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# Statement or Supramundanity? Making Sense of *Śūraṃgama-Samādhi* and Its Related Narratives

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**Abstract:** The aim of this paper is to provide a new interpretation for the term *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*, an important concept in the Mahāyāna literature, by proposing new exegeses of its primary and derivative meanings as they appear in the *Śūraṃgamasamādhi-sūtra* (*hereafter SSS*). While many have defined *samādhi* as a form of meditative practice, a state of mind, or a collection of terms as argued by Andrew Skilton, the concept *samādhi* in the *SSS* can be understood as a locus of gathering or convergence in the metaphorical sense. In *SSS*, this metaphorical location refers to the supramundane state of those buddhas and tenth-stage bodhisattvas, wherein all his supernatural powers and manifestations converge. Lamotte's interpretation of *Śūraṃgama* as "marche héroïque/heroic progress", however, only provides a single understanding of this polysemous concept. This article will offer a more nuanced understanding and interpretation of this compound term. Regarding the derivative meanings of the term, the present paper argues that the traditional interpretation of the term *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* (in the derivative meaning) as self-referential to the *sūtra* itself (*Śūraṃgama-samādhi* = *SSS*) does not align with the meaning of the term as it appears in the *SSS*. The exclusion of "self-reference" in our interpretation of the derivative meaning of the term therefore avoids the paradox of an "infinite loop of self-reference" as presented by past studies on the subject.

**Keywords:** early Mahāyāna samādhi sūtras; *Śūraṃgamasamādhi-sūtra*; infinite loop of self-reference; buddhist docetic theory; buddhist narratives

## 1. Introduction: Previous Interpretations of the Term *Śūraṃgamasamādhi*

The *Śūraṃgamasamādhi-sūtra* (hereafter *SSS*) is considered to be among the earliest Mahāyāna sūtras with a clear lower age limit. The first Chinese translation by Lokakṣema dates back to as early as the 186 CE (Lamotte 1965, p. 66; [1998] 2003, p. 59). As Paul Harrison said, "we have no clear idea of when the Mahāyāna arose, and the only basis we have for dating any given item from its enormous corpus of sūtra-literature is the date of its first translation into Chinese. For such an investigation Lokakṣema's works constitute a convenient point of depautre, and are thus well worth our consideration" (Harrison 1993, pp. 137–38, 168; 1987). Therefore, the *SSS* occupies a special place in the study of early Mahāyāna Buddhism. Moreover, the *SSS* has strongly influenced the traditions of East and Central Asian Buddhism[1], and has drawn considerable attention from scholars in the last few decades.[2] Among the various studies on the *SSS*, Lamotte's translation—"La Concentration de la Marche Héroïque; Eng. The Concentration of Heroic Progress"[3]—is widely quoted and accepted in modern-day scholarship.[4] However, his interpretation of the term *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* has come under scrutiny in recent years.

Beginning in 1999, a debate emerged regarding the fundamental meaning of the term "*samādhi*" in some early Mahāyāna sutras such as the *Samādhirāja-sūtra* (hereafter *SRS*), *Pratyutpannasamādhi-sūtra* (hereafter *PSS*), *SSS*, etc. Florin Deleanu and Andrew Skilton noted that while *samādhi* has traditionally been associated with altered states of consciousness and contemplative insight, several early Mahāyana *samādhi* sūtras did not, for instance, discuss the issues of meditational practice and experience (Skilton 1999; Deleanu

2000, p. 73; Skilton 2002, p. 57 ff.). Andrew Skilton argued that the word "*samādhi*" would be better understood as referencing a list of terms. Based on this observation, he proposed that in these sūtras, *samādhi* refers to a collection of terms rather than to a state of mind or a certain meditative experience (Skilton 2002, pp. 58 ff.).[5] His theory has undoubtedly changed our understanding of these scriptures and has raised interesting questions with respect to prevalent hypotheses in the study of the Mahāyāna that associates meditative experiences with the very origins of the tradition.[6] In 2020, Takanori Fukita pointed out that descriptions of meditation are in fact found in one of the *samādhi* sūtras analyzed by Skilton, i.e., the *PSS*. He argued that the reason why *SSS* contained no descriptions of meditation was because its focus was directed at advocating the powers of the buddhas. There was, therefore, no need to describe the practice of meditation in detail (Fukita 2020). In contrast, Paul Harrison seems to accept Skilton's theory and treats the definition of *samādhi* as the "interplay of practice and text" (Harrison 2022, p. 653, note 8).[7] However, this article holds that while using any of the various hermeneutics available to us to date, it remains very difficult to put together a cohesive interpretation of the term "*samādhi*" in *SSS*. Therefore, there is an urgent need for careful reconsideration of the meaning of *samādhi* in this scripture in particular.

In addition to the term *samādhi*, the interpretations of the term *Śūraṃgama* in the works of Lamotte and other scholars deserve further discussion. Indeed, the current interpretation of the term *Śūraṃgama* as "heroic march" appears to be somewhat distant from the contents of the scripture itself.

This paper focuses primarily on the concept of *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* as it is applied in *SSS*, with brief references to other *samādhi* sūtras when relevant. The textual analysis in this article reveals that *SSS* can provide us with a clearer understanding of the term *samādhi* that differs from previous interpretations as proposed in recent scholarship. As mentioned above, *SSS* is a significant early *samādhi* scripture, and the conclusions drawn from this study may offer valuable insights that help advance the discussion regarding questions related to semantics and doctrine in early Mahāyana *samādhi* sūtras.

## 2. The Theoretical Issues Inherent to Previous Interpretations of the Term *Samādhi*

The meaning of the term *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* is the key to unlocking subtler points found in *SSS*, not only in its doctrinal expositions but also in its narrative accounts. Where we are now in our understanding of the term, as informed by the popular traditional view that equates *samādhi* with meditation as well as Skilton's proposition that *samādhi* constitutes a "statement of terms", these interpretations continue to present the reader with significant challenges when interpreting *SSS*.

Skilton's critique of the traditional interpretation of the word "*samādhi*" as "meditation" is quite compelling.[8] I believe the interpretation of the term "*samādhi*" as meditative concentration in the aforementioned *samādhi* sūtras is problematic for the following reasons. Firstly, the "meditation" interpretation cannot answer how or why these early Mahāyāna *samādhi* sūtras advocated their respective forms of *samādhi* while simultaneously containing minimal content directly related to meditation (note: An exception can be found in the *PSS*, and the reasons for this anomaly will be explained below). Secondly, if *samādhi* is considered synonymous with meditation, the question remains as to why these scriptures employed lists comprised of terminology unrelated to meditative practice and experience when defining *samādhi*. Even the *PSS*, the sūtra with the most extensive meditation descriptions, enumerates sub-items that are unrelated to meditation, such as detachment from clothing, food and drink, tonics, halls, buildings, beds, seating, and other virtuous practices, to list only a few items. Thirdly, considering the *SSS* in a vacuum, if the *Śūraṃgama samādhi* is regarded as a specific form of meditation, it becomes impossible to elaborate as to why the sūtra equates this particular form of meditation with ultimate enlightenment. Moreover, even *SSS* itself denies that *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* is a particular form of meditation, instead all *samādhis* and *samāpattis* are encompassed within *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*, which indicates that it is not one of the *samādhis* or *samāpattis* in the meditative

sense. These issues make it difficult to argue that the term *samādhi* in these scriptures is truly synonymous with meditation. Indeed, when we suspend our entrenched notions regarding the meditative quality of *samādhi*, the lack of textual evidence related to the term's association to meditation and experience becomes apparent.

In contrast to Skilton's argument, Takanori Fukita believes that *samādhi* as a "statement of terms" is not an appropriate interpretation of the concept and he treats the collections of terms in the scriptures as "nothing more than lists". He argues that the *PSS* does indeed contain meditational descriptions (Fukita 2020, pp. 84–85). As to why the *PSS* contains both descriptions of meditation and a list of term, I will explain below that this is in fact a form of wordplay, an argument that does not diverge significantly from Skilton's critique of traditional interpretation.

Although Skilton's careful study is still relevant, his proposed definition for *samādhi* is not entirely satisfactory. In 1999, Skilton first argued that the term *samādhi* in *SRS* referred to the sūtra text itself (Skilton 1999). In 2002, he reformulated his theory, arguing that *samādhi* referred to a list or a "collection of terms" (Skilton 2002). Nevertheless, interpreting *samādhi* as either a self-reference to a "text" or a collection of terms fails to explain why, in the *SSS*, "dwelling in the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*" (Tib. dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin la gnas pa) enables buddhas or tenth-stage bodhisattvas to produce miracles. In this context, the referent for *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* could not have been a text or a collection of terms, as it is nonsensical to say that a bodhisattva abides in a text or a list of terms. It is equally strange to claim that one would be able to manifest all kinds of miracles by simply dwelling in a text. Another passage states that:

> O Jinamati! At the moment that a bodhisattva perceives all dharmas as unobstructed, momentary, vain and free from desire and hatred, he then enters into the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*.[9]

In this instance, if one were to consider *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* solely as a text or a list of terms, it would be difficult to comprehend why entering *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* requires that one see "all dharmas as unobstructed, momentary, vain and free from desire and hatred". Therefore, in this context, *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* seems to be unrelated to either a text or a list of terms. Here is another example:

> O Dṛḍhamati! the bodhisattva who abides in the first stage cannot obtain *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*... the second stage... the bodhisattva who abides in the ninth stage cannot obtain it. O Dṛḍhamati! Only the bodhisattvas who abide in the tenth stage can obtain *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*.[10]

If *samādhi* were merely a text or a list of terms, it would be difficult to explain why only the bodhisattvas who abide in the tenth stage can obtain *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*, whereas those in the first nine stages cannot. How can access to a text or a list be limited to only tenth-stage bodhisattvas? Moreover, the sūtra itself acknowledges that hearing, reciting, and copying this *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* is not limited to those that have obtained the tenth stage. Listeners or readers were strongly encouraged to copy and recite the scripture and practice accordingly. If *samādhi* refers to a text or a list of terms that only buddhas or tenth-stage bodhisattvas can obtain, then it would be impossible for everyone else to "obtain it", let alone to preach it, copy it, and practice it as instructed.

The examples mentioned above clearly indicate that the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* should not be interpreted as a list of terms. Moreover, it cannot simply be equated to the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi sūtra*, a text that can be preached, recited, and copied by all. Hence, it is imperative to discern the more nuanced meaning of the term "*Śūraṃgama-samādhi*" by differentiating its primary and derivative connotations.

Skilton was aware of certain disagreements between the contents of *SSS* and his definition of *samādhi*. He therefore proposed that the term *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* was an umbrella term, what he called a "comprehensive container for numerous concepts, practices and attainments" (Skilton 2002, p. 83). However, he did not explore the relationship between the conceptual (i.e., conceptual terms) and the practical (i.e., practices and attainments)

dimensions. This interpretation of *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* as a receptacle that included textual concepts alongside their referents, the practices and achievements, raises questions regarding the textual or the practical nature of *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*. Skilton's interpretation of *samādhi* as a list of terms presupposes that the concept must refer to something textual, which goes against his claim that *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* can also refer to practice and spiritual attainment. Indeed, even if we were to regard *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* as a container embracing both the concepts and their corresponding referents (i.e., practices and achievements), this interpretation still falls short of what the text itself is trying to convey—a point that will be explored in subsequent sections.

If the term *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* does not refer a text, if it is not a list of terms, nor is it a form of meditation, then what exactly does the term refer to? The present paper will attempt to answer this question by providing a lexical taxonomy related to the term's applications within the scripture. There will be two categories of interpretation for the term divided between what will here be called its primary meaning and its derivative meaning. In most cases, these two distinctive meanings for *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* as they appear in the *SSS* are not interchangeable. However, these distinctions are the result of interpretation based on an analysis of the text and its context, and they do not appear organically in the work itself. One must therefore remain mindful of the mode of interpretation being applied to the text.

### 3. New Interpretation of the Primary Meaning of *Śūraṃgama-Samādhi*

*3.1. Śūraṃgama-Samādhi as the Buddha's Supramundane State of Being*

In this section, I will first discuss the primary meaning of the term *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*. As Skilton has pointed out, the *SSS* provides a definition of this term in a paragraph, which serves as the basis for his arguments:

> O Dṛḍhamati, what is the so-called *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*? It is:
>
> Purifying the generation of one's mind (as pure) as the realm of space;
>
> ... (a list of over one hundred of terms or phrases)
>
> [manifesting] the bodhisattva entering into the womb, being born, departure from worldly life, practicing asceticism, approaching the circle of awakening, defeating the Māra, attaining enlightenment, turning the dharma wheel, achieving the great Nirvāṇa, and the annihilation of physical body, while not abandoning the natural state of a bodhisattva and not achieving the Nirvāṇa without remainder. Dṛḍhamati, this is called the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*. This is the realm of *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*.[11] The rest are immeasurable.[12]

Skilton offers two points regarding the interpretation of the term *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*. First, he argues that it here represents the statement itself of those listed terms—that is to say, it is the list itself. Second, when analyzing the *SSS*, he defines it as a "container for concepts, practices, and achievements", implying that he understands this *samādhi* to represent both the signifier (terms) and the signified (referents)—both doxis and praxis simultaneously.

At first glance, Skilton's argument appears to be well-founded, given that the scripture explicitly states that these one hundred terms or phrases listed above is called *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*. However, this seemingly straightforward passage sets a trap for its readers.

The definition approach adopted in this passage is not the typical approach of defining a term by stating its general species difference plus genus. This intensional definition specifies certain necessary conditions that allow one to confirm that it is so—for example, a "bachelor" is defined as an "unmarried man". Instead, this passage in *SSS* employs a looser method of listing items that is commonly used in everyday language to specify the term's extension, or every element that meets it definition criteria. This form of definition technique can be classified as an extensional approach that conveys the meaning of a term

by listing multiple related items, as opposed to relying on the genus-differentia or other intensional methods.

In an intensional definition, the relationship between the object and the definition is quite clear. A "bachelor" is an "unmarried man" and that is all. In the case of the *SSS*, while the listed items might all pertain in some way to the object of the definition, because it uses an extensional definition and it casts its net so wide, so to speak, various possible relationships can exist between the defined objects and the listed items.

According to Skilton's analysis, *samādhi* can be defined as the sum of its parts, that is the collection itself of those listed terms. However, this is merely one of many possible relationships that exist between the listed items and the defined objects. As mentioned above, this interpretation does not tie in with the original meaning of the scripture. Additionally, following the list, it states that "the rest (of the items) are immeasurable", indicating that the listed items only comprise a few examples used to illustrate the meaning of "*Śūraṃgama-samādhi*", while the unlisted items are innumerable. Therefore, if the list itself remains incomplete, interpreting *samādhi* as a collection of listed terms does not seem to do it justice—buying groceries with a shopping list that ends with "etc." is not a very good shopping list.

Moreover, regarding the way to understand the definition of *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*, the *SSS* remind its readers of the following passage:

> "O Dṛḍhamati, *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* should not be viewed as a single instruction, not as a single sphere (*\*viṣaya*), not as a single manifestation, not as a single sense-object, nor should it be seen as arising from a single meaning".[13]

This passage emphasizes that *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* "should not be seen as a single instruction (of the list)". In other words, it should not be considered a single instruction or phrase in the above list. Additionally, the above passage asserts that *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* should not be seen as a single sphere (*spyod yul gcig*), a single manifestation (*rnam pa gcig*), or a single sense object (*dmigs pa gcig*), which means that the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* should not be understood as the single referent of the term (such as observing the sharpness and dullness of faculties, meditative concentration, or manifesting supernatural powers to ripen sentient beings, etc.). Furthermore, the passage warns that *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* "should not be seen as arising from a single meaning", indicating that the term has multiple meanings (see Section 3). In sum, the scripture emphasizes that the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* cannot be understood by means of any single term/instruction in the list, nor does it refer to any single referent of the term. The text warns against any simplistic or reductionist understanding of *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* and suggests that it is, instead, a polysemous concept that requires a more comprehensive understanding.

If none of the aforementioned methods of interpretation is accurate, how can the list be properly understood? In other words, what is the possible relationship between *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* and the list? The answer is given by the scripture itself.

The Tibetan version of *SSS* first provides a list in prose, followed by repeating the list in verse. At the end of the versified list, it states that:

> (... list), O Dṛḍhamati, this is called the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*. This is the realm of the *samādhi*. The rest (enumerable subitems) are immeasurable. O Dṛḍhamati, therefore the *samādhi* manifest (itself) immeasurably, showing the spheres (*\*viṣaya*) of all the buddhas and the supernatural manifestations of the spheres (*\*viṣayavyūha*).

This passage demonstrates that what is listed is only a partial representation of the external manifestations of the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*, which, according to the text, can potentially manifest in an infinite variety of ways. This seems to suggest that the relationship between *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* and the enumerated items in the list is analogous to the relationship between something invisible (i.e., the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*) and its external manifestations. In other words, the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* should be something that transcends its external manifestations and cannot be reduced to the sum of these enumerated external manifestations, not to mention the sum of the terms.

Passages employing a similar means of definition can often be found in Nikāya/Āgama texts, such as the *Samādiṭṭhi-sutta* in the *Majjhima-nikāya*:

> O Sir, what is called goodness? Goodness is staying away from killing, goodness is staying away from taking what is not given, goodness is staying away from indulgence and lewdness, goodness is staying away from falsehood, goodness is staying away from divisive language, goodness is staying away from harsh words, goodness is staying away from delusive words, not being greedy is goodness, being without hatred is goodness, goodness is right view. Sir, these were called goodness.[14]

This passage ostensibly provides a definition of goodness (*kusala*), although only a few external manifestations of goodness are listed. In this extensional of definition, goodness is not the sum of the listed subitems (either literal expressions or righteous enumerated actions). An infinite number of virtuous deeds can exist in addition to these ten listed manifestations of goodness. Goodness itself, on the other hand, is that which informs these behaviors/subitems. In other words, in order to grasp this definition, it is necessary for us to infer from these exterior behaviors what the goodness, an internal nature that transcends and embodies them, is. This approach of defining a subject through external manifestations is a common practice in everyday conversations, as employed in the *SSS*. However, it should be noted that this is not the only possible relationship between lists and defined concepts. Another different relationship will be shown in the case of *PSS* below. The relationships between the *samādhi* and listed items in other *samādhi* sutras cannot be explored in detail here due to space limitations.

Having explained the extensional definition logic in *SSS*, what can we really say about *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*? To begin explaining the term, I will first provide the reader with a parallel scenario that one might encounter in daily life: Defining an invisible concept by its external manifestations or characteristics. For instance, let us consider the following description:

> Question: What is X?

> Answer: X is passion, romantic dates, caring, and companionship……this is called X.

Although this description does not explicitly identify X, it is obvious that the listed items are the external manifestations of the defined object. Without being overly cynical, we can infer from the answer that X refers to "love", as evidenced by its external manifestations, such as companionship and caring.

Similarly, although *SSS* does not directly disclose the essential meaning of *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*, it does provide a list of its external manifestations. By treating *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* as an unknown concept similar to X, we can infer its meaning by examining those listed manifestations. What are the external manifestations outlined by the *SSS* in the list?

In the scripture, the content of the list is summarized for us: "all the *samādhis*, all the meditative concentrations (\**samāpattis*), all the liberations, all the magical powers, supernatural gnosis, insights of analytical knowledge", etc. In other words, it comprises almost all the supramundane characteristics of the buddhas and the tenth-stage bodhisattvas.

Given that X can externally manifest as the buddhas' and bodhisattvas' supramundane features, it is fair to conjecture that X refers to the supramundane state in which buddhas and bodhisattvas abide, or even the supramundane nature of the buddha. Therefore, we can plausibly assume that the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* is essentially the supramundane nature or state of the buddhas or tenth-stage bodhisattvas.

This supramundane state of the buddhas and bodhisattvas is perhaps best represented by the magical power of manifesting countless bodies. In this case, the *samādhi* is able to manifest the "sphere of all the buddhas (\**viṣaya*) and the supernatural manifestations of the spheres" because the buddhas' spheres and the manifestations of the spheres are the external appearance of the buddha's supramundane state. Indeed, this notion of the *SSS* is closely connected to what Michael Radich calls "docetic Buddhology", that is, the bud-

dha's appearance and action in the world is in some sense only an appearance (Gk. dokesis, 'semblance, appearance', dokein 'seem, appear').[15] The term manifestation (*saṃdarśana* or sam-√*dṛś*) that appears repeatedly in the sūtra is semantically quite similar to the term "dokein" (δοκεῖν) in Christian Docetism.

Many narratives in the *SSS* focuses on the description of the manifestations of supernatural powers, particularly the magical power to appear anywhere at will for the purpose of saving sentient beings. Nevertheless, the scripture states that all magical powers (\**ṛddhis*) are also accommodated in *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*, suggesting that it is not merely a magic power per se but that which encompasses and surpasses magical powers.

Moreover, the *SSS* portrays traditionally more mundane facets of the Buddha's life, such as his wedded life with Gopī/Gopā(past life of Devaputra Gopaka; Tib. lha'i bu sbed pa; Ch. Quyu Tianzi 瞿域天子)[16], as divine manifestations for the purpose of saving all sentient beings. Therefore, these behaviors are not considered worldly but supramundane because they are believed to be the displays of the supramundane nature of the buddha. Therefore, according to the *SSS*, the Buddha does not possess a worldly nature but is defined wholly by how he surpasses the world, that which constitutes his supramundane status. In this way, the *SSS* implies that supramundanity (or the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*) is the very essence and nature of the Buddha's being.

*3.2. Meaning of Samādhi: Why Is the Buddha's Supramundane State Called Samādhi?*

If *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* refers to the supramundane state in which the Buddha abides, then why is this state called *samādhi*?

There are a group of three metaphors after the list in the *SSS* that ends with the sentence, "*de bas na dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin ces bya'o* (hence it is named *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*)". In other words, these three metaphors serve as explanations for the naming of the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*. Metaphor 1 explains how to understand the literal meaning of the term *samādhi*:

> [Metaphor 1]O Dṛḍhamati, it should be seen as all the concentrations (*samādhis*), all the meditations (\**samāpattis*), all the liberations, all the magical powers, supernatural knowledges, and wisdom of analytical knowledge are gathered ('*dus*) and accommodated (*chud pa*) in the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*. O Dṛḍhamati, just as it should be seen as all springs, ponds, lakes, pools, brooks, streams, and rivers are converged into the ocean. O Dṛḍhamati, in the same way all the concentrations (*samādhis*), meditations (\**samāpattis*), liberations, all the magical powers, supernatural knowledge, and all the wisdom of analytical knowledge of bodhisattva are regarded as included in the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*.[17]

Here, "all the concentrations(*samādhis*), all the meditations (\**samāpattis*), all the liberations, all the magical powers, supernatural knowledge, wisdom of analytical knowledge" are the various external manifestations of *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*, all of which are gathered and included ('*dus shing chud pa*) in the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*. The process of collection and containment in this passage coincides with the etymology of the word "*samādhi*", which derives from sam-ā-√*dhā* ("to put together, gather together"). Therefore, to "be gathered and accommodated ('*dus shing chud pa*)" can be regarded as an annotation of the meaning of *samādhi*.[18] The reason that these supramundane characteristics of the buddhas are "gathered and accommodated" in the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* lies in the fact that they are manifestations of the Buddha's supramundane state/*Śūraṃgama-samādhi*.

It is worth noting that the locative case was used in the expression "*dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin gyi **nang du** 'dus shing chud pa* (gathered and contained in the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*)". As is mentioned above, this passage can be considered an annotation of the term *samādhi*. Looking at the grammatical structure of the sentence, the term "*Śūraṃgama-samādhi*" should, in fact, designate the **location** where all the samādhis (meditative concentration), \**samāpattis*, liberations, etc., are placed together. In this case, the locative case may well hint at the literal meaning of the term *samādhi* in the compound *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*.

Although the dictionaries do not provide the definition "convergence or congregating location" for the term "*samādhi*", such an interpretation seems possible from the perspective of Sanskrit grammar. *Samādhi* is derived from *sam-ā-√dhā*, with the affix *-ki-* added. According to 3.3.92 of *Pāṇini*'s grammar, the derivative with the affix *-ki-* can represent *bhāva* and a *kāraka*, excluding *kartṛ* (Sharma 1995, p. 527). The metaphor of the ocean that appears in the passage above would indicate that *bhāva* ("state") is not used in this instance; instead, *samādhi* is interpreted as the *adhikaraṇam* ("location, place, realm"), one of the *kārakas*. Accordingly, the literal meaning of *samādhi* would here refer to the place where things gather together, the location of convergence—such as springs, ponds, lakes, pools, brooks, streams, and rivers converging in the ocean. This study does not assume that the author(s) of *SSS* were proficient in *Pāṇini*'s grammar, and the details from *Pāṇini*'s grammar are only borrowed here to show that such an interpretation is possible. The author(s) of the *SSS* may have applied similar knowledge intentionally or unintentionally to interpret *samādhi* in a sense that is not found in mainstream Buddhist literature. If this is the case, then the literal meaning of *samādhi* in this scripture would be neither "meditation" nor a "collection (of terms)", but "the location where things are held together" (things such as *samādhis*, *\*samāpattis*, liberations, etc., in *SSS*), that is, a convergence where the Buddha's manifestations are gathered and accommodated.

The reason why the supramundane state of the buddha is called the convergence (*samādhi*) may be that all the *samādhis* (in the sense of concentrations), *samāpattis*, wisdom, and supernatural powers are gathered, accommodated, and merged **into one single location:** The supramundane nature or state of buddhahood. In other words, the term *samādhi* should be considered a metaphor of the relationship between the buddha's supramundane state and his infinite manifestations. Converging location is different from the concept of "collection" because the supramundane state or nature, i.e., the place of convergence, is singular and indivisible. It is not a collection comprised of sub-items, but the indivisible place where all these sub-items, the list of supernatural manifestations, converge. In sum, in *SSS, samādhi* should be treated as a metaphor to show that something singular and indivisible serves as the convergence that all these subitems, i.e., the buddha's manifestations, gather together.

Several other Mahāyāna *samādhi* sūtras, such as the *PSS*, *SRS*, *Praśāntaviniścayapratihārya-samādhi-sūtra*, the *samādhi* section of *Bhadrakalpika-sūtra* (=*\*Sarva-dharma-naya-nidarśana-[samādhi]-sūtra* = *Guancha Zhufa Xing Jing* T.649 觀察諸法行經, hereafter *GZXJ*)[19], *Cheng Juguangming Dingyi Jing* (T.630 成具光明定意經, *\*Mahāyānāloka-samādhi-sūtra*? [20]) seem to share a similar interpretation of the literal meaning of *samādhi* as a "gathering location". However, what serves as a gathering location differs from one scripture to another. The relationships between these *samādhis* and the sub-items in their respective lists also differ from the relationship in the *SSS*.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to comprehensively expound upon the relationships between *samādhis* and their sub-items across all these *samādhi* sūtras. However, it is necessary to provide a brief explanation of the *PSS*, as this new interpretation can cast some light on the aforementioned issues raised by Takanori Fukita regarding the "non-meditative interpretation" of *samādhi*.

It is intriguing that *PSS* has two seemingly contradictory definitions of *samādhi* in the same context:

**Definition 1.** *Bhadrapāla, what then is the samādhi called "Direct Encounter with the buddhas of the Present"?*

> *'Namely, (1) concentration (Skt. manasikāra) on thoughts which have the buddha as their object; (2) absence of mental distraction; (3) obtaining mindful engagement and wisdom; ……(154) [seeing]. the sameness for all buddhas of all virtuous qualities--this, Bhadrapāla, is the samādhi called "Direct Encounter with the buddhas of the Present"'.*

*'Bhadrapāla, since those dharmas will produce samādhi, what then, Bhadrapāla, is the samādhi which is produced by those dharmas? It is the samādhi called "Direct Encounter with the buddhas of the Present"'.*

**Definition 2.** *And what, Bhadrapāla, is the samādhi called "Direct Encounter with the buddhas of the Present"?*

*In this regard, Bhadrapāla, any bhikṣus or bhikṣuṇīs, upāsakas or upāsikās who observe morality perfectly should go alone to a secluded spot, sit down, and think: "In which quarter does the Lord, the Tathagata, Arhat and Perfectly Awakened One Amitāyus live, dwell, reside, and teach the dharma?" In accordance with what they have learned they concentrate on the thought: "That Lord, the Tathāgata, Arhat and Perfectly Awakened One Amityus now resides, lives, dwells and teaches the dharma, surrounded and attended on by a host of bodhisattvas, in the world-system of Sukhāvatī, one hundred thousand koṭis of buddha-fields to the west of this buddha-field;" and they concentrate their thoughts on the Tathāgata with undistracted minds.*

*......*

*In the same way, Bhadrapāla, bodhisattvas, whether they be householders or renunciants, go alone to asecluded spot and sit down, and in accordance with what they have learned they concentrate their thoughts on the Tathāgata, Arhat and Perfectly Awakened One Amitāyus; flawless in the constituent of morality and unwavering in mindfulness they should concentrate their thoughts on him for one day and one night, or for two, or three, or four, or five, or six, or seven days and nights. If they concentrate their thoughts with undistracted minds on the Tathāgata Amitāyus for seven days and nights, then, when a full seven days and nights have elapsed, they see the Lord and Tathāgata Amitāyus.*

*......*

*Bhadrapāla, those bodhisattvas see that Lord and Tathāgata Amitāyus, perceive themselves as being in that world-system, and also hear the dharma. And they retain, master, and preserve those dharmas after hearing them expounded. They honour, revere, venerate and worship that Lord, the Tathāgata, Arhat and Perfectly Awakened One Amitāyus. And on emerging from that samādhi the bodhisattvas expound at length to others those dharmas, just as they have heard, retained, and mastered them.*

*......*

*Having simply heard of that Tathāgata's name, appearance, and qualities, with undistracted thoughts they called to mind the Lord, the Tathāgata, Arhat and Perfectly Awakened One Amitāyus. By repeatedly concentrating on him they saw that Tathāgata. Established in the bodhisattvas' samādhi of Direct Encounter with the buddhas of the Present, when they saw that Tathāgata, they asked the question: "Lord, what dharmas must bodhisattvas and mahasattvas possess to be reborn in this world-system [of yours]?" In this way whenever one wishes to be reborn in any buddha-field, one asks the Tathāgata [of that buddha-field]. (Harrison 1978b, pp. 21–30; Harrison 1990, pp. 26–36)*

The first definition employs a list of terms to define *samādhi* in the same way as the *SSS* and other *samādhi* sūtras mentioned above, whereas the second definition obviously refers to repeatedly concentrating on (Amitāyus?) buddha[21] and seeing him (in concentration). In Paul Harrison's examination of the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi*, he exclusively cites the second visualization definition (Harrison 1978a, pp. 42–46), while Skilton's research refers primarily to the first definition (Skilton 2002, pp. 63-66). However, the unresolved hermeneutic issues lie in the relationship between the two definitions in *PSS* (Skilton 2002, p. 19, note 48).

I believe that the two seemingly contradictory definitions are, in fact, a pun that plays on the polysemous uses of term *samādhi* in *PSS*, which is absent in other *samādhi* sūtras. Whereas the buddha's supramundane state serves as the gathering location in the *SSS*, in

the *PSS*, it is the concentration (*samādhi*) on the Tathāgata that serves as the gathering location (*samādhi*) of the listed items. In other words, the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi* is both a meditative concentration (*samādhi*) in reality and the gathering location (*samādhi*) of all items listed in the metaphorical sense. That is why the two definitions are not contradictory. In other words, the true referent of *Pratyutpanna-samādhi* is a form of meditative concentration, while at the same time, it is also metaphorically described as a gathering location (*samādhi*).

How can a form of meditative concentration serve as the gathering location for the items on the list? The relationship between the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi* and the subitems of the list is clearly stated in the *PSS*: "those dharmas (in the list) will produce *samādhi* (Harrison 1998, p. 32)", which implies that the relationship between the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi* and the enumerated items does not refer to the relationship between an (invisible) existent and its external manifestations, such as the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*, but to the relationship between the outcome and its conditions. The listed items are the conditions or meritorious deeds that produce the attainment of the concentration on the Tathāgata, and the concentration is the outcome as well as the converging location of these meritorious deeds. Therefore, the concentration on the present buddhas (*[Pratyutpanna-]samādhi*) can be compared to the converging location (*samādhi*) of the enumerated meritorious deeds. In other words, the shared meaning of the term "*samādhi*" among *SSS*, *PSS*, and other early Mahāyāna *samādhi* sūtras mentioned above, is likely not "concentration", but rather the "gathering location"—in the metaphorical sense. However, these sūtras vary in what they compare to the gathering locations (*samādhi*) and how the *samādhis* relate to the listed items. For instance, in addition to the *SSS* and *PSS*, the *samādhi* section of *BKS* or *GZXJ* holds that the "*samādhi*", i.e., *\*Sarva-dharma-naya-viniścaya-[nidarśana]-nirdeśa-nāma-samādhi*, refers to the path of relinquishing the two extremes and perceiving dharmas as uncreated and unproduced. As this way is the root or cause of the five hundred listed items, it is compared to the gathering location of them. Therefore, in the *PSS*, the gathering location (*samādhi*) only happens to refer to a form of meditative concentration (*samādhi*), which is a unique wordplay within these *samādhi* sūtras. Therefore, although one of the two definitions of *samādhi* is meditation in *PSS*, it is misleading to interpret other *samādhis*, including *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*, as suggested by Fukita (2020, pp. 84–85), to be a meditative concentration based solely on the context of the *PSS*.

In summary, the reason why in *SSS* the supramundane state of the buddha (and the bodhisattvas of the tenth *bhūmi*) is called *samādhi* is because the concentrations, supernatural powers, wisdom, etc., come together in the transcendent state of buddhahood, making this state of being the gathering place of all these qualities or manifestations. However, at the same time, the state of being itself is singular and indivisible, not comprised of these manifestations like a collection. In this regard, the term *samādhi* in these *samādhi* sūtras should be treated as a metaphor for the relationship between the term being defined and the listed items rather than an "interplay of practice and text", as claimed by Paul Harrison (Harrison 2022, p. 653, note 8), because the primary sense of *samādhi* commonly shared by early Mahāyāna *samādhi* sūtras is neither a practice nor a text/term list.

*3.3. The Literal and Metaphorical Meaning of Śūraṃgama*

The previous section explored the meaning of the term "*samādhi*". This following section will explore why this particular *samādhi* is called *Śūraṃgama*. Akio Sanae might be one of the first scholars to have discussed the term. He translated *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* as "the meditation like the hero with four limbs" (*Śūra-aṅga samādhi*) or "the meditation that walks like a hero" (*Śūraṃ-gama samādhi*). He believed that the former interpretation is equivalent to *Jianxiang Ding* (健相定) and *Yongjian Ding* (勇健定) in Chinese translation and that the latter corresponds to *Jianxing Ding* (健行定) and *Yongjin Sanmei* (勇進三昧). He argued that the Dharmarakṣa's translation, "*Yongfu Ding [Jing]* 勇伏定[經]", was not a viable translation of the title (Sanae 1930, p. 66).

Without referring to Sanae's paper, Lamotte later translated what would become the most widely used interpretation of the *SSS*, translating the title to mean "Texte de la Concentration de la Marche Héroïque/Text of the Concentration of Heroic Progress" without referring to Sanae's paper (Lamotte 1965, [1998] 2003). According to Lamotte, *samādhi* referred to "the state of concentration", while *Śūraṃgama* meant "Heroic Progress". He explained, "It is called Heroic Progress because whoever possesses it goes everywhere in the manner of a hero (*śūra*) without meeting any resistance, or because it is frequented (*gata*) by those heroes the buddhas and bodhisattvas" (Lamotte 1965, [1998] 2003, p. 1).[22] Jack Cliffor. Wright, in his review of Lamotte's monograph, argued that the term should be appreciated as a hybrid Sanskrit form of the term śūragrāma (with pantheon, with many heroes, with many gods) in *Ṛgveda* 9.90.3. (Wright 1967). Jacques May proposed an alternative interpretation, suggesting that *Śūraṃgama* is one of those terms where "°gama-" is artificially added and does not represent the root "gam-", but rather an extension of a suffix "°ga-" falsely connected to this root and ultimately means nothing more than "heroic" (May 1967, p. 223). In contrast, Ronald Eric Emmerick agreed with Lamotte, pointing to evidence to support his argument in *SSS* where a definition for *Śūraṃgama* was provided, as we will see in "metaphor 3" below (Emmerick 1970, p. xv). In response, Lamotte added a supplement in the forward to the English edition of his monograph, stating that, "For the author of *Śūraṃgamasamādhi-sūtra*, the hero in question [i.e., the *śūra*] is always the *Cakravarti* king, the universal monarch, always accompanied by his seven jewels" (Lamotte [1998] 2003, pp. xiii–xiv). Since then, Lamotte's interpretations of the term's meaning have been widely accepted. Skilton further elaborated on this view in his introduction to Lamotte's book, stating that "(*SSS*) is the scripture that contains teachings concerning the *samādhi* that bestows an 'heroic progress', *śūraṃgama*, on the path to Enlightenment" (Lamotte [1998] 2003, p. viii), but he does not provide a reason for why he interpreted it thus. John McRae also stated that *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* was "The meditative concentration of the 'heroic march' to buddhahood" and calling it "the very key to the enlightenment of the buddhas and all of their awesome spiritual power" (McRae 1998, p. 1). Both Skilton and McRae regarded *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* as an important practice method of practice on the road to enlightenment.

What the above-mentioned scholars did not fully take into account is that the illustrative paragraph cited by Emmerick was not a standalone example but belonged to the group of metaphors mentioned above. The first ocean metaphor illustrates the literal meaning of *samādhi* (discussed above), whereas the last two metaphors expound on the meaning of the term *Śūraṃgama*. Emmerick and Lamotte only cited the third metaphor (and, to some extent, misunderstood it), ignoring the rest. Indeed, their interpretation ignores the fact that the term *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* "does not arise from a single meaning", as stated in the *SSS*.

Lamotte's analysis of the term *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* is constrained by the bounds of classical Sanskrit grammar and tends to deviate from the original meaning of the text to some extent. However, in the text, it is implied that the interpretation of the term *Śūraṃgama* constitutes a form of wordplay that cannot be understood by means of conventional grammatical interpretation. The following passages are the two relevant metaphors:

(Vehicle A of Metaphor 2:) O Dṛḍhamati, just like a hero (general) who enters a war can control and dominate all four army companies of the king.

(Vehicle B of Metaphor 2:) No matter where the hero who enters the war goes, the four army companies will follow him (to the place he goes).

(Tenor A of Metaphor 2:) O Dṛḍhamati, the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* can graspe, subdue, and make to appear all of the gateways of the constant nature of dharma, which are the gateway of concentration, the gateway of equanimity, the gateway of the constant nature of dharma(*\*dharmasthitimukhas*), the gateway of liberation, the gateway of dhārani, and the gateway of supernatural power and liberation by vidyā.

(Tenor B of Metaphor 2:) Dṛḍhamati, wherever the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* of the bodhisattva goes, all the gateways of constant nature of dharma will go there.

(Vehicle of Metaphor 3:) Dṛḍhamati, just as wherever the wheel-turning king goes, the seven treasures will go there.

(Tenor of Metaphor 3:) O Dṛḍhamati, wherever the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* goes, all the dharmas which are the wings of bodhi(*bodhipakṣikadharmas*) will go forward and follow there.[23]

The first question: Who is the hero (*śūra*) in these metaphors? In Lamotte's opinion, the hero is whomever possesses *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*, i.e., the buddhas and bodhisattvas.[24] However, his interpretation is problematic given that, upon closer reading, the "hero" in these three metaphors is clearly neither the buddhas nor the tenth-stage bodhisattvas, but the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* itself, i.e., the supramundane state of the buddhas. Therefore, his interpretation seems to have misunderstood the context.

The second question: How do these metaphors interpret the compound *Śūraṃgama*?

Metaphor 2 can be divided into two sections (2A and 2B). Section 2A provides a reference to understand the translation of *Śūraṃgama* as "*Yongfu*勇伏 (heroic subduing)" by Dharmarakṣa, for which no proper explanation has been provided to date. In this metaphor, *dpa' bo* = **śūra* (hero, warrior), *dpung gi tshogs yan lag bzhi pa* = **caturaṅga-balakāya* (the four army companies), and the terms "*lag tu song*" and "*dbang du gyur pa*" might be translated from **hasta-gata* (controlled) and **vaśa-gata* (subdued), both of which may be interpretations of gama (both *gata and gama are derivatives of the root √*gam*). In other words, in section A of metaphor 2, gama is not to be interpreted as marching or going but as subdued. This explanation is, to some extent, in line with the meaning of "*Yong Fu* 勇伏 (subdued by hero/hero's subduing)", as translated by Dharmarakṣa. Section 2A seems to indicate that the author(s) may not have divided the compound of *Śūraṃgama* into two wordss—in accordance with classical Sanskrit grammar—but instead divided it into three words: *śūra*, *aṅga*, and *gama*. The control of *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* over the **dharmas-thitimukhas* is like a hero controlling the four army companies. While the rules of Sanskrit grammar would not allow for such an interpretation of *aṅga* or *aṃga* as impossible, the author(s) may have borrowed a half from *śūraṅ* and *gama* separately for the purpose of wordplay. If this is correct, the author(s)' focus was likely not on interpreting the term according to Sanskrit grammar but rather on taking full advantage of the potential of the language for more creative literary expression.

Both Section 2B and Section 2A divide the compound into *śūra(hero)*, *aṅga(four army companies)*, and *gama*. However, metaphor 2B differs from metaphor 2A in that it interprets gama as "going" and "following", as in metaphor 3. Therefore, Section 2B interprets the *Śūraṃgama* as "where the hero goes, the four army companies will follow him (to the place he goes)".

We see the variety of possible interpretations for the term *Śūraṃgama*, which may be why most Chinese translators preferred transliteration to translation when interpreting the text. In the *SSS*, several other metaphors beyond the three discussed here may involve wordplay with the term *Śūraṃgama*. However, these three are the only cases provided by the *SSS* that directly expound on why it is called *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* ("Therefore, it is called *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*").

As mentioned previously, *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* refers to the supramundane state or the nature of the buddha. Therefore, it is quite reasonable to compare the supramundane state of buddhahood to a hero or a general who has mastered the four army companies, as the buddha's supramundane nature is the ruler of all these manifestations. Otherwise, it would be challenging to comprehend how a single meditation, or a collection of terms, could unify all the concentrations, wisdom, supernatural powers, etc.

With respect to metaphor 3 previously quoted by Emmerick and Lamotte to interpret *Śūraṃgama*, not only is Lamotte's interpretation of *śūra* problematic, but his interpretation of gama as reliable as previously imagined. Although his interpretation of "gama" as

"progress" can be accepted, his further explanation of "no resistance will be encountered" and "it (the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*) is frequented[gata] by those heroes" lacks textual support.

According to metaphors 2B and 3, the \**dharmasthitimukhas* and \**bodhipakṣikadharmas* go wherever *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* goes; thus, the question of where *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* goes arises. Both Skilton and McRae regarded *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* as heroic progress on the path to enlightenment or buddhahood.

However, the available textual evidence does not lend credence to such an interpretation. This question is discussed in the text in a discussion between the two bodhisattvas, Dṛḍhamati and \*Buddhamatyabhimukha.

> (Dṛḍhamati) Said: O son of god, where is the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* going?
>
> (Buddhamatyabhimukha) said: O son of good family, the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* goes to the thoughts and activities of all sentient beings, while it does not go to the perception of the minds, views and objects. (The *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*) goes to all beings' life and death, while does not go to the troubles of reincarnation (existence). O son of good family, the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* goes to show all the concentrations, while does not go to shake the equality. (The *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*) goes to all buddhas' lands, while does not go to the conceptions of various buddha lands. (The *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*) goes to show all the buddhas, while does not go to show the imagining of the appearance and marks of the buddhas. (The *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*) goes to proclaim all sounds and voices and does not go to the conceptual thought of distinguishing syllables. O son of good family, the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* enters into seeing all buddhas, but does not enter into ultimate seeing (all buddhas). O son of good family, therefore, it is said "Where does the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* go?" (The answer is:) The Tathāgata's going is exactly that of the *samādhi*.
>
> Said: O son of god, where does the Tathāgata go?
>
> Said: The Tathāgata goes to nowhere (*agata*) because of the suchness (*tathā*).
>
> Said: O son of god, does not the Tathāgata go to Nirvāṇa?
>
> Said: O son of good family, all dharmas go to Nirvāṇa, so the Tathāgata does not go to Nirvāṇa. Why? Those who go to Nirvāṇa do not attain Nirvāṇa.[25]

The places to which *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* goes are not enlightenment, buddhahood, or Nirvāṇa, as suggested by Skilton and McRae, but the minds of all sentient beings' minds, reincarnations, buddha lands, the speeches of doctrine, etc. The minds of these sentient beings, etc., are likely the "wars" or battlefield entered by the hero in metaphor 2. Moreover, the buddha goes where the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* goes, i.e., he goes to all the "places" mentioned above while simultaneously reaching nowhere, including Nirvāṇa. Therefore, the march of *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* is not a journey of an ordinary person to pursue enlightenment; rather, it describes the path of the saints to deliver sentient beings through manifestations.

## 4. Are There Appropriate Cultivation Practices Related to *Śūraṃgama-Samādhi*?

Having discussed the meaning of *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*, this section will now address the question of cultivation practices.

The concern regarding practice vis-à-vis *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* has traditionally revolved around the cultivation of meditative concentration (Lamotte [1998] 2003, p. viii; McRae 1998, p. 1; Tsai 2006; Shih 2016, pp. 83–91). However, the evidence provided in past scholarship actually has little to do with meditational practice. Florin Deleanu and Takanori Fukita were acutely aware of this issue (Deleanu 2000, p. 73; Fukita 2020, pp. 85–86). By examining two of these practices, Fukita argued in a recent paper that these practices did not in fact lead to the mastery of *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* and that the *SSS* offers no appropriate and practical means for cultivating *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* (Fukita 2020, pp. 85–86).

However, it is unlikely that the *SSS* would promote *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* while simultaneously offering a series of unrelated practices. There must be some relation between the proposed practices and the defined state of being. This "inconsistency" in the text is no fault of the scripture itself but goes back to previous misinterpretation of the term *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* as a form of meditative concentration. Having redefined what we mean by *Śūraṃgama-samādhi,* it is now necessary to reconsider this issue.

One of the two cultivation examples provided by Fukita is the act of hearing, reciting, and teaching *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*, which confuses the primary meaning and the derivative meanings of *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*. What is heard, recited, preached to others, etc., refers to the derivative meaning of ***Śūraṃgama-samādhi,*** which is discussed in the next section. Therefore, the practices of hearing, recitation, etc., mentioned in these passages are not on the same level as the practice of *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* itself under discussion.

Apart from these cases, the *SSS* presents two levels of cultivation—one for buddhas and one for ordinary people—which are referred to as the dharmas of the buddhas and the dharmas of ordinary people, respectively.

The dharmas of the buddhas refer to the practice of abiding in the state of *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* or the cultivations performed by buddhas and celestrial bodhisattvas in the state of *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*. These practices involve contemplating emptiness, saving sentient beings, achieving buddha lands, cultivating six pāramitās, etc. Such practices are intentionally shown by buddhas and bodhisattvas for sentient beings, and they do not themselves need these practices.

> (Jayamati said:) … O the Blessed One, how to cultivate within *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*?
>
> The Blessed One replies: O Jayamati, whenever a bodhisattva sees not entering all dharmas, he will enter the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*. O Jayamati, whenever a bodhisattva views all dharmas as unobstructed, momentary, empty, and free from love and hatred, then he is practicing the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*. Moreover, O Jayamati, the cultivation within *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* is not just one kind of practice, O Jayamati, as many as there are activities of all sentient beings' minds and actions, are there the activities of the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*. In this *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*, as many as the entrance to the hearts and actions of all sentient beings, are there entrances into practice. In this *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*, as many as the activities of the faculties of all sentient beings are involved, are there cultivations entered. As many as the names and forms of all sentient beings, this bodhisattva manifests names and forms. O Jayamati, whoever manifests in this way, he is practicing in this *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*. As many as the names, forms and marks of all buddhas showing, the bodhisattva will show names, forms and marks. Jayamati, whoever appears in this way is practicing in the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*. As many as the buddhas' arrangement of merits of the buddha lands show, arrangements of merits of buddha lands will be manifested by those bodhisattvas. O Jayamati, if he manifests in this way, this is the practice of the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*. O Jayamati, for this reason, there are very few bodhisattvas who abide in the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*, but there are many who practice other inferior *samādhis*.[26]

The so-called "cultivation" discussed here refers to the various methods of deliverance in accordance with their respective spiritual capacities of every sentient being by buddhas and bodhisattvas who abide in the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*. In other words, this paragraph suggests that the cultivation of abiding in *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* has no fixed method of practice, with countless variance arising expediently in accordance with the minds and behaviors of all living beings, as well as the names and appearances of the buddhas. Furthermore, this cultivation is not a practice performed by ordinary people, but a "practice" manifested by the buddhas and bodhisattvas to guide sentient beings.

This manifested cultivation is clearly shown in the section on the Pefections(*pāramitās*). The practices of the six *pāramitās* are all manifestations of the buddhas. Because buddhas and bodhisattvas have already attained buddhahood, there is no need for them to practice

the *pāramitās* in the pursuit of enlightenment. For example, in the practice of the perfection of generosity (*Dāna-pāramitā*):

> Dṛḍhamati, all the treasures in the three thousand great thousand worlds, or the treasures in the sea, or in the abode of heaven, or in the abode of dragons, or on the earth, or in the hands of Yakṣas, or in the human world, as well as food, drink, clothes, vehicles, in all of these he is at home and in control. Anythings he wants to give is able to give. These are obtained from past merits. Not to mention achieved at will through supernatural achievement. [27]

The end of this passage states, "this is the supremacy of the cultivation of *Dānapāramitā* of the bodhisattvas who abide in *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*".[28] This paragraph shows that the bodhisattva who abides in the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* and practices the *Dānaparamitā* can give alms at will based on the immeasurable merits accumulated in the past, let alone making use of supernatural powers to give alms. Therefore, although these deeds are called practicing the *pāramitā* of giving to seek enlightenment, in fact, they are manifestations performed by buddhas and bodhisattvas who are beyond this mundane world.

Does the *SSS* mention the practice of *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* by ordinary people? The *SSS* says:

> "The Blessed One, if a bodhisattva having no arrogant mind towards all forms of cultivation, how should they cultivate the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*?"

> The Blessed One then said to the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Dṛḍhamati: "...Dṛḍhamati, if a bodhisattva wishes to cultivate the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* they should first cultivate mental disposition. When they have learned mental disposition, they enter into practice. When they have learned practice, they enter into the determination. When they have learned the determination, they enter into great loving-kindness. When they have learned great loving-kindness, they enter into great compassion. When they have learned great compassion, they enter into great joy.... They perfect the ten stages, and after dwelling on the tenth stage, they receive the inauguration of all the buddhas. After receiving the inauguration of all the buddhas, they obtain all the bodhisattva *samādhis*. After obtaining all the bodhisattvas' *samādhis*, they receive the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*. The one who obtains the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* will serve sentient beings through the activities of the buddhas while not abandoning the normal state of a bodhisattva.. Dṛḍhamati, in this way, all bodhisattvas who cultivate these dharmas will attain the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*. Dṛḍhamati, bodhisattvas who dwell in the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* have nothing more to learn".[29]

This paragraph describes in generic terms the Mahāyāna path for attaining enlightenment and seems to not contain much new and important information (except, perhaps, for the appearance of *Pratyutpanna-samādhi*). Bearing in mind the previous discussion of *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*, it is clear that *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* is not a special meditation or text but the supramundane status of the buddhas. Indeed, the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* is not the path, but the goal. This explains why the *SSS* does not elaborate on a special path of cultivation because attaining *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* is essentially the same as attaining enlightenment. No unique practice different from the general buddhist path exists because the process of achieving *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* for ordinary people is the attainment of buddhahood itself. In other terms, if ordinary people want to practice *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*, their practice is "dharmas of ordinary people", which is the buddhist path to enlightenment in the general sense. In contrast, the case of the buddhas or boddhisattvas who abide in *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* as discussed above refers to the "dharma of the buddhas", that is, their manifested "cultivations" for the purpose of the salvation of sentient beings.

The Scripture also stresses that these two ways—buddhas and ordinary people—are actually the same in their outward appearance, i.e., they are incompatible and inseparable.

> Then Dṛḍhamati said to *Buddhamatyabhimukha: son of god, where does a bodhisattva who wants to obtain this *samādhi* make effort?

\*Buddhamatyabhimukha said: son of good family, the bodhisattva who wishes to obtain this *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* should be diligent in the dharmas of ordinary people... The dharmas of ordinary people are neither possessed nor lacking of the dharmas of buddhas. Son of good family, a bodhisattva should (in this way) be diligent in the dharmas of ordinary people.

Dṛḍhamati said: Son of god, are all the dharmas of the buddha related to having or lacking of (the dharmas of ordinary people)?

\*Buddhamatyabhimukha said: Son of god, the dharmas of ordinary people are not unified or separated. Son of god, there is no difference and discrepancies between any dharmas of buddhas and dharmas of ordinary people. As the (two approaches) with the same way, son of good familiy, there is not unification or separation in this (the same way) of the name "diligence". Why? son of googd family, all dharmas have the unproduced suchness.[30]

The dharmas of the buddhas represents the diligence or diligent cultivation manifested by buddhas or bodhisattvas after the achievement of *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*. On the other hand, the dharmas of ordinary people are the diligent practices carried out before achieving *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*, which is the general practice in pursuit of enlightenment, as mentioned above.

However, the two kinds of approaches are virtually identical in appearance, and both adopt the same practical methods, i.e., the general Buddhist practices. Therefore, they are inseparable, because all dharmas have suchness or emptiness. They differ in terms of how they manifest. Moreover, the dharmas of buddha are manifested or shown for the sake of all sentient beings, whereas the dharmas of ordinary people are not because they have not yet attained full liberation; therefore, *dharmas* are one and inseparable in their outward appearance, meanwhile they cannot be equated because the former describes the practices while the latter describes the expedient manifestation.

If *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* refers to meditation or a list of terms rather than the "buddha's supramundane nature", then it would be difficult to comprehend why both of the approaches are the cultivations of *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*.

## 5. The Derivative Meanings of *Śūraṃgama-Samādhi* and Their Relationship with Narratives: Is There True Self-Reference in Mahāyāna Sūtras?

If *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* refers to the supramundane state of the saints, how can we explain the excerpts in the *SSS* on hearing, preaching, reciting, and copying *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*? This task involves defining the derivative usages of the term *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* (hereafter, the primary meaning is represented by italic characters, and the derivative meaning is indicated by bold and italic characters).

This type of derivative usage of terms, especially in Mahāyāna sūtras, is widely believed to be a reference to the sūtra text itself, and is often called a "self-reference" or an instance of "self-reflexivity" (for example, Cole 2005; Leighton 2006, 2008; Gummer 2012; Okada 2020; Wedemeyer 2021; Harrison 2022) and discussed in various directions.[31] These "self-referential" passages have become a popular topic in recent scholarship where it has been suggested that Mahāyāna sūtras employ rhetorical devices such as "breaking the fourth wall" and the "infinite loops" in these "self-referential" passages. In 2008, Taigen Dan Leighton proposed that the "self-reference" in the *Lotus sūtra* is comparable to Maurits Cornelis Escher's "Drawing Hands" drawing, where two hands draw one another on a sheet of paper (Leighton 2008, p. 24). Alexander J. O'Neill, and Christian K. Wedemeyer both proposed the literary phenomenon of "breaking the fourth wall" in Mahāyāna Sūtras (O'Neill 2020, p. 53; Wedemeyer 2021, p. 221 ff.). Paul Harrison expanded on the paradox of "self-reference" (similar to Escher's cross-hand painting,) noting that it was a general characteristic in many Mahāyāna sūtras and calling it an "infinite loop" of "self-reference". He further proposed that the combination of this "infinite loop" and the method of "breaking the fourth wall" was meant to draw the readers into the referential framework of the

text itself, causing readers to participate in "the grand quest for perfect awakening with its potentially infinite repetitions" (Harrison 2022, p. 656).

The foundation upon which Paul Harrison's theory is constructed posits the existence of both intentional "self-reference" and rhetorical instances of "breaking the fourth wall". However, the very basis of these arguments remains problematic.

It had long been assumed that what was promoted to be heard, preached, recited, and copied (i.e., *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*) in Mahāyāna sūtras was the same as the sūtra that we read in reality (*SSS*), with little reflection on whether the apparent "self-reference" within the Mahāyāna sūtras truly pertains to the sūtras we encounter in reality as complete texts. We must question the assumption: Are the "self-references" in Mahāyāna sūtras really self-references to the text itself?

I believe that this is not the case. Before the discussion, it is important to clarify that the following argument only pertains to the narrative or storytelling aspect, and it does not assume the historical veracity of the events depicted in the *SSS*. The aim of this section of my paper is to examine the coherence of the author's narrative world from a logical standpoint. For instance, in storytelling, even though the narrative itself may be fictional, if a television were to appear in a story of Tang Dynasty, it would undoubtedly raise questions. However, if there were to be something resembling a television mentioned in the Tang Dynasty story, and we adhere to the author's logical consistency, then we must endeavor to look for clues within the story to understand what this object that resembles a television signifies within the context of the story.

Likewise, if we were to view *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* (an object that resembles a TV) as self-reference (TV), as some scholars have done in the past, it would create inconsistencies within the logical framework of the story. Since the authors were bound by the fundamental premise in Buddhist history that the Buddhist Councils took place after the Buddha's parinirvāṇa, their story was unable to deviate from this historical context. Therefore, during the Vulture Peak assembly, the sutra itself has not yet been compiled according to the timeline of the story (with no real-world implications), as its compilation have to occur at the Buddhist Councils instead of the Vulture Peak assembly. Hence, if we are to believe in the author's logical consistency in this regard, it becomes implausible for the characters in the story to discuss the sutra text that will only come into existence decades later. Therefore, we are compelled to elucidate the meaning of *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* within the context of the Vulture Peak assembly. Or, to put it another way, this is comparable to an advertisement attempting to market televisions by using a story of the Tang Dynasty. The challenge lies in finding a way to align the story with the historical background of the Tang Dynasty while still influencing viewers to purchase televisions in reality. To overcome this dilemma, they can introduce an object that existed in the Tang Dynasty and bears resemblance to a television, using it as a metaphor for the actual televisions. By employing this rhetorical technique, the story maintains its coherence while achieving the goal of promotion. Similarly, due to the fact that the Buddhist councils occurred after the Buddha's Parinirvāṇa, the authors of the *SSS* were constrained by this fundamental premise. Consequently, if they sought to endorse or promote the *SSS* that in the story world emerged only after the Buddha's Parinirvāṇa through the voice of the Buddha, they would face similar challenges. This section tries to elucidate how the authors make use of pseudo-self-reference as a connotation of *SSS* in order to solve the problem. I believe this is a commonly utilized rhetoric device found in numerous Mahayana scriptures, including the *SSS*.

From a narrative perspective, Buddhist sūtras comprise at least two layers: The frame story (layer 1) and the embedded narrative (layer 2). The frame story (layer 1) is the story that the narrator (in "Thus have *I* heard [at one time]") recalls and narrates. The first-person narration is generally believed to have taken place during one of the Buddhist Councils. Indeed, according to the narrative structure of the scriptures themselves, these texts—oral or written—were recounted after the fact rather than being recorded by some kind of cosmic stenographer who was keeping the minutes. The embedded narrative (layer 2) is the story that is narrated. In the *SSS*, the embedded narrative refers to events that oc-

curred during the Buddhist assembly on Vulture Peak (including some scenes in which bodhisattvas travel to other places or worlds). Some Mahāyāna sūtras may contain a story or stories within the embedded narrative (layer 3 or deeper).

At the narrative level (not the historical level), the sūtra we read in reality is the product of the first-person narration, i.e., layer 1, which is a complete narrative recounting the process of the Vulture Peak assembly. In this narrative world, the completed *SSS* in reality did not exist until "I" narrated it, and the *SSS* as a text (oral or written) had therefore not yet come into being during the Vulture Peak assembly. Logically, the narrator ("I") should be Ānanda who was entrusted with the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* by the buddha at the end of the assembly or the Śakra Meruśikharadhara who also swears to propagate the teaching.

This narratological understanding is the very crux of the issue. The so-called "self-reference" (*Śūraṃgama-samādhi*) occurs in the dialogues between the buddha and his audience at the (fictional) Vulture Peak assembly, i.e., the embedded narrative (layer 2 or even layer 3). Insofar as the *SSS* would not exist yet for it was being preached and memorized. Therefore, in the setting of the author(s), the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* (so-called "self-reference") discussed in the assembly could not be referring to the *SSS* we read in reality directly because the text did not exist. In other words, the so-called "self-reference" (*Śūraṃgama-samādhi*) in the *SSS* cannot denote the sūtra itself (*SSS*), and the "self-reference" is therefore not truly a self-reference.

The next question is as follows: What does the "self-reference" (derivative meaning of *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*) denote? I believe that the so-called "self-reference" (*Śūraṃgama-samādhi*) can be distinguished into at least three categories:

(1)　The core teaching on *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* (**Śūraṃgama-samādhi** *1*).
(2)　The assumed future text anticipated by the (fictional) audience (**Śūraṃgama-samādhi** *2*).
(3)　The oral prototype of the text (not yet narrated) that existed in the memory of the (fictional) audience at Vulture Peak that—as mentioned and entrusted at the end of the *SSS* (**Śūraṃgama-samādhi** 3).

However, scholarship on the subject has often confused these three definitions for **Śūraṃgama-samādhi** with the *SSS* itself. In most sections of the *SSS*, however, the meaning of **Śūraṃgama-samādhi** can be determined not by blanket definitions such as "self-reference" but by reading the collocated verbs as well as the context. The term's distribution in the text, indeed, follows a narrative logic. Looking to instances of primary usage, the verbs collocated with *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* include "dwell", "obtain", etc. (but not all of the verbs collocated with "obtain" are primary usages). Examples can be found throughout the *SSS*. The first usage "core teaching on *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*" (**Śūraṃgama-samādhi** *1*) pertains to the given instructions that elucidates the essence of *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*, including its associated supernatural power and manifestations. These teachings, as delivered by the buddha and tenth-stage bodhisattvas, are found either before or after the passages containing instances of **Śūraṃgama-samādhi** *1*. In the text, this teaching is commonly shared among all buddhas. The verbs most often collocated with "**Śūraṃgama-samādhi** *1*" are "explain" or "hear" rather than "read", "recite", "preach to others", or "copy", and those who explain the core teaching are primarily buddhas and tenth-stage bodhisattvas, whereas those who hear are the audience. This kind of usage primarily occurs in §12–14 (before the core instruction); §81–117 (after the core instruction); and §132, §148, and §150–152 (after Mañjuśrī's instruction), although not all the cases in these passages are used in this way. The reason why this derivative usage of *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* appears is that these sections are used to discuss the merit and protective power of the core teaching.

The second usage "anticipated text" (**Śūraṃgama-samādhi** *2*) refers to the oral or written texts or books that the audience or the buddha himself believes will appear in the future based on the inherent merits of the core teaching. However, at the time of the Vulture Peak assembly, this version of the text only existed as a form of the audience's anticipation and assumption. In this sense, the verbs collocated with **Śūraṃgama-samādhi** *2* are not only

"hear" and "explain" but also "recite", "expound to others", and "copy". The events of reciting, expounding, and copying the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi 2* are anticipated to happen in the future instead of occurring during the assembly. The characters in these passages are often potential future dharmabhāṇakas or another unspecified figure (e.g., a person or bodhisattva). Logically, in the narrative at least, it entails the presupposition that this text would have firstly been narrated at the Buddhist Councils prior to being heard, recited, preached, or copied by Dharmabhāṇakas or other individuals in the future. This usage primarily occurs in §118, 129–131, 165, 173–174.

The third type of usage is the prototype of the oral version of the sūtra text (as it exists in the audience's minds) that is mentioned and entrusted at the end of the sūtra (*Śūraṃgama-samādhi 3*) (§167–172, 175–178). The prototype of the oral version of the sūtra corresponds to the recollections of the Vulture Peak assembly within the consciousness of the audience, particularly in the minds of Ānanda and Śakra Meruśikharadhara (based on the logic of the story with no historical implication). As the occurrences of this type of usage may not exclusively be confined to the very end of the sūtra, the prototype remains open to supplementation until the termination of the assembly. Logically, the prototype of the oral transmission does not contain fixed narrative discourses on the events that occurred in the assembly because it is a discursive process in the making. The concrete narrative discourses in the *SSS* do not come into existence until the first-person narration of the events ("Thus have I hear") takes place after the assembly, drawing upon the recollection or the prototype of the oral transmission of the sūtra. Therefore, *Śūraṃgama-samādhi 3* is different from *SSS* because, from the clues and logic of the story, we may infer that these plots preserved in memory did not necessarily form specific and recitable sentences or passages at the time of Vulture Peak assembly. The verbs most often collocated with *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* are "recite", "expound to others", "copy", etc.

According to the analysis presented above, the three kinds of *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* in the "self-referential passages" should not be considered as the reference to any version of the *SSS* we heard or read in the real world directly. It refers, at least in its derivative definition, to a core teaching, to the anticipation, and to the narrative process unfolding within the text itself. Therefore, in contrast to the present academic consensus, these instances of *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* would not be proper "self-references" but merely "pseudo-self-references".

Based on the above analysis, we can now respond to the issues related to the question of rhetorical the "infinite loops" and to the literary "breaking of the fourth wall". First, the premise for the existence of an infinite loop is the existence of instances of "self-reference" in the sūtras. As previously mentioned, from a narratological perspective, no "self-reference" properly occurs in the *SSS*, or even the Mahāyāna sūtras, precluding the possibility of an "infinite loop". That being said, Paul Harrison wrote regarding the *Lotus Sūtra* that the "self-reference" in (some) Mahāyāna sūtras cannot be understood as core instructions because there were no core instructions in the *Lotus sūtra*, making it impossible to avoid the paradox of an infinite loop. The *SSS* has also been criticized by Fukita for not having core instructions, although he did not discuss the issue of self-reference (Fukita 2020, pp. 84–85). As mentioned earlier, the core instruction of the *SSS* is in fact provided. The core instruction constitutes the definition of *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* (the buddha's supramundane state), its supernatural power, manifestations, and the cultivation methods (both praxis for ordinary individuals and the salvific practices of the saints).

Prior to Paul Harrison's work on rhetorical "infinite loops", other scholars had already argued that there was no core instruction in texts such as the *Lotus Sūtra* (Teiser and Stone 2009, pp. 17–18). Leighton even went so far as to argue that the paradox of the infinite loop itself was the core instruction of the *Lotus Sūtra* (Leighton 2006, pp. 13–40). However, the aforementioned scholars overlooked Seishi Karashima's point proposed in 2001 that the core instructions of the *Lotus Sūtra* did in fact exist and that they had been preserved in the Central Asian manuscript (Lü B-l 1.Recto) and in Chinese translations, whereas the core teaching section was missing in later Sanskrit manuscripts from Nepal and Gilgit, as

well as in the Kern-Nanjio edition ([Karashima 2001a](), pp. 216–17; [2001b](), note 115). This core instruction found in the Central Asian manuscript and in Chinese translations refers to "an elucidation of equality of the great knowledge (*Mahājñāna-samatā-nirdeśa*)"—that is to say, "Everyone can equally acquire buddhist wisdom, and therefore aim to acquire it". If Karashima's viewpoint is correct, then the Lotus sūtra would have contained core instructions in its early versions, i.e., the equality of the great knowledge, which is the *dharmaparyāya* named *Saddharmapundrikā*. Therefore, the self-referential paragraphs cited by Paul Harrison from the *Lotus sūtra* were predicated on misgivings regarding the absence of any core teachings in the scripture. If there were, in fact, core instructions in the text, then the instances cited by Harrison were not necessarily "self-referential" and the literary "infinite loop" is no longer a viable interpretation.

Secondly, is there really a phenomenon of "breaking the fourth wall" in the so-called "self-referential" paragraphs of *SSS*? Several scholars have borrowed the dramatic term "breaking the fourth wall" in the study of Mahāyāna sūtras to explain the phenomenon of jumping out of the story frame and engaging in dialogue with their readers or auditors in the real world ([O'Neill 2020](), p. 53; [Wedemeyer 2021](), p. 221 ff.; [Harrison 2022]()). Wedemeyer believed that the Mahāyāna sūtras cut across the narrative levels of the texts to interact with the real world where the reader (or audience) is located, allowing the readers to "self-identify with the characters in the sūtras", assuming that the readers will "shape their identities, behavior, and socioreligious allegiances accordingly" ([Wedemeyer 2021](), p. 222). This phenomenon is particularly reflected in the so-called "self-referential" paragraphs.

The author(s) of the *SSS* almost certainly intended to influence the readers in the real world, particularly in the "self"-promotional paragraphs. However, these paragraphs were completely self-contained within the narrative. As mentioned earlier, the "self-referential" paragraphs were not directly addressed to the readers but were strictly limited to the conversations held between various characters or agents in the story world. The denotation of ***Śūraṃgama-samādhi*** refers to the three types mentioned above, not in reference to the *SSS* as a text in the real world. Therefore, although the "self-referential" paragraphs imply the author(s)' expectation and assumptions with respect to what the future readers should do with the text in reality, they only connote, rather than denote, the *SSS* we read indirectly with a pseudo-self-reference (***Śūraṃgama-samādhi***). Indeed, how could the text refer to itself when it does not yet exist within the narrative? Therefore, the so-called "self-reference" neither transgresses the story framework nor does it pull the readers into the narrative framework of the sūtra directly.

Due to the narratological structure of Buddhist scriptures, i.e., the "Thus I have heard" framework, the author(s) of the sūtra are constrained by the timeline of the story itself. In the story world, the sūtra text, i.e., their work, can only come into existence after the agent "I" recounts and narrates details related to the previous assembly. This poses a fundamental question: If the author(s) seek to utilize the voice of the buddha or of other saints to endorse and promote their works, how can they effectively and reasonably have the buddha endorsing a scripture that has not yet come into existence without deviating from the established narrative framework? It is interesting to note that the author(s) employ the rhetorical device of "pseudo-self-reference" to address the problem. By utilizing pseudo-self-reference, they evoke images or associations in the minds of readers or auditors that are associated with the real scriptures they have composed, without explicitly referring to those scriptures as they exist in textual form in the real world. This technique serves as one of the authors' methods of manipulating the behaviors of the readers or auditors.

## 6. Conclusions

In summary, the evidence presented in this paper demonstrates that the previous understanding of the concept *Śūraṃgama-samādhi*, as well as "*samādhi*" more generally in the early Mahāyāna *samādhi* sūtras, is worth revisiting. Therefore, a new interpretation of the term and its narratives have been proposed in this article.

This article has argued that the definition of the term *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* should be divided into two main categories: A primary meaning and a derivative meaning. The primary definition of *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* refers to the supramundane state of the buddha and the tenth-stage bodhisattvas. The supramundane state is also the inherent nature of the buddhas as their mundane behaviors are expedient manifestations in nature. This literal interpretation of *samādhi* is neither a "collection of terms", as claimed by Skilton, nor a form of "meditation" as traditionally believed but is instead the gathering location or the location of convergence in the metaphorical sense. In *SSS*, it is the supramundane state that serves as the gathering location for the supramundane qualities and supernatural manifestations of a saint, while in *PSS*, it is the concentration on the buddha (*Pratyutpanna-samādhi*) that serves as the gathering location of meritorious deeds enumerated in the list. The buddha's supramundane state is known as *samādhi* (the place of convergence) because all the supramundane manifestations and characteristics are contained and gathered within it.

Regarding the term *Śūraṃgama,* we have seen to what extent it is a polysemous metaphor. Bearing this in mind, Lamotte's widely quoted interpretation translation does not fully capture the variety of meanings contained by the term. The author(s) of the sūtra did not interpret the compound term strictly in accordance with the rules of the Sanskrit grammar but rather they used the term similar to a pun, a word game that could refer to multiple things at once. The "march" of *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* is not walking on the path to Nirvāṇa but represents the buddha going to the hearts and minds of all living beings, etc.

The cultivation of *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* can be divided into two categories: The practices of the buddha and the practices of ordinary people. However, the described practice of ordinary people is consistent with the general practice in the Buddhist tradition, with no special practice method because the process of obtaining the *Śūraṃgama-samādhi* (the supramundane state of buddha) is itself the process of becoming the buddha. The buddha's practice is a manifested "practice" for the salvation of living beings. These two practices are similar in their external appearance, but they are essentially distinct. Their relationship is, therefore, both unconsolidated and inseparable.

The derivative usages (***Śūraṃgama-samādhi***) are widely considered to refer to the sūtra we can read in the real world and is therefore known as "self-reference". This led to discussions on the paradox of the "infinite loop" of the "self-reference". However, this interpretation neglects the layered nature of the scriptural narratives: The frame story (layer 1) and the embedded narrative (layer 2). Looking at the story itself, the sūtra we read is the outcome of a first-person narration (layer 1) and it did not come into being at the Vulture Peak assembly (layer 2). Hence, the discussion of the ***Śūraṃgama-samādhi*** at the assembly (layer 2) does not directly refer to the *SSS* we encounter in reality. It could not have been a "self-reference" to *SSS* if the text did not exist in the timeline of the narrative. In the present paper, I argued that we can distinguish three different definitions for the term ***Śūraṃgama-samādhi***, which only connote, rather than denote, the *SSS* in reality as a form of "pseudo-self-reference" (***Śūraṃgama-samādhi***). This interpretation model based on narrative avoids the paradox of the "infinite loop" of "self-reference". The pseudo-self-reference, as a previously unnoticed rhetorical technique in Mahāyāna sūtras, allows the author(s) to manipulate their readers to recite, preach, and copy the scriptures in the real world by using the voice of the Buddha without disrupting the narrative timeline and framework.

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## Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| *BKS* | *Bhadrakalpika-sūtra* |
| Ch. | Chinese |
| D | Derge (Sde dge) Edition of the Tibetan Kanjur. |
| *GZXJ* | *Guancha Zhufa Xing Jing* (觀察諸法行經) |
| MN | *Majjhimanikāya* |
| Ōtani | Ōtani number in Chibetto Daizōkyō Kenkyūkai henshū (1962). |
| *PSS* | *Pratyutpanna-Buddha-Saṃmukhāvasthita-Samādhi-Sūtra* |
| *SRS* | *Samādhirāja-sūtra* |
| *SSS* | *Śūraṃgama-samādhi-Sūtra* |
| T | Taisho shinshū daizōkyō number in Takakusu and Watanabe (1924–1932). |
| Tib. | Tibetan |
| Tōh | Tōhaku number in Ui et al. (1934). |
| Q | Peking Edition of the Tibetan Kanjur. |

## Notes

1 Concerning the history of translation and reception of the *SSS* in China proper and Tibet, see Lamotte (1965, pp. 63–115; [1998] 2003, pp. 56–103). Regarding the Khotanese fragments, see (Emmerick 1970; Skjærvø 2002, pp. 169–70, 182–88, 220, 223, 266–68, 327–30, 409, 608).

2 See (Sanae 1930, 1931; Emmerick 1965, 1970; Lamotte 1965, [1998] 2003; Thubten Kalzang et al. 1970; Tanji 1974; Kaneko 1990; Kawamura 1969, 1972, 1993; Shioiri 1990; Fukita and Noriyuki 1997; Deleanu 2000; Skilton 2002; Tsai 2003, 2006; Wakemi 2004; Kobayashi 2004; Apple 2015; Chen 2015, 2018; Radich 2015; Shih 2016; Fukita 2020; Sawazaki 2021; Wenta 2023). The works that edit the Sanskrit fragments are not included in this review. For the survey of Sanskrit fragments, see Wille (2014, p. 229). For new fragments preserved in Sackler Museum of Peking University, see Saerji (2020, pp. 19–21, 43–49).

3 Concerning the interpretation of the concept of *Śūraṃgamasamādhi*, see (Emmerick 1970, note 13; Lamotte [1998] 2003, pp. xii–xiii).

4 Lamotte's monograph received over ten book reviews, but only J. May and J. C. Wright expressed differnt views on his interpretation, see (Emmerick 1965; Vetch 1965; Lamotte 1966; Wright 1967; De Jong 1970; Sakurabe 1972; Steinkellner 1999; Guruge 2000; Pāsādika 2000; Kroll 2001; von Hinüber 2001; Mochizuki 2006). After Emmerick (1970) and Lamotte ([1998] 2003) responded to these critiques, no further dissenting opinions arose regarding the section of *Śūraṃgama*.

5 In the *SRS*, the term 'pada' is used to refer to these subitems in the list.

6 For the hypotheses linking meditation to the origin of Mahāyāna, see Harrison (1995); Williams (1989); Deleanu (2000); Harrison (2003).

7 Paul Harrison said "it is possible that this brief discussion of the issue oversimplifies it, insofar as it does not address Andrew Skilton's provocative thesis (Skilton 2002) that *samādhi* in various *samādhi* sūtras refers not to a meditative practice (in the normal sense) but to a list of items. If the thesis is accepted, and samādhi is understood as inventory, then the distinction we are drawing between text and practice is blurred even more. In this paper there is insufficient space to pursue such problems further, but for some earlier thoughts on the interplay of practice and text, see Harrison (2003)". See Harrison (2022, p. 653, note 8).

8 However, the *PSS* is special among these scriptures as its meaning of samādhi involves a pun, as explained later in the article.

9 The English translation in this paper is based on the Tibetan version. The Chinese version is provided for reference purposes only. Tib. *rgyal ba'i blo gros gang gi tshe na byang chub sems dpa' chos thams cad thogs pa med pa dang|skad cig pa dang|ya ma brla dang|rjes su chags pa dang|khong khro ba dang bral bar mthong ba de'i tshe|dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin 'di la zhugs pa yin no||*(D 304b4-6; Q 331b2-4. ) Ch. 佛言：“名意！菩薩若能觀諸法空，無所障礙，念念滅盡，離於憎愛，是名修是三昧。”(T 643b21-23).

10 Tib. *blo gros brtan pa dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin ni byang chub sems dpa' sa dang po la gnas pas mi 'thob|sa gnyis pa la gnas pas ma yin|......byang chub sems dpa' sa dgu pa la gnas pas mi 'thob kyi| blo gros brtan pa dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin ni byang chub sems dpa' sa bcu pa la gnas pas 'thob bo||*(D 260a6-b1; Q 284a1-4). Ch. 爾時佛告堅意菩薩：“首楞嚴三昧，非初地、二地、三地、四地、五地、六地、七地、八地、九地菩薩之所能得，唯有住在十地菩薩，乃能得是首楞嚴三昧。”(T 631a18-21).

11 As is noted by Skilton, "The conclusion of Lamotte's translation of the Chinese text does not follow exactly the pattern shown by the *SRS* and *PSS*, in that the list is not concluded by the enclosing phrase of identification, 'This, young man, is that samādhi for which the name śūraṃgama-samādhi is used'. Fortunately the Tibetan translation contains the complete text of the passage and thus allows us to see that the *SSS*, too, conforms closely to the pattern of the other *samādhi* sūtras we have examined". See (Skilton 2002, p. 68).

12 Tib. *blo gros brtan pa de la dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin de gang zhe na|'di lta ste|nam mkha'i khams bzhin du sems bskyed pa shin tu yongs su sbyang ba byas pa dang|sems can thams cad kyi sems la rtog pa mngon sum du gyur pa dang|...... byang chub sems dpa' dag mngal du 'jug*

*pa dang | btsas pa dang | mngon par 'byung ba dang | dka' ba spyod pa dang | byang chub kyi snying por 'gro ba dang | bdud 'dul ba dang | byang chub mngon par rdzogs par 'tshang rgya ba dang | chos kyi 'khor lo bskor ba dang | mya ngan las 'da' ba chen po dang | lus 'jig pa yang ston la byang chub sems dpa'i chos nyid de yang mi gtong zhing shin tu phung po med par yang mya ngan las mi 'da' ba 'di ni blo gros brtan pa dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin ces bya ste | 'di ni dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin gyi yul lo | | gzhan yang dpag tu med pa dag yod do | |* (D 260b1-262b4; Q 284a4-286b5). Ch. 何等是首楞嚴三昧？謂：修治心猶如虛空(一)。觀察現在眾生諸心(二)。……示現入胎初生(九十七)。出家成就佛道(九十八)。轉於法輪(九十九)。入大滅度而不永滅(一百)。堅意！首楞嚴三昧如是無量。(T 631a21-c26).

[13] Tib. *blo gros brtan pa dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin ni bshad pa gcig tu mi blta | spyod yul gcig tu ma yin | rnam pa gcig tu ma yin | dmigs pa gcig tu ma yin | don gcig las byung bar mi blta'o | |* (D 264b7-265a1; Q289a3-5). Ch.堅意！　首楞嚴三昧，不以一事一緣一義可知。(T 631c27-28).

[14] *Katamañ-c' āvuso kusalaṃ: Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī kusalaṃ, adinnādānā veramaṇī kusalaṃ, kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī kusalaṃ, musāvādā veramaṇī kusalaṃ, pisuṇāya vācāya veramaṇī kusalaṃ, pharusāya vācāya veramaṇī kusalaṃ, samphappalāpā veramaṇī kusalaṃ, anabhijjhā kusalaṃ, abyāpādo kusalaṃ, sammādiṭṭhi kusalaṃ. Idaṃ vuccat' āvuso kusalaṃ* (MN I 47[12–14]).

[15] For more on "docetic" doctrine in Mahāyāna Buddhism, see Ruegg (2008); Radich (2015). With respect to the borrowing of the terms "Docetism" or "docetic" in buddhist studies, Michael Radich said, "I will use the terms 'docetism', 'docetic', etc., to refer to ideas holding that the buddha's appearance and action in the world is in some sense only an appearance (Gk. dokesis, 'semblance, appearance', dokein 'seem, appear'). The corollary of such docetism is that the reality of the buddha's true nature, being, etc., differs in some significant respect from that appearance. In using the term 'docetism', which is obviously derivative from a specific context in Christian history, I do not mean to imply any particular degree of comparative or historical affinity with the doctrines of the Christian sect of the Docetae". See Radich (2015, pp. 105–6).

[16] For more on the relationship between Gopaka, Gopā/Gopikā, and Śākyamuṇi, see Lamotte ([1998] 2003, pp. 154–55, note 138). The narrative of Gopaka in *SSS* evidently implies a marital relationship between Gopā and the bodhisattva Śākyamuṇi.

[17] Tib. *blo gros brtan pa ting nge 'dzin thams cad dang | snyoms par 'jug pa thams cad dang | rnam par thar pa thams cad dang | rdzu 'phrul dang | mngon par shes pa dang | so so yang dag par rig pa'i shes pa de dag thams cad ni dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin gyi nang du 'dus shing chud par blta'o | | blo gros brtan pa 'di lta ste | dper na chu mig dang | mtshe'u dang | rdzing dang | lteng ka dang | chu bran dang | 'bab chu dang | 'bab chu chen po gang ji snyed pa de dag ni rgya mtsho chen por 'dus par blta'o | | blo gros brtan pa de bzhin du byang chub sems dpa'i ting nge 'dzin dang | snyoms par 'jug pa dang | rnam par thar pa gang ji snyed pa dag dang | rdzu 'phrul thams cad dang | mngon par shes pa dang | so so yang dag par rig pa'i shes pa de dag thams cad ni dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin gyi nang du 'dus par blta'o | |* (D265a1-4; Q289a4-7). Ch. 一切禪定解脫三昧，神通如意無礙智慧，皆攝在首楞嚴中。　譬如陂泉江河諸流皆入大海，如是菩薩所有禪定，皆在首楞嚴三昧。(T631c28–632a2).

[18] The reason this can be identified as an annotation is that the subsequent phrase, "Therefore, it is called *Śūraṃgamasamādhi*", already points out that the previous three metaphors explain why it is called *Śūraṃgamasamādhi*. Therefore, here, like the other two metaphors, word play is employed, using metaphors to explain the word.

[19] With respect to *Guancha Zhufa Xing Jing* (觀察諸法行經T649, hereafter *GZXJ*), Nanjō Bun'yū reconstructed its Sanskrit title as *Sarva-dharma-caryā-dhyāna-sūtra*. Andrew Skilton reconstructed the same title as *Sarva-dharma-niyata-pravicayacaryā-samādhi Sūtra*, and Andrew Skilton mentions that Juo-Hsueh Shih suggested to him in a private communication that the name of the sūtra may be constructed as *Sarva-dharma-niyata-parīkṣa-samādhi*. However, Can Li identified the former section of *GZXJ* as an independent translation of the samādhi section of *Bhadrakalpika-sūtra*(hereafter *BKS*). The core concept of *Shuo[ming] Jueding Guancha Zhufa Xing Sanmodi* (Chin: 說[名]決定觀察諸法行三摩地) advocated by T649 was translated as *Chos thams cad kyi tshul la nges par ston pa zhes bya ba'i ting nge 'dzin* and *Liao Zhufaben Sanmei* (了諸法本三昧)" in the Tibetan and Dharmarakṣa's Chinese translation of *BKS* (Li 2015, p. 236). This identification may help to reconstruct the Sanskrit name of the samādhi as *Sarva-dharma-naya-viniścaya-[nidarśana]-nirdeśa-nāma-samādhi* and the sūtra title as *Sarva-dharma-naya-(viniścaya-)nidarśana-sūtra*.

[20] A set of early Mahāyāna *samādhi* sūtras was mentioned in Asaṅga's *Mahāyānasaṃgrah*, most of which happened to include a term list, i.e. *Mahāyānāloka, SRS, PSS(=Bhadrapāla-sūtra), SSS and Sarvapuñyasamuccayasamādhi-sūtra*. See Skilton (1999, pp. 643–44) and Skilton (2002, p. 52 ff.). Skilton reported that he had: "not as yet found any scriptural candidate for the *Mahāyānāloka*". However, *Mahāyānāloka(-samādhi-sūtra)* might be identified as the lost translation of *Guoming Sanmei Jing* (光明三昧經) by Lokakṣema and T.630 (成具光明定意經) translated by Zhiyao 支曜 in the Eastern Han Dynasty.

[21] Paul Harrison pointed out that it is doubtful whether Amitābha buddha is regarded as a proper noun in the Tibetan translation of *PSS*. He said, "In view of the nature of the evidence we have no way of determining whether an original verse reference to the buddha Amitāyus (relating to a prose passage missing in some redactions) has been passed over by the Tibetans and possibly T.419, or whether on the other hand the Chinese have misread an ordinary bahuvṛhi--a(pari)mitāyus--as a proper name. But even if the latter is the case this looks very much like a reference to the lore pertaining to the bodhisattvas of Sukhavatī, who have an unlimited lifespan like their buddha, and can see countless other buddhas at will" (Harrison 1990, p. 51).

[22] "Elle est qualifiée de Marche Héroïque parce que celui qui la détient va partout à la manière d'un héros(*śūra*) sans rencontrer de résistance, ou parce qu'elle est frayée(*gata*) par ces grands héros que sont les buddha et les bodhisattva". See Lamotte (1965, p. 1).

[23] *blo gros brtan pa de bzhin du byang chub sems dpa'i ting nge 'dzin dang | snyoms par'jug pa dang | rnam par thar pa gang ji snyed pa dag dang | rdzu 'phrul thams cad dang | mngon par shes pa dang | so so yang dag par rig pa'i shes pa de dag thams cad ni dpa' bar 'gro*

*ba'i ting nge 'dzin gyi nang du 'dus par blta'o||blo gros brtan pa 'di lta ste|dper na rgyal po'i dpung gi tshogs yan lag bzhi pa thams cad ni dpa' bo g.yul du 'jug pa'i lag tu song zhing dbang du gyur pa yin te|dpa' bo g.yul du 'jug pa gang dang gang du 'gro ba d e dang der dpung gi tshogs yan lag bzhi pa yang 'gro'o||blo gros brtan pa de bzhin du ting nge 'dzin gyi sgo'am|snyoms par 'jug pa'i sgo'am|chos la gnas pa'i sgro'am|rnam par thar pa'i sgo'am|gzungs kyi sgo'am|mngon par shes pa dang|rig pa dang|rnam par grol ba'i sgo gang ji snyed pa chos la gnas pa'i sgo de dag thams cad ni dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin gyi lag tu song ba yin|dbang du gyur pa yin|mngon du gyur pa yin te|blo gros brtan pa byang chub sems dpa'i dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin gang dang gang du 'gro ba de dang de nyid du chos la gnas pa'i sgo thams cad 'gro'o||blo gros brtan pa 'di lta ste|dper na 'khor los sgyur ba'i rgyal po gar 'gro ba der rin po che sna bdun yang 'gro'o||blo gros brtan pa de bzhin du dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin gar 'gro ba der byang chub kyi phyogs kyi chos thams cad kyang 'gro zhing rjes su 'brang ste|de bas na dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin ces bya'o||*(D 265a4-b1; Q289a7-b5). Ch. 譬如轉輪聖王有大勇將，諸四種兵皆悉隨從。堅意！如是所有三昧門、禪定門、辯才門、解脫門、陀羅尼門、神通門、明解脫門，是諸法門悉皆攝在首楞嚴三昧，隨有菩薩行首楞嚴三昧，一切三昧皆悉隨從。堅意！譬如轉輪聖王行時七寶皆從。如是堅意！首楞嚴三昧，一切助菩提法皆悉隨從。是故此三昧名為首楞嚴。(T 632a2-9).

24　Lamotte (1965, p. 1); ibid. ([1998] 2003, p. 1): "It is called Heroic Progress because **whoever possesses it** goes everywhere in the manner of a hero (siira) without meeting any resistance, or because it is frequented (gata) by **those heroes the buddhas and bodhisattvas**".

25　Tib. *smras pa|lha'i bu dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin gang du 'gro ba yin|smras pa|rigs kyi bu dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin ni sems can thams cad kyi sems dang spyod pa la 'gro ba yang yin la|sems dang lta ba dang|dmigs par 'du shes pa la 'gro ba ni ma yin no||srid par 'gro ba'i 'chi 'pho dang|skye ba thams cad du 'gro ba yang yin la|srid par 'gro ba'i nyon mongs par 'gro ba ni ma yin no||rigs kyi bu dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin ni ting nge 'dzin thams cad ston par 'gro ba yang yin la mnyam pa nyid 'khrugs par 'gro ba ni ma yin no||sangs rgyas kyi zhing thams cad du 'jug par 'gro ba yang yin la zhing sna tshogs su 'du shes par 'gro ba ni ma yin no||sangs rgyas thams cad ston par 'gro ba yang yin la sangs rgyas kyi gzugs dang|mtshan la rnam par rtog cing ston par 'gro ba ni ma yin no||sgra dang|skad thams cad ston par 'gro ba yang yin la yi ge'i 'du shes yongs su rtog par 'gro ba ni ma yin no||rigs kyi bu dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin ni sangs rgyas thams cad mthong bar 'gro ba yang yin la shin tu mthong bar 'gro ba ni ma yin no||rigs kyi bu de lta bas na dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin ji lta bur 'gro ba yin zhes gang de skad smras pa ni de bzhin gshegs pa'i 'gro ba gang yin pa ting nge 'dzin 'di'i 'gro ba yang de yin no||smras pa|lha'i bu de bzhin gshegs pa ji lta bur gshegs|smras pa|de bzhin gshegs pa ni de bzhin nyid kyi phyir mi 'gro bar gshegs so||smras pa|lha'i bu de bzhin gshegs pa yongs su mya ngan las 'da' bar mi gshegs sam|smras pa|rigs kyi bu chos thams cad yongs su mya ngan las 'da' bar 'gro ba yin te|de bas na de bzhin gshegs pa yongs su mya ngan las 'da' bar gshegs pa ma yin no||de ci'i phyir zhe na|mya ngan las 'da' ba'i 'gro ba ni yongs su mya ngan las mi 'da'o||*(D280b2-281a2; Q306a3-a6.) Ch. 堅意復問：「首楞嚴三昧去至何所？」天子答言：「首楞嚴三昧去至一切眾生心行，而亦不緣心行取相；去至一切諸所生處，而亦不為生處所污；去至一切世界佛所，而不分別佛身相好；去至一切音聲語言，而不分別諸文字相；普能開示一切佛法，而不至於畢竟盡處。善男子！問是三昧至何處者？隨佛所至，是三昧者亦如是至。」堅意問言：「佛至何處？」天子答言：「佛如如故至無所至。」又問：「佛不至涅槃耶？」答言：「一切諸法究竟涅槃，是故如來不至涅槃。所以者何？涅槃性故不至涅槃。」(T 636a28-b10).

26　*yang bcom ldan 'das dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin 'di la ji ltar nan tan bgyi|bcom ldan 'das kyis bka' stsal pa|rgyal ba'i blo gros gang gi tshe na byang chub sems dpa' chos thams cad ma zhugs par mthong ba de'i tshe|dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin 'di la zhugs pa yin no||rgyal ba'i blo gros gang gi tshe na byang chub sems dpa' chos thams cad thogs pa med pa dang|skad cig pa dang|ya ma brla dang|rjes su chags pa dang|khong khro ba dang bral bar mthong ba de'i tshe|dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin 'di la zhugs pa yin no||rgyal ba'i blo gros 'on kyang dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin 'di la ni nan tan gcig tu ma zad kyi rgyal ba'i blo gros dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin 'di la nan tan byed pa'i rgyu ni sems can thams cad kyi sems dang spyod pa'i rgyu ba ji snyed pa de snyed yod do||dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin 'di la ni sems can thams cad kyi sems dang spyod pa 'jug pa ji snyed pa de snyed kyi nan tan 'jug pa yod do||dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin 'di la ni sems can thams cad kyi dbang po'i rgyu ba ji snyed pa de snyed kyi nan tan 'jug pa yod do||sems can thams cad kyi ming dang gzugs ji snyed pa byang chub sems dpa' des de snyed kyi ming dang gzugs bstan par bya'o||rgyal ba'i blo gros gang de ltar ston pa de ni dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin 'di la nan tan byed pa'o||sangs rgyas thams cad kyi ming dang gzugs dang|mtshan mthong ba ji snyed pa byang chub sems dpa' des ming dang gzugs dang|mtshan mthong ba de snyed bstan par bya ste|rgyal ba'i blo gros gang de ltar ston pa de ni dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin 'di la nan tan byed pa'o||sangs rgyas thams cad kyi sangs rgyas kyi zhing gi yon tan bkod pa ji snyed mthong ba byang chub sems dpa' des sangs rgyas kyi zhing gi yon tan bkod pa mthong ba de snyed bstan par bya'o||rgyal ba'i blo gros gang de ltar ston pa de ni dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin 'di la nan tan byed pa yin no||rgyal ba'i blo gros de'i phyir byang chub sems dpa' gang dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin 'di la gnas pa ni nyung gi gang ting nge 'dzin ngan pa gzhan la spyod pa dag ni mang ngo* (D 304b4-305a5; Q331b2-332a4). Ch. 「……世尊！菩薩云何修是三昧？」佛言：「名意！菩薩若能觀諸法空，無所障礙，念念滅盡，離於憎愛，是名修是三昧。復次名意！學是三昧，不以一事。所以者何？隨諸眾生心心所行，是三昧者有是諸行；隨諸眾生心心所入，是三昧者有是諸入；隨諸眾生諸根入門，是三昧者有是入門；隨諸眾生所有名色，得是三昧菩薩亦示若干名色；能如是知，是名修是三昧。隨一切佛名色相貌，得是三昧菩薩亦示若干名色相貌；能如是知，是名修是三昧。隨見一切諸佛國土，菩薩亦自成是國土，是名修是首楞嚴三昧。」名意菩薩白佛言：「世尊！是三昧者修行甚難？」佛告名意：「以是事故，少有菩薩住是三昧，多有菩薩行餘三昧。」(T 643b20-c5).

27　Tib. *blo gros brtan pa dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin la gnas pa'i byang chub sems dpa' ni longs spyod btsal te/ sbyin pa bged par byed par mi blta yi/ blo gros brtan pa stong gsum gyi stong chen po'i 'jig rten gyi khams na rin po che gang ji snyed pa rgya mtsho chen po na yod pa'am/ lha'i gnas na yod pa'am/ klu'i gnas na yod pa'am/ sa chen po'i steng na yod pa'am/ gnod sbyin gyi lag na yod pa'am/ mi'i 'jig rten na yod pa'i rin po che yang rung // zas dang / skom dang / gos dang / bzhon pa yang rung ste/ de dag thams cad la de dbang phyug tu gyur pa yin/ dbang du gyur pa yin no// gang la sbyin par 'dod pa de la sbyin par byed de/ de yang sngon gyi bsod nams*

*kyis thob pa yin na/ yid kyis rdzu 'phrul sgrub pa lta ji smos te/ blo gros brtan pa de ni dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin la gnas pa'i byang chub sems dpa'i sbyin pa'i pha rol tu phyin pa yongs su sbyong ba byed pa'i bye brag tu blta'o//* (D 265b1-4; Q 289b5-290a1). Ch. 菩薩住首楞嚴三昧，不行求財而以布施，大千世界及諸大海、天宮、人間，所有寶物、飲食、衣服、象馬車乘，如是等物自在施與，此皆是本功德所致，況以神力隨意所作。是名菩薩住首楞嚴三昧檀波羅蜜本事果報。(T 632a10-14).

28  Tib. *de ni dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin la gnas pa'i byang chub sems dpa'i sbyin pa'i pha rol tu phyin pa yongs su sbyong ba byed pa'i bye brag.* (D 265b4; Q 289b8) Ch. 是名菩薩住首楞嚴三昧檀波羅蜜本事果報。(T 632a13-14).

29  Tib. *bcom ldan 'das ji ltar slob na byang chub sems dpa' bslab pa thams cad la rlom sems ma mchis par dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin 'di la slob pa lags\de skad ces gsol pa dang\bcom ldan 'das kyis byang chub sems dpa' sems dpa' chen po blo gros brtan pa la 'di skad ces bka' stsal to\\……blo gros brtan pa de bzhin du byang chub sems dpa' dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin 'di la slob pa na thog ma nyid du bsam pa la slob bo\\gang gi tshe bsam pa la lobs par gyur pa de'i tshe sbyor ba la 'jug go\\gang gi tshe sbyor ba la bslabs par gyur pa de'i tshe lhag pa'i bsam pa la 'jug go\\gang gi tshe lhag pa'i bsam pa la bslabs par gyur pa de'i tshe byams pa chen po la 'jug go\\gang gi tshe byams pa chen po la bslabs par gyur pa de'i tshe snying rje chen po la 'jug go\\gang gi tshe snying rje chen po la bslabs par gyur pa de'i tshe dga' ba chen po la 'jug go\\gang gi tshe dga' ba chen po la bslabs par gyur pa de'i tshe btang snyoms chen po la 'jug go\\gang gi tshe btang snyoms chen po la bslabs par gyur pa de'i tshe byang chub sems dpa'i 'phags pa'i gnas pa bzhi la bslabs pa yin te\bzhi gang zhe na\byams pa chen po dang\snying rje chen po dang\dga' ba chen po dang\btang snyoms chen po'o\\gang gi tshe byang chub sems dpa'i 'phags pa'i gnas pa 'di bzhi la bslabs par gyur pa de'i tshe rjes su mthun pa'i mngon par shes pa lnga po mi nyams pa dag la slob bo\\gang gi tshe rjes su 'thun pa'i mngon par shes pa lnga po mi nyams pa dag la bslabs par gyur pa de'i tshe pha rol tu phyin pa drug tshar phyin pa yin no\\_gang gi tshe pha rol tu phyin pa drug tshar phyin par gyur pa de'i tshe thabs mkhas pa rtogs par khong du chud pa yin no\\gang gi tshe thabs mkhas pa rtogs par khong du chud pa de'i tshe rjes su 'thun pa'i bzod pa gnyis pa la gnas pa yin no\\gang gi tshe rjes su 'thun pa'i bzod pa gnyis pa la gnas pa de'i tshe mi skye ba'i chos la bzod pa 'thob bo\\gang gi tshe mi skye ba'i chos la bzod pa dang ldan pa de'i tshe sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das rnams kyis bla na med pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i byang chub tu lung bstan par 'gyur ro\\gang gi tshe sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das rnams kyis bla na med pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i byang chub tu lung bstan pa de'i tshes brgyad pa la 'jug par 'gyur ro\\gang gi tshe sa brgyad pa la zhugs par gyur pa de'i tshe byang chub sems dpa'i ting nge 'dzin da ltar gyi sangs rgyas mngon sum du bzhugs pa mthong ste\de ting nge 'dzin de dang ldan pas sangs rgyas mthong ba dang mi 'bral bar 'gyur ro\\gang gi tshe sangs rgyas mthong ba dang mi 'bral ba de'i tshe sangs rgyas kyi chos thams cad yongs su rdzogs shing yongs su grub pa thob par 'gyur ro\\des sangs rgyas kyi chos thams cad yongs su rdzogs shing yongs su grub pa la gnas nas sangs rgyas kyi zhing bkod pa phun sum tshogs pa mngon par sgrub bo\\de sangs rgyas kyi zhing bkod pa yongs su bzung nas skye ba dang\rigs dang\rus phun sum tshogs pa dang\mngal du 'jug pa dang\mngon par 'byung ba phun sum tshogs pa yongs su rdzogs par byed do\\de skye ba dang\rigs dang\rus phun sum tshogs pa dang\mngal du 'jug pa dang\mngon par 'byung ba phun sum tshogs par gyur nas sa bcu yongs su rdzogs par byed do\\de sa bcu la gnas nas sangs rgyas thams cad kyis dbang bskur ba 'thob bo\\de sangs rgyas thams cad kyis dbang bskur ba thob nas byang chub sems dpa'i ting nge 'dzin thams cad thob par 'gyur ro\\de byang chub sems dpa'i ting nge 'dzin thams cad thob nas phyis dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin 'di thob par 'gyur ro\\dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin thob pa'i byang chub sems dpa' de ni sems can rnams la sangs rgyas kyi mdzad pas nye bar gnas par 'gyur te\byang chub sems dpa'i chos nyid de yang mi gtong ngo\\blo gros brtan pa de ltar na byang chub sems dpa' gang chos de lta bu dag la bslabs par gyur pa de ni dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin 'di thob par 'gyur ro\\blo gros brtan pa dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin 'di la gnas pa'i byang chub sems dpas ni gang du yang bslab par mi bya'o\\de ci'i phyir zhe na\sngon legs par bslabs pa'i phyir te\sangs rgyas kyi chos thams cad de la mngon du 'gyur ro\\*(D 271b-272b; Q 296b2-297a1). Ch. 堅意菩薩白佛言："世尊！菩薩欲學首楞嚴三昧，當云何學？"佛告堅意："……如是堅意！菩薩欲學首楞嚴三昧，先當學愛樂心，學愛樂心已當學深心，學深心已當學大慈，學大慈已當學大悲，學大悲已當學四聖梵行，所謂慈、悲、喜、捨。學四聖梵行已，當學報得最上五通常自隨身，學是通已，爾時便能成就六波羅蜜；成就六波羅蜜已，便能通達方便；通達方便已，得住第三柔順忍；住第三柔順忍已，得無生法忍；得無生法忍已，諸佛授記；諸佛授記已，能入第八菩薩地；入第八菩薩地已，得諸佛現前三昧；得諸佛現前三昧已，常不離見諸佛；常不離見諸佛已，能具足一切佛法因緣；具足一切佛法因緣已，能起莊嚴佛土功德；能起莊嚴佛土功德已，能具生家種姓；能具生家種姓已，入胎出生；入胎出生已，能具十地；具十地已，爾時便得受佛職號；受佛職號已，便得一切菩薩三昧；得一切菩薩三昧已，然後乃得首楞嚴三昧；得首楞嚴三昧已，能為眾生施作佛事，而亦不捨菩薩行法。堅意！菩薩若學如是諸法，則得首楞嚴三昧。菩薩已得首楞嚴三昧，則於諸法無所復學。"(T 633 c17-634a16).

30  *de nas byang chub sems dpa' blo gros brtan pas lha'i bu sangs rgyas blo gros mngon sum la 'di skad ces smras so\\lha'i bu byang chub sems dpa' ting nge 'dzin 'di thob par 'dod pas gang la brtson par bya\smras pa\rigs kyi bu byang chub sems dpa' ting nge 'dzin 'di thob par 'dod pas so so'i skye bo'i chos rnams la brtson par bya'o\\smras pa\lha'i bu ji ltar na byang chub sems dpas so so'i skye bo'i chos rnams la brtson par bya\smras pa\ci nas kyang so so'i skye bo'i chos rnams sangs rgyas kyi chos rnams dang ldan pa yang ma yin\mi ldan pa yang ma yin par mthong ba de lta bur\rigs kyi bu byang chub sems dpas so so'i skye bo'i chos la brtson par bya'o\\smras pa\lha'i bu ci sangs rgyas kyi chos rnams ldan pa'am\mi ldan par nye bar gnas sam\smras pa\rigs kyi bu so so'i skye bo'i chos rnams kyang sbyar ba'am\dbral bar mi nus te\gang yang rigs kyi bu sangs rgyas kyi chos rnams dang\so so'i skye bo'i chos rnams gnyis su med cing gnyis su dbyer med de\tshul gcig pas de'i phyir brtson pa zhes bya'i rigs kyi bu 'di la sbyar ba'am\dbral bar bya ba'i chos ni gang yang med do\\de ci'i phyir zhe na\rigs kyi bu chos thams cad ni mi skye ba'i de bzhin nyid dang ldan no\\*(D 280a-b1; Q 305b5-306a1). Ch. 爾時堅意菩薩問現意天子言："菩薩若欲得是三昧，當修行何法？"天子答言："菩薩若欲得是三昧，當修行凡夫法。若見凡夫法、佛法不合不散，是名修集首楞嚴三昧。"堅意問言："於佛法中有合散耶？"天子答言："凡夫法中尚無合散，何況佛法？""云何名修行？""若能通達，諸凡夫法、佛法無二，是名修集。而實此法無合無散。善男子！一切法集，無生相故；一切法集，無壞相故；一切法集，虛空相故；一切法集，無受相故。"(T 636a19-28).

31  For a review of previous discussions, see Gummer (2012, p. 138).

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