under the name of Paramārtha, as well as the data in Yaśomitra's *Sphuṭārthā*, compel us to distinguish between two bearers of the name Vasubandhu: the brother of Asaṅga and the author of the *Abhidharmakośa*. Of these the earlier, the brother of Asaṅga, lived before 400 A. D., while the later, the author of the *Abhidharmakośa*, is to be placed in the 5th century.

We will now proceed to piece together what the tradition has to say about the two bearers of the name Vasubandhu. We shall try in this way to gain a picture of these two men. At the same time we shall be able to

¹⁾ A parallel to Yaśomitra is offered by Haribhadra, who too in his *Abhisamayālamkāraloka* opposes Asaṅga and his brother Vasubandhu as *pūrvācāryāḥ* to the later representants of the school (*Abhisamayālamkāraloka*, ed. U. Wogihara, p. 75, 8 ff.).

see whether our distinction of the two Vasubandhus is thereby supported and confirmed.

We begin with the author of the *Abhidharmakośa*, or, as we shall call him henceforward, Vasubandhu the younger. The best source on him is that part of the biography by Paramārtha, which refers to him; that is, from the arrival on the scene of the Sāṃkhya teacher Vindhyavāsin down to the refusal of a disputation with Saṃghabhadra on account of his old age. The trustworthy impression which one gains of this account, at least in its main outlines, has been pointed out by many, and specially by Takakusu (B 11, pp. 50-53). And indeed we may trust it in a high degree, since Paramārtha, according to the results reached up to this point, was separated from Vasubandhu the younger by a comparatively small space of time.

About the teaching activity of Vasubandhu, I would like to accept the following data as trustworthy. Vasubandhu was the pupil of Buddhāmītra¹⁾. He disputed with success against the Sāṃkhya teacher Vindhyavāsin. There was no personal encounter, but Vasubandhu confuted the book of Vindhyavāsin (other texts give it the title *Kanakasaptati*)²⁾ in a tract called *Paramārthasapta-*

¹⁾ Buddhāmītra is so unimportant that later fancy would certainly not have made him the teacher of Vasubandhu. It is significant that in the tradition reproduced by Hsüan-tsang he has already been displaced by the better known Manoratha (see below, p. 45). The Mankuwār inscription (*Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, III, by J. F. Fleet, Calcutta 1888, No. 11, pp. 45-47), quoted by K. B. Pathak (B 24), is of the Gupta year 129 (= 448-9 A. D.) and mentions one Buddhāmītra as donor; as far as the date is concerned, it could be due to the teacher of Vasubandhu. But as the name is not of rare occurrence, it seems safer not to lean upon this element.

²⁾ K'UEI-CHI, *Ch'eng wei shih lun shu chi*, T 1830, ch. I, p. 252 b, 6 and ch. 4, p. 379 b, 19; cf. *Yuktidīpikā* (Calcutta Sanskrit Series No. XXIII), p. 176, 6, and also *Nandīsūtra*, Bombay 1924, p. 194 a, 6.

tikā ¹⁾. His principal work was the *Abhidharmakośa*, the composition of which extended over a lengthy period. He successfully defended this work against the attacks of the grammarian Vasurāta. On the other hand, he declined a discussion with the orthodox Vaibhāṣika teacher Saṃghabhadra on account of his old age.

The following data on the external circumstances of his life seem to deserve credit. He enjoyed the favour of a Gupta ruler called Vikramāditya, who entrusted him with the education of his heir apparent Bālāditya. After Bālāditya had ascended the throne, he summoned Vasubandhu to the royal court in Ayodhyā, where he lived greatly honoured by all. Also the statement at the end of the biography, that he died in Ayodhyā at the age of 80, seems to refer to Vasubandhu the younger; because the connection with Ayodhyā is essential in his case, while it seems doubtful for the elder Vasubandhu.

The most important of these data is the connection with the Gupta rulers. If we succeed in ascertaining what Gupta rulers are meant, then we shall gain also an additional element of precision for the date of Vasubandhu the younger. To this effect we shall take up the statements of Paramārtha in the order as they are given. He begins with saying that Vindhyavāsin lived more than 1100 years after the Nirvāṇa, i. e. after 400 A. D. Then follows the dispute of Vindhyavāsin with Buddhmitra, his confutation by Vasubandhu, the composition of the *Abhidharmakośa*, which certainly occupied a long time, and then Bālāditya's accession to the throne and the invitation of Vasubandhu to court. Paramārtha does not say

¹⁾ The Sanskrit form of the title is attested by Kamalaśīla, *Tattvasaṃgrahapañjikā* (Gaekwad's Oriental Series No. XXX-XXXI), p. 129, 21.

how many years after the 1100 years Vindhyavāsin's arrival took place, but the following events, which must be distributed over a lengthy period, render it advisable to look for the accession of Bālāditya rather in the middle than at the beginning of the 5th century. And indeed, about this period we find two Gupta rulers who bore the two names mentioned by Paramārtha. The first is Skandagupta, the last great Gupta ruler (c. 455–467 A. D.), who called himself Vikramāditya. The second is his nephew Narasiṃhagupta (c. 467–473), who bore the name Bālāditya. Of Bālāditya we hear that he was a zealous supporter of Buddhism, and that he caused a magnificent building to be erected at Nālandā, the great seat of Buddhistic learning ¹⁾. I think therefore that the equation, already suggested by Liebich (B 8 and B 36, pp. 268 ff.) and Takakusu (B 11, p. 56 and B 12, p. 44), of Skandagupta and Narasiṃhagupta with the protectors of Vasubandhu can be taken as certain. No difficulty is presented by the fact that Narasiṃhagupta did not directly succeed his uncle Skandagupta, and that between the two we must place the reign of his father Puragupta Prakāśāditya: on account of the particular character of Indian tradition, this short reign of probably one year can easily have been forgotten after 50 years.

¹⁾ The building in Nālandā, which is also attested by epigraphy (*Epigraphia Indica*, XX (1929–30), pp. 37–46), is usually brought into relation with Narasiṃha Bālāditya. In the work of Hsüan-tsang it seems however that Narasiṃha has been mixed up with a second Bālāditya, because Narasiṃhagupta Bālāditya (c. 467–473) can hardly have been the adversary of Mihiragula (reigning since c. 502). Bālāditya is also stated by Hsüan-tsang to have been the grandson of Buddhagupta (apparently the same as Budhagupta). In any case the younger Bālāditya, perhaps Bhānugupta (about 510), is so late, that he is wholly out of question as a protector of Vasubandhu.

In order to make an earlier date for Vasubandhu possible, the attempt has been made to identify the rulers mentioned by Paramārtha with Candragupta I, the founder of the Gupta dynasty, and his son Samudragupta (V. A. Smith, *The early History of India*⁴, Oxford 1924, p. 347), on the ground that Candragupta I may have been actually known as Vikramāditya, and that Samudragupta in his youth must have borne the title of Bālāditya. But a scientific discussion cannot base itself on what name could have been borne by a king, but it must find out who actually bore it. The fact is that, out of all the Gupta rulers, Skandagupta and Narasiṃhagupta alone bore, succeeding each other, the titles of Vikramāditya and Bālāditya.

Only one piece of evidence has been up to now brought forward in support of Vasubandhu's connection with earlier Gupta rulers¹⁾. It comes from the *Kāvya-lamkā-ravṛtti* of Vāmana, a writer on poetics who lived about 800 A. D. at the court of king Jayapīḍa of Kaśmīr. He quotes in his work the following verse (*Vāmana's Lehrbuch der Poetik*, ed. by C. Cappeller, Jena 1875, p. 31; in the edition of the Vānīvilās Press p. 86):

*so 'yam samprati Candraguptatanayaś candraprakāśo yuvā
jāto bhūpatir āśrayah kṛtadhiyām diṣṭyā kṛtārthaśramah*

¹⁾ Vāmana's evidence is discussed in B 15, B 18, p. 376 = 38, B 19, B 20, B 21, B 22, B 23 and B 26. I have gone deeper into the matter in spite of the scarce importance of this evidence, because the case is a good example of how the uncritical quotation of sources of different value can only result into increased confusion. There is also the following to be noted. Haraprasad Shastri and Narasimbachar uphold the lection Subandhu and refer it to the poet Subandhu. Smith identifies Candragupta's son with Samudragupta, Pathak with Kumāragupta I, Bhandarkar with Govindagupta. Truly, so many scholars, so many opinions. And on account of such uncertain opinions we should reject the witness of Paramārtha!

Balāditya is not attested for any of the above mentioned rulers. And the Buddhistic tendencies, which are well attested for Narasiṃhagupta, should be supposed by way of conjecture in the case of the other rulers. The evidence of Vāmana and of Paramārtha is therefore in contradiction, and we are confronted with the problem, to whom of the two we should give our preference.

In order to decide this question, we must before all keep in view that the verse quoted by Vāmana goes back if it is true, to the Gupta age. But in the verse we are, only told that the son of a Candragupta on his accession patronized poets and scholars. The relation with Vasubandhu reposes on the statement of Vāmana alone. It is beyond our knowledge on what sources he relies in this case. But in this way we have already pronounced our judgement on his statement, because the relation between our two authorities shapes itself out as follows. On the one hand stands Paramārtha, who was born about 20 years after the death of Vasubandhu, on the other Vāmana, who lived about 250 years later than Paramārtha. How strongly had changed e. g. the tradition about Balāditya during the 100 years that lie between Paramārtha and Hsüan-tsang! So strongly, that V. A. Smith (B 26, p. 334) refuses to recognize to the statements of Hsüan-tsang any independent value in front of those of Paramārtha. Now another 150 years are added. Moreover, Vasubandhu stands for Paramārtha at the centre of his interest; it is his life, about which he writes. Vāmana writes a manual of poetics, in which he inserts an occasional remark on Vasubandhu, the origin of which remains unknown. We know very well what we should expect from Indian commentators in such cases. Now and then

“ This young son of Candragupta, of moon-like splendour, the refuge of the wise, now that he has become a king, has happily reached the goal of his exertions ”. To this he adds the remark: *āśrayaḥ kṛtadhiyām ity asya Vasubandhu-sācivyo pakṣepaparavāt sābhiprāyatvam*. “ The words ‘ refuge of the wise ’ contain a covert allusion, as they hint at Vasubandhu’s ministership ”. Vāmana accordingly quotes the verse as an example of covert allusion (*abhiprāya*) and considers the words *kṛtadhiyām* as a hint that the ruler, whom the verse praises, made Vasubandhu his minister. The text is not sure. Beside *Vasubandhu-* we find also the lections *ca Subandhu-*, *Subandhu-* and *Budha-*. But the lection *Vasubandhu-* is possible, perhaps even probable. If, however, Vasubandhu was the minister of the son of a Candragupta, then the above accepted connection with Skandagupta and Narasiṃhagupta falls to the ground.

How are we to appraise this evidence? The verse quoted by Vāmana seems to go back to the Gupta age, and may therefore represent a contemporary piece of evidence. The sons of a Candragupta are, if we take into consideration the known Gupta rulers, Samudragupta (c. 335–375), the son of Candragupta I (c. 320–335) and Kumāragupta I (c. 413–455), the son of Candragupta II (c. 375–413). Some have thought even of Govindagupta, a little known son of Candragupta II. But in no case can we reach an agreement with the data of Paramārtha. That Vasubandhu should have become a minister already at the accession of Kumāragupta I (413) and should have continued his activity under Skandagupta (c. 455–467) and Narasiṃhagupta (c. 467–473), is scarcely thinkable even in view of his traditionally accepted age of 80. Besides, Candragupta II has borne the title of Vikramāditya, but the name

some valuable tradition, but side to side with it the worst examples of superficiality and often the purest nonsense. Under such circumstances we are compelled to say, that according to the rules of sound criticism the authority of Vāmana has no weight at all in comparison to Paramārtha's. We could perhaps suppose that the statement of Vāmana might refer to Vasubandhu the elder. But this is precluded by the fact that a relation of this Vasubandhu with any ruler is nowhere mentioned. I think it therefore most probable that Vāmana had a hazy knowledge of the high position enjoyed by Vasubandhu the younger at the court of a Gupta ruler, and that he utilized this knowledge in the wrong place. I do not think that we must look for more than this behind his statement.

In addition to the above, I should like to point out another fact which goes against a connection between Vasubandhu and the earlier Gupta rulers. It is well known that during the rule of the Gupta dynasty the royal residence was changed from Pāṭaliputra to Ayodhyā, and everything points to the 5th century as the period of this change. Whether this is to be connected with a destruction of Pāṭaliputra by the Huns, as supposed by Liebich (B 36, p. 269 and 274 f.), is a moot question. But the Chinese pilgrim Fa-hsien at the beginning of the 5th century still found Pāṭaliputra in full splendour, while he has nothing to say about Ayodhyā. The shifting of the residence to Ayodhyā seems therefore to have taken place afterwards, perhaps under the reign of Kumāragupta I (c. 413–455)¹⁾. In any case the role of Ayodhyā in the

¹⁾ It seems to me very likely that this transfer of the capital to Ayodhyā gave to Kālidāsa the inspiration to the 16th canto of the *Raghuvamśa* (cf. Liebich, B 36, p. 275).

account of Paramārtha is in contradiction with the state of affairs under the early Gupta rulers ¹⁾.

Summing up the essentials once more, the facts are as follows. Our oldest and best authority Paramārtha states that Vasubandhu enjoyed the favour of two Gupta rulers, who bore the names of Vikramāditya and Bālāditya. The data on the living period of Vasubandhu the younger lead us to the middle of the 5th century. About the same time we find two Gupta rulers, viz. Skandagupta and Narasiṃhagupta, who closely follow each other and bear the names of Vikramāditya and Bālāditya. They are the only Gupta rulers within the whole of the period under consideration, of whom this may be said. Any attempt to drag on other rulers compels us to forced and artificial conjectures. Under such circumstances, scientific logic requires, in my opinion, that we identify the Gupta rulers mentioned by Paramārtha with Skandagupta and Narasiṃhagupta; I consider therefore this identification as established.

Now it becomes possible for us to settle with more precision the date of Vasubandhu. According to Paramārtha's account, the climax of Vasubandhu's activity took place still under the reign of Vikramāditya. From the reign of Bālāditya we hear only the discussion with the grammarian Vasurāta and the refusal of the challenge of Saṃghabhadra on account of his old age. Nothing is

¹⁾ I would attribute little importance to the fact, pointed out by Liebich (B 36, p. 273), that according to the account of Hsüan-tsang the king Vikramāditya "shortly afterwards lost his kingdom" (T 2087, ch. 2, p. 881 a, 2; in St. JULIEN, II, p. 118). Hsüan-tsang's historical information about this period is too corrupted. At any rate, this suits better a ruler, who at the end of his reign had to fight so hard against the Huns as Skandagupta did, than any other member of the dynasty.

heard of a connection with a later ruler. We must also consider that Vasubandhu, when he was charged with the education of the heir apparent, had evidently reached a mature age and the climax of his fame. Thus it seems to me probable that Vasubandhu was already an aged man at the time of Bālāditya's accession, and died during his reign or shortly later. Taking in account also his traditional duration of life of 80 years, I would propose for his dates about 400–480 A. D.

We turn now to Vasubandhu the elder, the brother of Asaṅga. The first and the last part of the biography by Paramārtha refer to him. We read there of his native city Puruṣapura, of his father Kauśika and of his brothers Asaṅga and Viriñcivatsa. We are also told that he originally belonged to the Sarvāstivāda school, that he was later converted by his brother Asaṅga to Mahāyāna, and that he developed a widespread activity in the service of Mahāyāna. These are the essential facts. The mention of a life of 80 years and of a death in Ayodhyā I would rather refer, as above set forth, to Vasubandhu the younger. Besides, from other statements of Paramārtha we gather that he lived 900 years after the Nirvāṇa.

We cannot, however, utilize this last statement, because Paramārtha apparently took it over already in this form from an older tradition, and thus we do not know to which Nirvāṇa-era it refers. We must therefore look for other evidence about his date. Such evidence is extant, and in this case too the more important materials have been collected already by Péri. Takakusu (B 33) has tried to invalidate this evidence, because it contradicts to his ideas of the dates of Vasubandhu; but his reasons are so insufficient and open to question, that we cannot

attach great value to them ¹⁾. In the following discussion I shall therefore take again as my starting point Péri, and shall discuss Takakusu's objections in their proper place.

In the first place I should like to discuss the evidence of Kumārajīva. It has been called into doubt, and Takakusu treats it as non-existent ²⁾; but it passes the test

¹⁾ The insufficient demonstration by Takakusu has been objected to several times by Péri (e. g. B 18, p. 362 = 24 and 368 = 30). Chinese information about Indian authors and their works is often uncertain and contradictory. In such cases we must carefully sift the single statements and weigh them against each other. How this should be done, has been shown in an exemplary manner by P. Demiéville in his paper *Sur l'authenticité du Ta tch'eng k'i sin louen* (*Bulletin de la Maison Franco-Japonaise*, Tome II, No. 2, Tōkyō 1929). Péri too fairly enough reproduces always the evidence pro and con. Takakusu, on the contrary, merely gives the evidence favourable to his contention, and thinks himself quit of his duty with this. Even more objectionable is that he passes under silence all the arguments of Péri, which contradict his thesis, and treats them as non-existing. This is apt to mislead outsiders, who are not fully conversant with the subject. Lastly, several times, and especially in his last paper (B 33) he makes apodictic statements, without adducing evidence or proof. It is not the scientific usage to make simple statements and to throw the burden of the proof on the opponent. Under such circumstances, the discussion of Takakusu cannot be given the weight to which the fame of this scholar should entitle it.

²⁾ B 33, p. 80. The personal witness of Kumārajīva is passed under silence by Takakusu. He does not even take into consideration the reasons which Péri opposes to his doubts on the translations of Vasubandhu's works; he limits himself to the more than doubtful argumentum ex silentio, that Kumārajīva did not write a biography of Vasubandhu! Generally speaking, the fashion in which Takakusu employs argumenta ex silentio is very peculiar. Beside the lack of a biography by Kumārajīva, he adduces (B 12, pp. 39 f.; B 33, p. 80) in support for his late date of Vasubandhu the fact that his name is mentioned neither by Fa-hsien nor by Sung Yün, but appears the first time with Paramārtha. Whoever has read the work of Fa-hsien, knows that Fa-hsien, in contrast to Hsüan-tsang, had no literary and philosophical interests. He undertook the journey to India in order to get precise information about the monastic rules of Buddhism, the Vinaya. Thus he tells us that he succeeded in procuring the Vinaya of the Mahāsāṃghika, of the Sarvāstivādin and of the Mahīśāsaka. He mentions also his obtainment of some canonical works, such as the *Dūṛghāgama*, *Samyuktāgama*, *Parinirvāṇasūtra*. Lastly he mentions also the Abhidharma of the Mahāsāṃghika, and, incidentally and wholly isolated, the above

of closer examination. In order to assess it at its proper value, we must, however, take into account also the quality of this evidence. In the works of the Buddhist schools of that time it was common usage to limit statements and discussion to the compass of one own's school. With the exception of professedly polemical works and of single traditional polemical sections, often and for long stretches we may find not a single mention of other schools and their representatives. To give an example, there are many works of the Yogācāra literature, in which neither Nāgārjuna nor his works are mentioned or discussed. And yet nobody will dare to assert that those authors did not know Nāgārjuna. It is thus a general rule, that we may expect a full tradition about a teacher only within his own school. Information from outside is always more or less occasional or casual. This rule must absolutely be taken into account in employing an argumentum ex silentio. Now, Kumārajīva belongs to the Madhyamaka school. Vasubandhu is one of the masters of the Yogācāra school. A priori we can expect only occasional mentions from Kumārajīva. From this point of view, Kumārajīva's information about Vasubandhu is relatively copious.

Kumārajīva, one of the most important Buddhist missionaries in China, was born in 344 A. D. in Eastern Turkestan, arrived in China in 385 and died there in 413. He originally belonged to Hīnayāna, but was early converted to Mahāyāna, under the decisive influence of a teacher

mentioned rifacimento of the *Abhidharmasāra*. But this is all. Vasubandhu is not mentioned, but so are not Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva or any other of the great masters of the early period. The same is to be said with stronger reason of Sung Yün, who does not speak at all about things literary. In this way we could even prove that Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva could not have lived before the 5th century.

called Sūryasoma. Péri (B 18, p. 375 f. = 37 f.) has called attention to an important statement by Kumārajīva, handed down by his pupil Sêng-chao 僧肇 in a postface to the translation of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, and preserved in Hui-hsiang's *Fa hua ching chuan chi* (T 2068, ch. 2, p. 54 b, 6 ff.). It runs as follows: "Kumārajīva says. . . When I formerly dwelt in India, I travelled through the five parts of India, studying the Mahāyāna. As a pupil of the great teacher Sūryasoma I found true understanding. Full of great affection, he gave me an Indian book and said: 'The sun of the Buddha has set in the west. The remaining light will reach the North-East. This book here is meant for the North-East. Do diffuse it with all care. Once upon a time the great teacher Vasubandhu has composed this instruction (*upadeśa*). It is the right instruction. Thou shalt not accept nor reject its stanzas. And thou shalt not accept nor reject its text'. I took it with great reverence and carried it in my book-basket when I came here".

Kumārajīva says thus that in his youth his teacher Sūryasoma recommended to him as fundamental a work by Vasubandhu, probably the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkopadeśa*. His term as a pupil with Sūryasoma, according to the account in his biography, should be placed about 360 A. D. Already in that time a Mahāyāna work by Vasubandhu enjoyed wide popularity. How far we can press the expression "once upon a time the great teacher Vasubandhu has composed", in order to get an earlier authorship, must be left undecided for the moment.

A second piece of evidence by Kumārajīva is represented by his translations of works of Vasubandhu. Two translations by Kumārajīva of works of Vasubandhu are preser-

ved: a commentary on Āryadeva's *Śataśāstra* (T 1569), translated in 404 A. D., and the so-called *Bodhicittot-pādanaśāstra* (T 1659), of the year 405 A. D. Vasubandhu's authorship of both works has been called into doubt. But in both cases the objections are not decisive, and Vasubandhu's authorship would not have been called into doubt on their ground alone, were it not for the desire to avoid recognizing such an early date for translations of works by Vasubandhu. This motive is now eliminated, once we admit that they are works by the elder Vasubandhu.

The facts are the following. Kumārajīva has translated, along with Āryadeva's *Śataśāstra*, a commentary which was later attributed to Vasubandhu. The text itself mentions as its author one Vasu k'ai-shih 婆藪開士. This deviates from the manner in which Vasubandhu is usually indicated in later times, and Takakusu has therefore maintained that this is a teacher Vasu, unknown from other sources. But the unusual denomination alone is no sufficient proof, because that which was usual in the 6th and 7th centuries, is not necessarily valid for the 4th and 5th centuries. Moreover, Péri (B 18, pp. 362-368 = 24-30) has made the following remarks: In the first place, *k'ai-shih* is a Buddhist title current in the earlier period; it is employed in the same way as later on Bodhisattva. Secondly, the abbreviation Vasu for Vasubandhu is absolutely admissible, in view of numerous other such abbreviations which we meet in the Chinese tradition. Thirdly, that later tradition sees in Vasu Vasubandhu, the famous brother of Asaṅga, while nothing is known of another Vasu. Such being the circumstances, we have no ground to deviate from the given tradition. Generally speaking, on Indian ground, where certain evidence and

documents so seldom occur, we cannot lightly reject a tradition; otherwise we should cut away most of the ground from under the feet of historical research. In my opinion we must here follow the principle that every tradition, if not improbable from internal evidence, must serve as working hypothesis at least as long as no weighty reason are brought to bear against it. No such weighty reasons are however extant in the present case. The only thing that can be said against this tradition, is the difficulty to accept such an early date for Vasubandhu. And, as we have shown above, this difficulty is removed once we admit the authorship of the elder Vasubandhu.

Concerning the *Bodhicittotpādanaśāstra*, Péri (Op. cit., pp. 368-372 = 30-34) has shown that in the early Chinese catalogues this work is either listed as anonymous, or attributed to Vasubandhu. Only one catalogue, the *K'ai yüan shih chiao mu lu* (T 2154, ch. 12, p. 609 c, 1-4) speaks of an uncertainty in the tradition; it says: "Some say that the Bodhisattva Vasubandhu composed it. But some say also that the Bodhisattva Maitreya expounded it. We cannot tell which one is right". Vasubandhu's authorship is therefore the better attested one. Besides, Péri has given also a quite convincing explanation for the oscillation of the tradition between Vasubandhu and Maitreya: as in several other cases, it seems that Vasubandhu has based his book on a work of Maitreya, which he elaborated or commented upon. The final settlement of the question can be brought only by an examination of the text, which, however, plays only a minor role in our inquiry.

We find also no objection in the fact that Kumārajīva translated only single works of Vasubandhu, while the

majority of the works of Vasubandhu the elder found only later a translator. The translation of Indian works into Chinese often depended from external circumstances; above all, on the time of the arrival of missionaries of the school concerned in China. The great representatives of the Yogācāra school, who translated the greater part of the Mahāyāna works of the elder Vasubandhu into Chinese, Bodhiruci and Ratnamati, lived only in the 6th century. Kumārajīva, as a follower of the Madhyamaka school, of course translated only those few works of Vasubandhu, which for some motive or other were of interest for him. As a matter of fact, one of the two works translated by him, the above mentioned commentary to the *Śataśāstra*, is a commentary to a Madhyamaka text. Péri (Op. cit., pp. 373 f. = 35 f.) has rendered it very likely that this text made a particularly deep impression on Kumārajīva in his youth, and therefore was highly appreciated by him. Besides, it is not at all peculiar for the elder Vasubandhu to have composed a commentary on a Madhyamaka work. It is characteristic of Maitreyanātha, the teacher of his brother Asaṅga, that he tried to blend Madhyamaka ideas with the Yogācāra doctrine. Asaṅga himself wrote a commentary to Nāgārjuna's *Madhyamakakārikā*, the *Madhyamakānusāra* (T 1565)¹⁾. And thus it can be understood without difficulty how his brother too compiled a similar work. The traditional attribution of the commentary on the *Śataśāstra* to Vasubandhu appears also from this point of view to be unimpeachable, and we have therefore no ground for rejecting it.

¹⁾ It is noteworthy that this work too was translated not by one of the great followers of the Yogācāra school, but by Gautama Prajñārucci.

Summing up, we can say that the two translations by Kumārajīva discussed above contain, if not with absolute certainty, at least with great likelihood, works of Vasubandhu. Of course this piece of evidence brings no new element towards the determination of the date of Vasubandhu; but it supports and completes the personal evidence set forth at the beginning. Kumārajīva contributes towards the determination of the date of Vasubandhu this element, that he knew Vasubandhu's Mahāyāna works, i. e. works of his later period, and that he learnt of them already in his youth about 360 A. D. from his teacher Sūryasoma. This gives us a fairly precise terminus ante quem, but nothing more. It does not even mean that these works were composed long before that date.

I have laid stress upon this point, because there is an all too frequent tendency to extract from vague statements more than they really mean. Again and again, when famous works are quoted, we meet with the assertion that they must have originated a long time ago and thus they are shifted fifty, hundred and more years backwards. This is totally unwarranted. Scholars do not realize clearly enough what twenty or thirty years may mean in a spiritually agitated epoch and in the personal activity of a man. Moreover, famous works of the antiquity enjoyed a great authority in India; but also new works of outstanding masters quickly gained importance and diffusion. Even though we know of cases in which some work was kept back and became difficult to obtain, on the other hand the frequent travels of poets and scholars offered the possibility of a rapid diffusion. A similar case of rash assertion is e. g. the statement (Takakusu B 11, pp. 3 f.) that the works brought by Paramārtha to

China in 546 A. D. should in all likelihood be older than 500 A. D. We fail to see why Paramārtha should not have brought with him to China the more outstanding new works of his time, which determined the philosophic interest of the day. As a matter of fact, such men as e. g. Guṇamati and Dignāga are his older contemporaries, and their works, which Paramārtha brought with him to China and translated there, would hardly have been composed before 500 A. D. Even if in his translations he does not mention the fact that they are works of contemporaries, he does not state the contrary. It is absolutely unwarrantable, when tradition keeps silent about two alternatives, to deduce from the silence a conclusion in favour of one of the two.

Another point, which must be discussed here because it will gain at once importance for our purport, is the following. In the history of Indian literature and philosophy we are often compelled to calculate a date from the generations of teachers and pupils which have passed. We reckon with round numbers, as it is impossible to do otherwise. But we are hardly enough conscious, how these numbers can be stretched and what space for adjustment they leave. The difference of age between teacher and pupil allows of the most different possibilities. We know of cases in which masters and pupils were of the same age. I quote only the famous example of Dharmapāla and his pupil Śīlabhadra. It happened even that older men became the pupils of famous teachers, even if these were younger. On the other hand, so many teachers are said to have reached a very old age, and an early beginning of discipleship is so frequent in India, (as one may read in the biography of the above mentioned Kumārajīva), that a difference in age of 50 or 60 years is by no means to be

ruled out. The distance between master and pupil may thus oscillate between zero and 60 years, and in some special cases it may have been even greater. In spite of all this, the nature of Indian tradition compels us to employ reckoning by generations. But we should never leave out of sight the uncertainty of the results and the possibility of far-reaching displacements.

Let us now turn to our next authority for the date of Vasubandhu the elder ¹⁾. Before the *Abhidharmakośa* saw the light, the most popular Abhidharma handbook of the Vaibhāṣika school was the *Abhidharmasāra* of Dharmasrī (T 1550). About 320 A. D. Dharmatrāta compiled a rifacimento of this work (T 1552), by expanding the poetical text to more than the double and by adding a diffuse commentary. He prefixed to the text some introductory stanzas (p. 869 c 6, ff.), in which he justified his enterprise. The explanations of the text hitherto existing, says he, were either too meagre or too diffuse and a manual which is unsupported and empty (or: is unsupported like the empty space 無依虛空論 *wu i hsiu k'ung lun*) cannot be understood even by the experts. He wishes therefore to compose a work that keeps the right medium. The Chinese translation, prepared in the years 434–435 A. D. by the Indian Saṃghavarman and others, adds to these introductory verses some explanations, which apparently are due to the translators. According to them, Dharmatrāta's words about the manual which is unsupported and empty, contain an allusion to a commentary of Vasubandhu on the *Abhidharmasāra* which had a size of about 6000 *śloka*. It is not at all surprising

¹⁾ Cf. B 33, p. 86; B 34, B 37 and B 38; also B 18, pp. 347 f. = 9 f.

that Vasubandhu the older should have written such a work, because we know that he originally belonged to the Sarvāstivādin school and composed works on Abhidharma. Pelliot (B 38, pp. 268 ff.) has accordingly supposed that the rifacimento of the *Abhidharmasāra* in 6000 *śloka*, which the Chinese pilgrim Fa-hsien obtained in Pāṭaliputra about 406 A. D., and which he translated into Chinese after his return home (cf. *Kao sêng Fa hsien chuan*, T 2087, p. 864 b, 25), may have been this very work of Vasubandhu. If therefore the traditional interpretation of Dharmatrāta's verse is true, we would have gained another terminus ante quem, which would shift Vasubandhu the elder some decades back from Kumārajīva. A pity that this interpretation is not at all certain. It is based (as said above) only on the statement of the translators of 434–435. But these would make us believe that Dharmatrāta has placed among the too diffuse works the commentary of Upasānta, the 8000 *śloka* of which do not amount to much more than a third of his own work, which is intended "to keep the right medium"; and their interpretation of the following allusion to Vasubandhu does not gain in credibility from this. This piece of evidence does contain useful information about the literary activity of Vasubandhu; but as terminus ante quem, it is safer to keep to the date of 360 A. D. given by Kumārajīva.

Important in this connection is the next piece of evidence, given by Bodhiruci (B 18, pp. 341–344 = 3–6). The Indian teacher Bodhiruci, who came to China in 508 A. D., translated in 535 A. D. the commentary of one Vajrasī 金剛仙 on Vasubandhu's *Vajracchedikāprajñāpāramitāśāstra*. At the end of this work (T 1512, ch. 10, p. 874 c, 9 ff.) we find an account of how Maitreyaṅgana

composed the original text and transmitted it to Asaṅga, and how Vasubandhu wrote the commentary thereon. Then follows a short statement of the tradition of the work, which apparently is due to Bodhiruci. It runs: "Thereupon he (Vasubandhu) communicated this work to the master Chin-kang-hsien (Vajraṣi) etc. This Chin-kang-hsien transmitted it to Wu-chin-i (Akṣayamati), Wu-chin-i gave it to Shêng-chi. Shêng-chi communicated it to P'u-t'i-liu-chih. The chain of tradition down to this day numbers about 200 years". Here we have the teacher lineage from Vasubandhu to Bodhiruci, so that we can calculate the time of Vasubandhu from the number of generations. Besides, there is in addition a number, which gives a solid basis to this calculation. Bodhiruci wrote his translation in 535 A. D. Counting 200 years backward we reach 335 A. D. If we reckon by generations, as Bodhiruci came to China in 508 A. D., we can fix the date, on which his teacher communicated to him the work, to about 500 A. D. The interval between the single generations must be taken to be rather large, in view of the number of 200 years. This is, however, not to be wondered at, after what we have remarked above on the reckoning by generations. If we take as interval between master and pupil the not excessive number of 50 years, we obtain as the date of the transmission of the work by Vasubandhu to Vajraṣi c. 350 A. D.; and this agrees fairly well with the calculation according to the 200 years. In this way we obtain an important addition to the data gained from Kumārajīva. Vasubandhu must have been still alive a short time before Kumārajīva received his works from his teacher Sūryasoma; while calculating his dates, we cannot therefore go far beyond the terminus ante quem given by Kumārajīva.

The evidence of Bodhiruci has been, however, called into doubt by Takakusu (B 33, p. 83 f.). But his discussion is again so superficial and open to objection, that we can safely pass it over¹⁾. Luckily we can also find further data, which lead us to the same period and confirm the statements of Bodhiruci. A tradition relates that the Vaibhāṣika master Manoratha was the pupil of the elder and the teacher of the younger Vasubandhu. In view of the above calculated date of Vasubandhu the younger, we are compelled on this ground too not to stretch the date of Vasubandhu the elder farther than strictly necessary beyond the terminus ante quem given by Kumārajīva. And even then, if we stick to the tradition in its above mentioned form, we find a nearly unbearably large interval between the two Vasubandhu. As a matter of fact, the tradition needs a correction. That Vasubandhu the elder was the teacher of Manoratha, is rendered certain

¹⁾ Takakusu maintains in the first place that the work of Vajraṣi is no Indian work, but a compilation made in China by Bodhiruci or by somebody else. This "can easily be seen by a perusal of its contents". We will not waste our time with this easy manner of proving a very important scientific statement. In order to liquidate this work in a definitive manner, he employs the statement of K'uei-chi (T 1700, p 125 c, 19), which already Péri (B 18, p. 342 = = 4) had quoted and translated in the following way: "le troisième est l'ouvrage de King-kang-sien, qu'on dit être un homme des contrées méridionales, du pays de Wou; ce n'est pas la véritable bonne doctrine". Takakusu does not discuss at all the tradition, already quoted by Péri, that Vajraṣi passed several years in China; he simply ignores it. We have shown above that the succession of the tradition is not to be deemed improbable on account of the few persons that must be distributed over 200 years. Even less decisive against its credibility is the fact that these persons are otherwise unknown. We know very little about the circles who used to study the Mahāyāna works of the elder Vasubandhu. And generally speaking, so little is known of the enormous bulk of the Buddhist tradition, that it is but natural that we should meet with something new at every pace. That the work of Vajraṣi is not mentioned in any catalogue, either as translation or as compilation, is no proof in the face of the early evidence collected by Péri in favour of the work.

by Yaśomitra, i. e. by a trustworthy authority (cf. *Sphu-ṭārthā* p. 289, 6 *sthavīro Vasubandhur ācārya-Manorathopadhyāyah*). But Manoratha was hardly the teacher of the younger Vasubandhu; at the utmost he was his older contemporary¹⁾. According to the credible testimony of Paramārtha, the teacher of the younger Vasubandhu was Buddhāmītra, and only with Hsüan-tsang his place is taken by the more famous Manoratha. We can still see clearly the process. The disputation of Buddhāmītra with the Sāṃkhya master Vindhyaśālin, which is related in the biography by Paramārtha (T 2049, p. 189 c, 17–190 a, 18), has grown with Hsüan-tsang (*Hsi yü chi*, T 2087, ch. 2, pp. 880 c, 5–881 a, 8) into a dispute of Manoratha with a large number of heterodox masters. Manoratha is defeated, and on the point of death he sends an account of the circumstances to his disciple Vasubandhu. In this narrative are interspersed also romantic motives, such as the jealousy of king Vikramāditya, who intentionally tries to bring about the defeat of Manoratha. Generally speaking the whole account shows the same development and transformation, as that which we can observe in the account of the dealings of Vasubandhu with Saṃghabhadra. I do not believe, therefore, that we can really consider Manoratha to have been the teacher of Vasubandhu the younger. But in no case can we place him at a much earlier date; otherwise it would be difficult to understand

1) When Hsüan-tsang talks of places, where events important for Buddhism happened, or where famous works were written, we must handle this information with prudence, because often it looks not better, as when Alexander the Great was shown in Troia the house and the harp of Paris. Still, it is noteworthy that local tradition connected Manoratha with Puruṣapura, the home of Vasubandhu the elder, and not with Ayodhyā, the scene of the activity of Vasubandhu the younger.

how he could later take the place of Buddhāmītra. Besides, the date of 1000 A. N. in Hsüan-tsang was attributed to him too (T 2087, ch. 2, p. 880 c, 6 f.). Lastly, already in Paramārtha (T 2049, p. 189 c, 27) he is mentioned in the narrative of the dispute with Vindhyavāsīn as one of the famous contemporaries.

If we take into account all these circumstances, I would propose as a working hypothesis 320–380 A. D. as the dates of Vasubandhu the elder. In doing this I admit that Vasubandhu was a celebrity of the day when Sūryasoma gave his works in the hands of young Kumārajīva; there is hardly any objection to such a supposition. The pupilhood of Vajrasī and the transmission of the doctrine down to Bodhiruci is possible under these circumstances, without our being compelled to suppose enormous intervals between teacher and pupil. Manoratha too, who was a pupil of the elder Vasubandhu during the latter's Hīnayāna period, needs not to be placed too early.

In this way we have gained, as I believe, an acceptable basis for the dates of the elder Vasubandhu. Now we have still to answer the question whether we can extract from the tradition some further data about his life. Already the information discussed above has yielded some valuable facts about the works composed by him. Above all, it is logical to admit that there existed other biographies of the elder Vasubandhu, before and by the side of that of Paramārtha. And indeed it is possible to find some trace of such biographies; it is again Péri who has collected the essential materials, without however drawing the logical conclusions, because he lacked the basis for them ¹⁾.

¹⁾ On this occasion I feel compelled to point out, how sharply Péri has observed the peculiarities of the different traditions. Cf. e. g. p. 373=35 n. 1 of his paper.

Péri has pointed out (Op. cit., pp. 352 f. = 14 f. and 372 f. = 34 f.) that the Chinese teacher Fa-tsang 法藏, who flourished about the end of the 7th century, mentions in his *Hua yen ching chuan chi* (T 2073, ch. I, p. 156 b, 27 ff.) two biographies of Vasubandhu, an earlier fundamental biography (本傳 *pên-chuan*) and a second different one (別傳 *pieh-chuan*). The second, later one, seems to be identical with the biography by Paramārtha. The earlier, of which he quotes a lengthy passage, is different from it. Again, Hui-ying 惠運, a pupil of Fa-tsang, quotes in his *Ta fang kuang fu hua yên ching kan ying chuan* (T 2074, p. 173 b, 8 ff.) a biography of Asaṅga. The quotation in Fa-tsang speaks of the wonderful apparitions that accompanied the composition of Vasubandhu's *Daśabhūmikaśāstra*. The passage in Hui-ying tells the same story, but it is also preceded by the narrative of Vasubandhu's conversion by his brother Asaṅga. Both accounts therefore refer to the elder Vasubandhu. Thus we perceive that at the end of the 7th and beginning of the 8th century there was extant in China a biography of Vasubandhu different from that by Paramārtha; it was concerned, however, with the elder Vasubandhu. On its side there was a biography of Asaṅga, which showed striking coincidences with it ¹⁾. Shall we perhaps see here the traces of a tradition upon the elder Vasubandhu, which is older than Paramārtha and is not mixed up with pieces of information concerning the younger Vasubandhu?

We have already repeatedly had the occasion to point out, how important it is to pay attention to the sources

¹⁾ I do not think it impossible that it was a biography of both brothers, which is quoted sometimes under the one and sometimes under the other name.

from which our information comes. In this case too the whole situation becomes clear, if we turn our attention to the origin of our information. Fa-tsang and Hui-ying belong both to the Hua-yen (Kegon) school, which fact carries the following consequences with it. The works of the younger Vasubandhu stood in the limelight of interest for the schools of Paramārtha and of Hsüan-tsang alone. Because of this, also the information about his life met with deeper interest, and partly displaced the accounts of the elder Vasubandhu, as we have perceived in the case of the biography by Paramārtha. The case is different with such schools as the Hua-yen or the T'ien-t'ai (Tendai) schools. These are interested exclusively in the Mahāyāna works of the elder Vasubandhu, and thus it is but natural that the information about his life should be better preserved with them. Above all, there was one school, for which Vasubandhu the younger was wholly without importance, and of which we may expect a priori that it should have preserved no information about his life. This is the San-lun (San-ron) school, which goes back to Kumārajīva. This school follows the Indian Madhyamaka school, and the three fundamental works, to which it owes its name, are Madhyamaka texts. Even Vasubandhu the elder played for them a role only inasmuch as he wrote, as already mentioned, a commentary on one of the three fundamental texts, and because some of his works left a particular impression on Kumārajīva in his young age. For the rest, neither the further developments of the Yogācāra school, to which the elder Vasubandhu belonged, nor the younger Vasubandhu had any importance for them. We may therefore expect that they should have preserved only such information concerning his person, as

was handed down from the times of Kumārajīva, and that this should be the likeliest place where to find some pure and unadulterated information on the elder Vasubandhu. As a matter of fact, such is the case, and above all there is one item to which a particular importance must be attributed.

One of the greatest masters of the San-lun school is Chi-tsang 吉藏 who flourished at the end of the 6th and beginning of the 7th century. Among his numerous works there is also a commentary on the *Satasāstra* with the commentary of Vasubandhu, translated by Kumārajīva. In this work he writes (T 1827, p. 234 b, 29-c, 10): "He (Vasubandhu) hailed from Ko-na-shih-chih, i. e. from Chang-fu-kuo (Puruṣapura)... Vasubandhu was originally a follower of the Hīnayāna and wrote 500 Hīnayāna works. But all of them were later lost and have not been transmitted. His elder brother Asaṅga was a follower of Mahāyāna. When he saw that his younger brother was wholly given to Hīnayāna, he feared that he could do harm to the Great Teaching, and wished to guide and to convert him. To this end he feigned to be ill. When the younger brother heard that the elder was ill, he came to visit and to console him. The younger brother asked the elder: 'Why are you ill?' He replied: 'I am ill on your account'. The younger brother asked: 'How is this?' He replied: 'You are given to Hīnayāna and do harm to the Great Teaching. This is a very heinous crime. Therefore I am ill because of you'. He replied: 'If it is so, it is a crime of the tongue. The tongue must therefore be cut off'. The elder brother said: 'This is not necessary. You may rather compose Mahāyāna works, so that the Great Teaching may be given diffusion'. Upon this he composed

500 Mahāyāna works. The people of that time called him therefore the Master of the Thousand Manuals ”.

Chi-tsang gives here a short extract from a biography of Vasubandhu, which in its main outlines corresponds with the one by Paramārtha: origin, activity in favour of Hīnayāna, conversion by his elder brother Asaṅga and activity in favour of Mahāyāna. Only the mention of his death is missing. But in one point the account of Chi-tsang fundamentally deviates from the narrative of Paramārtha. Chi-tsang says, that Vasubandhu as a follower of Hīnayāna composed numerous works, which were for the greater part forgotten and were not preserved. Paramārtha knows nothing of this. On the contrary, the whole narrative of Paramārtha culminates in the account of the composition of the *Abhidharmakośa*, which Chi-tsang does not mention at all. How are we to explain this difference?

After all what we have set forth till now, the explanation is simple. To put it in a nutshell, Chi-tsang reproduces the authentic biography of Vasubandhu the older, free from all the information concerning Vasubandhu the younger. Therefore there is no mention of the *Abhidharmakośa*, because Vasubandhu the older wrote no *Abhidharmakośa*. On the other hand, the mention of the numerous Hīnayāna works, which were soon completely forgotten, is wholly credible in the case of the elder Vasubandhu. For Vasubandhu the younger, it would go against everything else we know of him. Also the peculiar nickname of Master of the Thousand Manuals, of which Chi-tsang speaks, is a stranger to the tradition on the younger Vasubandhu ¹⁾.

¹⁾ This nickname of Master of the Thousand Manuals occurs, as aptly pointed out by Péri (B 18, p. 365 = 27, n. 3), also in the biography of Chih-i, the

In this way our interpretation of Paramārtha's Life of Vasubandhu, which we have given at the beginning, receives its documentary confirmation. We have said that it is clearly divided into three parts, of which the first and third refer to the elder Vasubandhu, while the central portion concerns the younger Vasubandhu. Now we have here before our eyes the tradition, on which Paramārtha's first and third part are palpably based; at the same time we have also the original central portion, which has been displaced in the biography of Paramārtha by the account of Vasubandhu the younger. Also the origin of Paramārtha's biography becomes now clear and comprehensible, and at the same time we can understand how it could displace the earlier biography. Once a beginning was made with the confusion between the younger and the elder Vasubandhu, people perceived in the earlier biography the omission of any mention of his greatest deed, the composition of the *Abhidharmakośa*; and thus they substituted for the colourless account of the Hīmayāna activity of Vasubandhu the elder, the detailed narrative of the composition of the *Abhidharmakośa*. Once this had happened, this form of the biography was bound to appear richer and more complete than the earlier one, specially for those schools, which honoured Vasubandhu as the author of the *Abhidharmakośa*. And thus the old biography fell into oblivion first with them, and then with the generality.

With the recognition of the elder Vasubandhu's biography in Chi-tsang, another piece of information assumes a new importance (B 18, pp. 372 f. = 34 f.). The catalogue

founder of the T'ien-t'ai school (T 2050, p. 191 b, 24), i. e. in a school for which, as stressed above, the elder Vasubandhu alone had any importance.

of Buddhist works composed by Ch'ing-mai 靖邁 in the years 664–665 A. D. lists under the works of Kumārajīva, besides the biographies of Aśvaghōṣa, Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva, also a biography of Vasubandhu (*Ku chin i ching t'u chi*, T 2151, ch. 3, p. 359 b, 29). Takakusu has declared this piece of information, which was uncomfortable for his thesis, to be a mistake by Ch'ing-mai (B 11, p. 54). But if viewed in the frame of the results hitherto arrived at, the thing gains quite another outlook. It has been established that 50 years before Ch'ing-mai Chi-tsang, who belonged to the school of Kumārajīva, knew a biography of the elder Vasubandhu, which was different from that of Paramārtha. The natural conclusion is that this biography was due to Kumārajīva. If such a work of Kumārajīva is now really attested, we cannot lightly reject this evidence. I take therefore the statement of Ch'ing-mai to be wholly trustworthy, and am convinced that Kumārajīva did actually write such a work. That the statement of Ch'ing-mai stands isolated, can be easily understood in the case of a work which was displaced and forgotten at an early date. This was probably the source from which Chi-tsang drew his information about the older Vasubandhu ¹⁾.

We have thus recovered the biography of the elder Vasubandhu, at least in its outlines. Only one item is lacking in the information hitherto collected: the account of his death. Of course the statement of Paramārtha, that Vasubandhu died at the age of eighty in Ayodhyā, refers,

¹⁾ With this, however, I do not mean to say that the whole of the Chinese information on the elder Vasubandhu comes from this source. Hui-ying's account of the conversion of Vasubandhu, for example, is different from the narrative of Chi-tsang.

as already shown, to Vasubandhu the younger. Here I should like to draw attention to a legend, which hails from the tradition-sphere of Asaṅga and Vasubandhu the elder. It is found in the book of travels of Hsüan-tsang (T 2087, ch. 5, p. 896 *b*, 24- *c*, 19) and is related also by Chih-i 智 豈眞, the founder of the T'ien-t'ai school, in his *Ching t'u shih i lun* (T 1961, p. 79 *c*, 12-23). Its purport is that Asaṅga made a compact with his pupils Vasubandhu and Buddhasimha, that he who would die earlier, would appear to the others and tell them, how things looked in the beyond. Buddhasimha dies first, but nothing happens. Then Vasubandhu dies, and again a long time passes without anything occurring. Then suddenly he appears to Asaṅga and his disciples in heavenly splendour, and tells them of the Tuṣita heaven and of the future Buddha Maitreya. It would be rash to draw far-reaching conclusions from this legend. But one thing seems to me probable. Even legends do not usually place themselves needlessly in opposition to facts generally known and recognized as such. As the above legend implies that Vasubandhu died before his brother Asaṅga, I should hold this particular as historical. Otherwise it would have been natural and nothing would have stood against letting Asaṅga appear before Vasubandhu. I believe, therefore, that Vasubandhu the elder actually died before Asaṅga, and that the later generally accepted tradition, that he survived Asaṅga for a long time, has come into being through confusion with the younger Vasubandhu.

Thus we have collected everything of importance that the tradition has to relate upon the life of Vasubandhu the elder. Now we shall proceed to give a final synopsis of our investigation.

A careful examination of the information on the life and dates of Vasubandhu shows that there were two persons of this name, an elder and a younger one. The elder Vasubandhu is the brother of Asaṅga, the head of the Yogācāra school. The younger Vasubandhu is the author of the *Abhidharmakośa*. The discrimination between these two persons eliminates all the seeming contradictions of the tradition, because the apparently contradictory elements distribute themselves partly on the younger and partly on the elder Vasubandhu. If we distribute this information on the two persons, allowing to each of them only that which really belongs to him, we reach the following picture.

Vasubandhu the elder was probably born about the year 320 A. D. His home city was Puruṣapura, modern Peshāwar ¹⁾. His father, the Brahman Kauśika, filled the respected post of a state teacher (國師). He had two brothers, an elder one, Asaṅga, and a younger one, Viriñcivatsa ²⁾. According to a secondary tradition he was born from the same mother as Asaṅga ³⁾. In his youth, Vasubandhu belonged to the school of the Sarvāstivādin and wrote numerous works (the traditions speaks of 500), which were soon forgotten and lost. One of them was perhaps a commentary to the *Abhidharmasāra* of Dharmasīri, called *Tsa a p'i t'an hsin* ⁴⁾. Later on he he was converted

¹⁾ Chi-tsang's tradition gives besides the unexplained name Ko-na-shih-chih 割那舍闍.

²⁾ Precise particulars about these names are given in Paramārtha's biography (T 2047, p. 188 b 23 ff.).

³⁾ V. K'uei-chi, *Ch'êng wei shih lun chang chung ch'u yao*, T 1831, p 608 a 9 f.

⁴⁾ The fact that this work bears the same title as the corresponding work of Dharmatrāta, does not stand in the way; because it is a general class-title

to the dogmatic of the Sarvāstivāda its definitive form. His own commentary to it shows, however, a strong leaning towards the Sautrāntika school. After the composition of the *Abhidharmakośa* he successfully defended himself against the attacks of the grammarian Vasurāta. But he refused on account of his old age a disputation with the Vaibhāṣika master Saṃghabhadra, who attacked his commentary to the *Abhidharmakośa* from the orthodox Vaibhāṣika point of view. He died around the year 480 A. D. in Ayodhya, at the age of 80 years.

With this our investigation is at an end. We have treated in their main outlines all the questions connected with the life and dates of Vasubandhu, and we have brought them, as I hope, to a satisfactory solution. And still, not all questions are yet solved. Above all, there is a large quantity of works, which go under the name of Vasubandhu, and which we have not mentioned in our discussion. It is of the highest importance to determine, who of the two Vasubandhus was the author of each single work because among them we find some that were of fundamental importance for the development of Indian philosophy. I shall mention only the *Viṃśatikā* and *Triṃśikā Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*. But the accounts of the life of Vasubandhu either do not give any information at all about these works, or mention them in passages where the two Vasubandhus are confused with each other, as e. g. at the close of Paramārtha's biography, so that we cannot draw any conclusion about them. We must therefore employ other means in order to determine the author of these works; we must gain the necessary basis from their contents and the doctrines upheld in them. But at present this can be hardly undertaken, because such an examination cannot be carried

by his brother Asaṅga to Mahāyāna and composed, according to tradition 500 Mahāyāna works, so that he received the name of Master of the Thousand Manuals. To his Mahāyāna works belong a commentary to Āryadeva's *Śataśāstra*, a commentary to Maitreyanātha's *Madhyānta-vibhāga*, and several works on Mahāyāna sūtras, such as the *Daśabhūmikaśāstra*, the *Saddharmapūṇḍarīkopadeśa* and the *Vajracchedikāprajñāpāramitāśāstra*, as well as the *Bodhicittotpādanaśāstra*. Wonderful legends became soon attached to his activity in favour of Mahāyāna. He died before his brother Asaṅga, possibly about 380 A. D.

Vasubandhu the younger was born about 400 A. D. The tradition has nothing to say about his birth place and origin ¹⁾. We know only that Buddhāmītra was his teacher. He himself belonged to the Sarvāstivāda school, but leaned more and more towards the Sautrāntika school. At the climax of his activity he enjoyed the favour of the Gupta ruler Skandagupta Vikramāditya (c. 455–467). Especially Narasiṃhagupta Balāditya (c. 467–473), whose preceptor he had been, summoned him after his accession to Ayodhya, modern Oudh, and showered on him the highest honours. The first work, through which Vasubandhu the younger became famous, was the *Paramārthasaptatikā*, in which he confuted the Sāṃkhya teacher Vindhyavāsini, who had defeated his teacher Buddhāmītra in a disputation. But his chief work was the *Abhidharmakośa*, in which he gave

and not the title of a particular work, in the same manner as Yaśomitra's work bears the general class-name *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*, but the particular title *Sphuṭārthā*. The particular title of Dharmatrāta's work seems to have been *Vibhāṣārthālamkāra* (cf. B 38, p. 250, n. 5).

¹⁾ The corresponding information concerning Vasubandhu the elder was apparently so deeply rooted, that diverging accounts could not exist for long on its side.

out until we get a clear idea of the development of the Yogācāra doctrine, at least in its main features. Hardly the very first spade work has been done to this end. Besides, some of the most difficult questions in the whole field of the Yogācāra school are connected with this investigation; e. g. the questions centering around the name Maitreyanātha. Above all we must obtain more clarity about the work and attainments of the most outstanding personality within the whole range of the Yogācāra school, about Asaṅga. But this must be left for a special investigation.

A P P E N D I X

(On this Appendix see p. 1, a)

1. (Cf. B 30 and B 33, p. 81) It has been attempted to find in the words of Vasubandhu himself some element for the determination of his dates. Thus, in the closing verses of the *Abhidharmakośa* he complains that after the death of the Buddha and of his disciples the doctrine has been thrown into confusion by false teachers; he concludes with these words: "Recognizing that the doctrine of the Sage lies in the throes of death, and that this is the time when vice is powerful, those who strive after salvation must not be negligent". In the Buddhist scriptures there is frequent mention of a prophecy by the Buddha, to the effect that his teaching will last only 1000 years. Vasubandhu too knew of this prophecy and reckoned with it, as shown by *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* to IV, v. 110 *d*. The last verse of the *Abhidharmakośa*, just preceding the preceding closing verses, concerns the duration of the Teaching and this prophecy. Some scholars wished therefore to see in the above quoted closing verses an allusion to the imminent destruction of the Teaching, and concluded that Vasubandhu wrote these verses shortly before 1000 years from the Nirvāṇa had been completed. But they seem to have read into the verse more than it contains, the more so because the preceding discussion shows that the author searched for a way to explain away the non-fulfilment of the prophecy through a distinction between tradition

(*āgama*) and practice (*adhigama*) of the teaching. In any case, this interpretation of the closing verse means at the utmost a possibility, but no proof. Even if it is correct, it can give us no help, because of the numerous Nirvāṇa-reckonings extant, as we do not know on which Nirvāṇa era Vasubandhu's calculations are based.

2. (Cf. B 33, p. 82) Takakusu places the so-called "dotted record" in relation with the above discussed evidence¹⁾. Saṃghabhadra, a Śramaṇa from the West (according to Takakusu's supposition a Singhalese), who came to China in the second half of the 5th century, brought with him an ancient manuscript of the Vinaya-piṭaka, on which since the death of the Buddha a dot had been placed at every Pravāraṇa feast. At that time 975 dots could be counted. Saṃghabhadra passed the rainy season of 489 A. D. in Canton and added himself the last dot. I do not wish here to enter upon the question of the credibility of the "dotted record", although it foots on the very peculiar supposition of a manuscript that was written down by Upāli immediately after the death of the Buddha. But it is a fact that the Nirvāṇa-reckoning of the "dotted record" has no connection with Vasubandhu, and therefore it is not permissible to base upon it the calculation of his date.

3. (Cf. B 11, pp. 54-56; B 12, pp. 42 f.; B 16; B 18, p. 384 = 46; B 33, p. 84; B 34; B 39) Also the dates of the Chinese translations have hitherto played a great role in the discussion of the date of Vasubandhu. The sup-

¹⁾ On the "dotted record" see J. TAKAKUSA, *Pali Elements in Chinese Buddhism: a Translation of Buddhaghoṣa's Samanta-pāsādikā, a Commentary on the Vinaya found in the Chinese Tripitaka*, in *JRAS* 1896, pp. 415-439, specially pp. 436 f.

porters of an early date pointed out that the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, which is attributed to Asaṅga, was translated into Chinese already in 413–421 and 431 A. D. They cite also the translation of Vasubandhu's commentary to the *Śataśāstra* of the year 404, and the translation of the *Bodhicittotpādanaśāstra* of 405. The supporters of a later date deny Asaṅga's and Vasubandhu's authorship of the above works, and ask in their turn the question why, if Vasubandhu lived in the 4th century, the *Abhidharmakośa* was translated into Chinese only in 563, while the much more incomplete rifacimento of the *Adhidharmasāra* by Dharmatrāta found its translators in 379–418, 426–431 and 433–442.

The explanation is very simple for us. Whether we accept the attribution of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* to Asaṅga or not, this represents in no case a difficulty, since Asaṅga belongs to the 4th century. We have also no need to call into doubt the attribution of the commentary to the *Śataśāstra* and of the *Bodhicittotpādanaśāstra* to Vasubandhu, because they are the works of the earlier Vasubandhu. The late translation of the *Adhidharmakośa* can also easily be explained, because it is a work by the younger Vasubandhu and it was not yet written at the time when Dharmatrāta's work was translated.

4. (Cf. on Harivarman B 18, p. 359 f. = 21 f.; on Sāramati B 18, pp. 348–355 = 10–17; B 32; on Saṃghabhādra B 28; B 31, pp. LXVII f.). Moreover, the connection of Vasubandhu with other Buddhist teachers has been adduced in order to determine his date. One of these teachers is Harivarman, the author of the *Tattvasiddhisāstra* (T 1646). His date is given as 900, or more precisely 890 A. N., and this by Kumārajīva and his pupils, which places him at

least before 400 A. D. It was concluded from this that Vasubandhu, who lived within 900 years after the Nirvāṇa, cannot be placed much later. There is no objection to this, as the date of 900 A. N. concerns the elder Vasubandhu.

Another ancient master is Chien-i (堅意 = Sāramati?) the author of a *Mahāyānāvātāra* (T 1634), which was translated 437-439 A. D. into Chinese. As this work quotes (p. 49 b, 12) the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*, which is attributed to Asaṅga, scholars took this as indicating an early date for Vasubandhu. This element too agrees without difficulty with our date of Vasubandhu, the brother of Asaṅga.

An unlucky undertaking instead, was the attempt to date Saṃghabhadra, the adversary of Vasubandhu the younger, with the help of Chinese information, in order to gain a fixed point for the date of Vasubandhu. Scholars tried to identify him with that Saṃghabhadra, who in 489 A. D. at Canton translated the *Samantapāsādikā* of Buddhaghosa into Chinese, and whom we already had occasion to mention in connection with the "dotted record". It is, however, unthinkable that the famous Vaibhāṣika teacher Saṃghabhadra should have come to China, without later tradition finding him worthy of the slightest mention. This misdirected suggestion has been quickly rejected and abandoned.

The remaining numerous persons, which Takakusu (B 12, pp. 44 ff.) discusses in relation with Vasubandhu, do not deserve a mention, as their dates are even more indefinite and the traditions on them even more vague than on Vasubandhu.

5. Péri (B 18, pp. 377-390 = 39-52) has collected with the greatest care all the information about the disciples

of Asaṅga and Vasubandhu, in order to gain in this way support for his date of Vasubandhu. As a matter of fact, the interval between Dharmapāla, who lived in the middle of the 6th century, and Vasubandhu, whom he places in the second half of the 4th century, agrees fairly well with the interval between the traditional dates of 1100 and 900 A. N. But there is no contradiction with our calculations, since 900 A. N. refers to the elder Vasubandhu.

On the other hand Péri is confronted with the peculiar fact (cf. op. cit., pp. 386 f. = 48 f.), that he can cite many names of pupils and other teachers who belong to the 4th and 6th centuries, while the 5th century remains almost completely empty; and his attempt to account for this fact sounds unconvincing¹⁾. But the void in the 5th century disappears for us, since the personal pupils of the elder and of the younger Vasubandhu, whom Péri had to press together in the 4th century, can be distributed in the 4th and 5th centuries, and so also the other teachers, who are connected with the one or the other Vasubandhu.

Lastly, we must also mention Stcherbatsky's opinion (B 30, p. 2, n. 2 and B 40, p. 31 f.) that Vasubandhu must be placed rather late on account of the pupilship of Dignāga. But this alleged pupilship hails from the late and unsatisfactory Tibetan tradition. The old Chinese sources know nothing about it. And the manner in which Dignāga in *Pramānasamuccaya*, I, v. 14 speaks of Vasubandhu, stands against a personal pupilship.

¹⁾ A reference to the revival of Brahmanism under Gupta rule is not sufficient, because it hardly displayed such a sudden and strong influence. It is enough to think of the account of Fa-hsien. Moreover, this strong influence would have been exercised only in the Gupta realm, but not e. g. in the West in the home country of Asaṅga and Vasubandhu, or in Kaśmīr.

6. On purpose the following sources have not been utilized:

Firstly, the lists of the patriarchs (cf. B 11, p. 54; B 18, pp. 344–348 = 6–10; B 31, pp. LXVIII f.). The tradition in them shows such oscillations, and its foundations are so questionable, that they are better left out of account in exact research work. In any case, the Vasubandhu of the patriarch lists seems to be the elder Vasubandhu ¹⁾.

Secondly, the Tibetan tradition. It is so late and so corrupted in comparison with the Chinese sources, that it is as good as without any value, at least for the period under consideration. Buston (1290–1364), e. g., who yet is considerably earlier than Tāranātha, in the biographies of Asaṅga and Vasubandhu in his *C'os-'byuñ* does not give us a single element beyond the Chinese tradition, which could be of any historical value. In any case scholars who utilize the Tibetan tradition, must treat it according to its own characteristics and cannot place it on the same level as the Chinese sources. In the last place, there is the synchronism of Vasubandhu with the Tibetan king Lha-t'o-t'o-ri (B 14, p. 227); this can however be only a later reconstruction, but certainly no contemporary evidence.

I have left out of account also the paper by G. Ono (B 35). It proceeds on internal evidence and remains therefore outside the limits of the present discussion. Its arguments, moreover, are so weak and superficial, that they are not worthy of confutation.

¹⁾ Cf. also Th. WATTERS, B 13, I, p. 211.

ADDITIONAL REMARKS

For the following remarks I am substantially indebted to the kindness of Prof. P. Demiéville.

P. 20 ff. In the major part of the editions the second preface to the *Mahāyānasamgrahabhāṣya* is not attributed to T'an-ch'ien, but to Hui-k'ai.

P. 35 As regards the text of Hui-hsiang a better version is contained in the footnote of the edition of the *Tai-shō Tripitaka*. But as to the meaning the difference is insignificant.

P. 47 f. Part of a biography of Vasubandhu is also to be found in the *Ch'êng wei shih lun liao i têng* by Hui-chao 惠沼 a disciple of K'uei-chi (T 1832, ch. 1, p. 659 c, 15-660 a, 10). Save some omissions and a few additions it agrees almost verbatim with the first part of the biography by Paramārtha and ends exactly where the narrative precedes to the antecedents of the compilation of the *Abhidharmakośa*. So it bears only on the older Vasubandhu. It is therefore worth notice, that Hui-chao adds the words: "The details of the remaining vicissitudes of his life (are to be given) according to the account of the fundamental biography (所餘因緣廣如本傳所說). "On the other hand the preface to Paramārtha's translation of the *Abhidharmakośa* by Hui-k'ai, which concerns only the younger Vasubandhu, contains the remark (T 1559, p. 161 a, 19): "All this according to the different biography (具如別傳)".

P. 52 f. As to the trustworthiness of the catalogue by Ch'ing-mai Prof. Demiéville kindly communicates to me the following remarks: *Le catalogue de Tsing-mai*

ADDITIONAL REMARKS

est très suspect en ce qui concerne ses attributions à Kumārajīva (cf. Tomomatsu, *J. As.*, 1931, II, p. 154); c'est lui qui enfile le plus oeuvres de Kumārajīva. Toutefois, en ce qui concerne la biographie de Vasubandhu je serais enclin à ne pas écarter son témoignage. Tscheng (K'ai-yuan-lou, T 2154, ch. 4, p. 513 c, 5; ch. 15-p. 650 b, 18), qui était un excellent critique, accepte ce témoignage, en notant que de son temps (730 p. C.) cette biographie était perdue. . . . La biographie de Nāgārjuna par Kumārajīva a été reproduite dans le Fou fa tsang yin yuan tchouan (cf. Maspero, *Mélanges S. Lévi*, et Walleser, *Hirth Anniversary Volume*). S'il y avait eu une biographie de Vasubandhu par Kumārajīva, les compilateurs du Fou fa tsang yin yuan tchouan auraient dû la reproduire elle aussi. Or leur notice sur Vasubandhu (T 2058, p. 321 b, 23-29) est très brève et très plate. Ceci est un argument contre le témoignage de Tsing-mai.

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