

Ascetic Figures before and in Early Buddhism

Religion and Reason 30

*Method and Theory
in the Study and Interpretation of Religion*

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Mouton de Gruyter
Berlin · New York

Ascetic Figures
before and in
Early Buddhism

The Emergence of Gautama
as the Buddha

Martin G. Wiltshire

Mouton de Gruyter
Berlin · New York 1990

Mouton de Gruyter (formerly Mouton, The Hague)
is a Division of Walter de Gruyter & Co., Berlin.

⊗ Printed on acid-free paper which falls
within the guidelines of the ANSI to ensure
permanence and durability.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Wiltshire, Martin Gerald.

Ascetic figures before and in early Buddhism ; the emer-
gence of Gautama as the Buddha / Martin G. Wiltshire.

p. cm. — (Religion and reason ; 30)

Based on the author's thesis (Ph. D.) — University of
Lancaster.

Includes bibliographical references (p.) and index.

ISBN 0-89925-467-5 (alk. paper)

1. Gautama Buddha. 2. Asceticism—India. 3. Asceti-
cism—Buddhism. 4. Buddha (The concept) I. Title. II. Series.

BQ894.W55 1990

294.3'63—dc20

90-13283

CIP

Deutsche Bibliothek Cataloging in Publication Data

Wiltshire, Martin G.:

Ascetic figures before and in early Buddhism : the emergence of
Gautama as the Buddha / Martin G. Wiltshire. — Berlin ; New
York : Mouton de Gruyter, 1990

(Religion and reason ; 30)

ISBN 3-11-009896-2

NE: GT

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Printing: Ratzlow-Druck, Berlin. —

Binding: Lüderitz & Bauer, Berlin. Printed in Germany.

*To Harry Scragg
in memoriam*

Preface

This book has grown out of my doctoral thesis, entitled 'The Origins of the Paccekabuddha Concept', submitted to the University of Lancaster. It puts forward a theory that attempts to identify with more exactitude than hitherto achieved the ascetic milieu to which the Buddha belonged, and to locate the Buddha firmly within this milieu. It also sets out to demonstrate that the 'followers of the Buddha', the 'sangha', were aware of the Buddha's identity as part of this milieu and accordingly constructed the doctrine of the Buddha's uniqueness as a response to this awareness and as a way of establishing and consolidating their own identity. This work, therefore, represents both a piece of historical inquiry and the application of a sociological approach. In this latter respect it seeks to use the sociological concept of the 'new religious movement' and its typical behavioural traits as a way of explaining and shedding light on developments that marked the beginnings of the Buddhist tradition.

How far it succeeds in this it will be for the reader to judge, but I hasten to add that the book is conceived as a preliminary exploration and the author will be more than satisfied if it spurs others into responding to and following up some of the issues raised here.

The chief resource for research has been the Pali Text Society edition of the Nikāyas. Translations from the Pali cited here have been taken from the PTS editions unless otherwise stated. In terms of coverage of the

wider ascetic background of the early Indian religious tradition I have drawn upon a number of key Jain and Brahmanical texts in the original and in translation.

Many of the terms occurring in this work exist in both Pali and Sanskrit (sometimes in Prakrit also) e.g. P. *paccekabuddha*, *isi*, *samaṇa*; Skt. *pratyekabuddha*, *ṛṣi*, *śramaṇa* Pkt. *patteyabuddha*. If a term with more than one rendering is mentioned in connection with a specific textual source then the rendering preferred is the same as occurs in the source; otherwise in general discussion the Pali rendering is preferred. One exception to this principle is the adoption of the locution 'Śramaṇa Tradition' or 'Śramaṇa Movement' when the subject is discussed at the broadest historical level.

I would very much like to thank Professors Ninian Smart and Trevor Ling for encouraging me to go to print. Needless to say they are not answerable for the ideas and argument contained in this book. Thanks are also due to Professor Jacques Waardenburg in accepting the work into the series 'Religion and Reason', and for his manifest patience and understanding with regard to any delays there may have been in forwarding the manuscript. I am indebted to Jackie Brienne and Enid Adam for help with proof-reading and to the Western Australian College of Advanced Education for assistance with production of a camera-ready copy. A special thanks to Eunice Fitzhenry who retrieved the manuscript from a potentially disastrous situation in the city of Liverpool. And to my wife, Jean, who throughout has acted as 'a remover of obstacles' enabling me to apply time and energy for the completion of the book.

Martin G Wiltshire
Perth W.A.
March 1990

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Introduction

Among the wide variety of ascetics, philosophers and teachers forming the backcloth to the life and legend of the Buddha there is mention in Buddhist sources of mysterious ascetic figures called **paccekabuddhas** (Skt. **pratyekabuddha**). Although surrounded by obscurity, their peculiar distinctiveness lies in the fact that they are regarded as 'enlightened'. They alone among all the groups of ascetics share with the Buddha the honour of this distinction. Our curiosity as to their real identity is further increased when it is realised that they are a category of ascetic recorded in Jain as well as Buddhist sources.

Although the subject of **paccekabuddhas** has been variously studied by European, Singhalese and Japanese scholars no one to date has provided a theory of the historical identity of these figures and succeeded in situating them with some degree of precision in the religious and social context of their time.¹ Perhaps the closest anyone has come to providing a successful explanation of their identity is Richard Gombrich. In a review (OLZ, 74, 1979) of Kloppenborg's 'The Paccekabuddha, A Buddhist Ascetic' he has suggested that they have no basis in historical fact but are merely a classificatory abstraction devised by Buddhist doctrine. Although Gombrich's 'fiction' theory possesses the merit of coherency we subscribe to the view that there actually existed an identifiable ascetic phenomenon corresponding to the figure of the **paccekabuddha**. It is the principal intention of

this book to argue this case and to show how important to our understanding of Early Buddhism is the question of the identity of these ascetics.

What Buddhism essentially teaches about **paccekabuddhas** is they achieve the summum bonum of Buddhist experience, enlightenment (**bodhi**), without contact with the Buddha or his teaching. They are not like the traditional followers of the Buddha, the monks and laity, who acquire their identity as a result of hearing and responding to the Buddha's word (**buddha-vacana**). **Paccekabuddhas** realize enlightenment by their own efforts, having never heard or come to rely upon the Buddha's teaching. Not only does this fact set them apart from the mainstream of tradition, it raises important issues in respect of the import and status of that tradition. In the first place it raises questions with regard to the alleged uniqueness of the Buddha himself if he is not the only being imputed to have achieved enlightenment entirely by his own efforts. Secondly, how ought we to understand the role and function of his teaching and his significance as a mediator if, in principle, beings can achieve the same end by their own efforts? These queries, it must be appreciated, do not take the form of criticisms launched from without the Buddhist tradition. They arise from within, since references to **paccekabuddhas** and the assertion that they are 'enlightened' ascetics are to be found within the Buddhist scriptures themselves. How can these scriptures affirm the sui generis nature of the Buddha and, at the same time, admit the existence of **paccekabuddhas**? It is hoped that this study will make a significant contribution to the resolution of this fundamental paradox.

The first step we have taken in the direction of resolving this paradox is to ascertain

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the accepted and standard meaning of the term **paccekabuddha** in Early Buddhism. With this in mind we have divided the Pali sources into three groups corresponding respectively to earlier-Nikāya, middle-Nikāya, and later and post-Nikāya periods of composition. To the first group may be assigned the earliest strata of material within the Nikāyas, exemplified by such texts as the Sutta-nipāta and by verse sections occurring elsewhere in the Nikāyas. The main body of the Nikāyas belongs to the 'middle' period, and most of the fifth Nikāya belongs to the 'later' period together with, of course, the post-Nikāya commentarial literature.

Throughout these sources there are just two sorts of **buddha** mentioned: the **sammāsambuddha** and the **paccekabuddha**. Sākyamuni, the historical founder of Buddhism, is a **buddha** of the former kind by virtue of being that category of person who, in a given dispensation (**sāsana**), brings into existence a body of teaching (**dhamma**) or a path (**magga**) by which, **nibbāna** can be realized, and who also creates a community (**saṅgha**) of followers. The status of the **paccekabuddha** within Early Buddhism can best be summarised in the form of three distinct but interconnected propositions:

- (i) The **paccekabuddha** is the same as the **sammāsambuddha** in that he achieves enlightenment (**bodhi**) without assistance from a teacher (**satthar**).²
- (ii) In contrast to the **sammāsambuddha**, the **paccekabuddha** does not, after his enlightenment, become a teacher (**satthar**) in the sense that he does not promulgate a **dhamma** and found a **saṅgha** or **sāvaka** (disciple) tradition.³

- (iii) The **paccekabuddha** cannot co-exist with a **sammāsambuddha** and therefore belongs to a different era.⁴

It remains unclear whether any or all of the doctrines expressed by these propositions pertains to **paccekabuddhas** in the earliest historical stages of Buddhism. The question of the relative status of the two sorts of **buddha**, for example, is not addressed until the period of the composition of the later and post-Nikāya texts. The term **paccekabuddha** does not appear at all in the earliest strata of the Nikāyas and when it does first appear, in the middle period, there is no reference to these or similar doctrines. The obscurity surrounding its first usage leaves open the possibility that the concept of a **paccekabuddha** underwent some alteration of meaning in the various phases of the composition of the sources.

Some explanation is therefore required as to why **paccekabuddhas** are not specifically mentioned in the oldest strata and why, when they are referred to in the middle period, there is no attempt at doctrinal interpretation. In view of these obscurities we have searched the earlier and middle strata of sources for any evidence of a distinction of kinds of **buddha** such as that exemplified by the categories **sammāsambuddha** and **paccekabuddha**.

This investigation resulted in us spotlighting the ascetic figure referred to as the **muni**. The usage of the term **muni** in canonical sources is accompanied by considerable obscurity but one noticeable feature is its association with the Buddha and with the **paccekabuddhas** rather than with disciples of the Buddha or non-Buddhist ascetics. The term **muni** it would seem represents a blanket concept for an 'enlightened' being, together with

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an implication that the notion of **buddha** might at one time have been an entirely singular concept. We have therefore formulated the hypothesis that the **muni** represents a proto-Buddha figure who antedated the distinction between **sammāsambuddha** and **paccekabuddha**. We therefore seek to demonstrate that what was at first one type of 'saint' in due course became bifurcated into the categories of **paccekabuddha** and **sammāsambuddha**. Over a longer period Buddhism filled in the outlines of the distinction by providing full doctrinal justification for the two categories of **buddha**.

In those passages where **paccekabuddhas** are first mentioned these figures are not only linked with the **muni** but with the ascetic categories of 'seer' (P.*isi*; Skt.*ṛṣi*) and 'renouncer' (P.*samaṇa*; Skt.*śramaṇa*). The discovery of these additional associations has further helped our quest after the historical identity of the **paccekabuddha**. Since *isi*, *samaṇa* and **muni** are not only Buddhistic terms but trans-sectarian then an investigation is warranted into their significance in relation to the wider context of the Jain and Brahmanic traditions. We therefore have resolved to explore each of these categories within both Buddhism and the wider ascetic milieu of the period.

In Buddhist sources, terms such as *isi*, **muni**, *samaṇa* and a further counterpart, *brāhmaṇa*, are used attributively (describing the ascetic ideal) as well as indicatively (denoting a social identity). In Pali canonical texts, for instance, the application of the term *isi* to an ascetic signifies his possession of 'religious potency' and is used of both Brahmanic and non-Brahmanic ascetics. *Samaṇa* signifies a 'renouncer', one who has abandoned household existence in order to become a religious mendicant; he is categorically

not a Brahmanic ascetic. Besides denoting one who has reached the height of spiritual perfection, **muni** is always understood as the Buddhistic counterpart of the Brahmanic priest. Both the Buddha's and the **pacceka-buddhas'** own particular distinctiveness lie in the fact that they are characterised by all three of these nomenclatures. All sorts of ascetics are characterised as **isi** or **samaṇa** but significantly the term **muni** is reserved for the Buddha and the **pacceka-buddha**.

The qualities by which an ascetic deserves the title **isi** are quite varied: Whereas the 'religious potency' of the Brahmanic **isi** consists in his ownership of ascetic power (**tapas**), sacred formulae (**manta**) and his right and ability to perform **śrauta** rites, the use of the term **isi** to describe the **paccekabuddha** denotes his possession of 'magic power' (**iddhānubhāva**). One of the dominant themes in the representation of the **paccekabuddha** within earlier and later Buddhist literature, (and one scholars have tended to overlook), is his close association with displays of 'magic' (P.**iddhi**; Skt.**ṛddhi**), notably his practice of 'flight' or 'levitation'. These references to his 'magic powers' occur almost entirely within Buddhist narrative literature. Traditionally in Buddhism, such displays were for the purpose of proselytising; nevertheless they were regarded as a poor alternative to proselytising by the method of 'verbal' instruction (**anusāsa**). Canonical Buddhism teaches that a person can only become a **sāvaka** (disciple) by receiving 'verbal' instruction. Exhibitions of 'magic' can do no more than impress the onlooker, whereas 'verbal' instruction communicates itself directly to a person's understanding.⁵ The **paccekabuddha** is an ascetic who employs 'magic' more often than 'verbal' instruction,

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and he is never seen to make persons into *sāvakas*. *Paccekabuddhas* display their magic in order to win the allegiance or vindicate the devotion shown to them by the layperson.

The *paccekabuddha*'s identity as a 'renouncer' (*samaṇa*) in canonical sources serves as an important clue in deciphering his historical identity. In this connection there survives a legend in Buddhist and Jain literature which tells how four proto-*śramaṇa* kings (*kṣatriyas*) become *paccekabuddhas*. Close scrutiny of extant recensions of the legend reveals that it is very old, probably antedating the formation of these two distinct traditions, and represents an archetypal account of the origins of the non-Brahmanic custom of 'renunciation', namely, the beginnings of the *Śramaṇa* Movement. The legend, therefore, seems to link *paccekabuddhas* with an archaic ascetic tradition. This interpretation receives corroborative evidence in the *Isigili Sutta*, the earliest Buddhist canonical reference to the *paccekabuddha*. The following questions therefore present themselves: Could the *paccekabuddha* have been the source of the ascetic phenomenon of 'renunciation' in India? Could he have represented the common ascetico-religious background tradition which manifested itself ultimately in the sectarian forms of Buddhism and Jainism? Certainly the theory would account for the presence of this mysterious figure in both Buddhism and Jainism, and also would help shed light on the historical origins of these traditions and their similarities in doctrine, ethics and mythology.

Further confirmation of the theory that *paccekabuddhas* were proto-*śramaṇas*, arises out of the way in which Buddhist sources describe the experience of *paccekabodhi* (the form of enlightenment which gives rise to the

concept **paccekabuddha**). This experience is represented as happening only to householders and occurs simultaneously with the decision to become a 'renouncer'. In short, there seems to exist a definitive connection between the attainment of **paccekabodhi** and the act of 'renouncing' household life. The theory which interprets the **paccekabuddha** as an ascetic figure antedating the rise of Buddhism and Jainism also helps to explain his equation with the **muni**. For the figure of the **muni** is mentioned as far back as the later portions of the Ṛg Veda, such as in the Keśin Hymn, where he is depicted as a mysterious ascetic with extraordinary powers.

Searching for the historical identity of the **paccekabuddhas** by investigating their connection with the ascetic categories of **isi**, **samaṇa** and **muni**, has provided us with sufficient evidence to produce a cogent and coherent explanation of the **paccekabuddha** concept. This explanation can be summarized as follows: The Buddhist and Jain traditions had their origin in the Śramaṇa Movement which began as a protest by **kṣatriyas** against the Brahmanic stranglehold on religion and society. This protest expressed itself in the adoption of an ethic of world-renunciation. The movement redefined and gave its own significance to many traditional Brahmanic concepts as it grew in momentum and challenged the hegemony of the Brahmanic tradition. After some time the cultural phenomenon of 'renunciation' developed sectarian differences within its own tradition. The period from the beginnings of 'renunciation', whilst the movement was still principally a maverick phenomenon, until the period prior to sectarian divisions can be said to mark the epoch of the original **muni**, the proto-śramaṇa or proto-**buddha** figure. The concept of the **paccekabuddha** in the post-Buddhist and post-Jain

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period is an anachronism for this figure. Here lies the original significance of that concept.

This theory provides a comprehensive explanation of the doctrine of the **paccekabuddha** in Canonical Buddhism as expressed in the three propositions (supra) defining their status and their relationship to the figure of the Buddha. The first proposition, that no form of **buddha** has a teacher, can be read as evidence that the Buddhistic tradition had its roots in the heuristic principle of discovering truth through one's own experience rather than by accepting the teaching and authority of another. With regard to the second proposition, it is to be noticed that notions of a **dhamma**, **saṅgha** and **sāvaka** (disciple) together with the notion of a 'founder', are all corollaries of a sectarian based organisation. The doctrinal affirmation that **paccekabuddhas** are not themselves 'founders' of a **dhamma** or a **saṅgha**, is consistent with them belonging to the pre-sectarian stage of the tradition. The idea that the **paccekabuddha** is incapable of teaching **dhamma** can itself be understood as a dogmatic overlay of interpretation on a de facto state of affairs - the **paccekabuddha** existed prior to the emphasis on distinct teachers with their own doctrine and principles of practice. So we see the rise of historical Buddhism as corresponding to the growth of a **sāvaka** tradition, where initiation involves the principle of following the teaching of one man. Once this principle becomes enshrined, the idea of realising a spiritual goal without the assistance of another begins to decline.

The third proposition, that **paccekabuddhas** cannot exist at the same time as a **sammāsambuddha**, marks the full adoption and investiture of the principle that a teacher is a sine qua non for salvation. If **paccekabuddhas** were admitted to exist it would undermine the

rationale of a *sāvaka*-based organization. In canonical theory there survives two forms of *buddha*, but in practice there is only one: he who justifies the existence of the *sāvaka* tradition - Sākyamuni Buddha. It is to be observed that such a proposition occurs only in the later and post-Nikāya period, at a time when the Buddhist tradition had acquired an established organizational structure. Prior to that time there is evidence to suggest that the attitude toward the attainment of enlightenment was a good deal more fluid.

The interpretative framework which we have found best assists the clarification of these historical and doctrinal developments is a sociological one. The sorts of events that characterize the emergence and rise of Buddhism as a major religion are seen to be those which follow a similar pattern sociologically to that of many new religious movements. In particular, to see the Buddha as a successful charismatic leader and to see the demise of the notion of 'freely-realizable' enlightenment as part of the process whereby the movement successfully achieves 'routinization' of that charisma, helps to make sense of the sorts of doctrinal developments that have been outlined above. We have, therefore, decided to utilise the term 'cultus' (worship) to represent the behaviour of the Buddhist tradition in its origins and inception. This term has been chosen advisedly for two reasons: firstly, because of its associations with the word 'cult'. We have deliberately not used the word 'cult', for obvious reasons, but we are aware that the study of so-called 'cults' has and can prove instructive for the understanding of more enduring religious movements. We would like this association borne in mind throughout this study. Secondly, the word 'cultus' perhaps represents for us an inter-

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pretative key for analysing traits and trends of behaviour exhibited by Early Buddhism. In particular it is a term which adequately conveys the dynamic driving principle underlying the growth of Buddhism, the principle of the uniqueness of Sākyamuni and his teaching. In this respect, Buddhism was operating no differently than its sectarian rivals. Brahmanism, for instance, assimilated salvation to the notion of dutiful performance of 'sacrificial rites' and represented the *brāhmaṇa* as the sole mediator. Buddhism displays a similar structure: the figure of Sākyamuni becomes the sole mediator and his teaching (*dhamma*) the means of salvation. We have, therefore, considered it appropriate to refer to Buddhism in its beginnings as "the Sākyamuni 'cultus'". In short, the rise of historical Buddhism was inspired by the belief in the sui generis character of the Buddha and his teaching.

In giving accentuation to the importance of these particular features in the origins of Buddhism we may lay ourselves open to the accusation that we have altogether ignored the paramount role of the 'moral' and 'reformative' factors in the emergence of Buddhism, its critique of caste and of animal sacrifice, or have undervalued the originality of the Buddha and his teaching. It is not our intention to denigrate these factors or underestimate the ethical dimension of Buddhism, and we do not see our thesis as detracting from them. Indeed, it will be seen that a main pillar of this thesis is the argument that the primary impetus behind the disaffection with Brahmanic religion and the mores of existing culture was the affirmation of the religious and moral postulate of *ahiṃsā* (non-injury). That at some point in society's emergent moral sensibilities and ascetico-religious techniques a figure such as that of the Buddha should have

encapsulated and given new direction and initiative to those developments is no surprising observation in respect of comparisons with the sociological beginnings of other faiths with historical founders. To see the Buddha as part of a wider currency of values operating at the time and to see him as a focus of special 'worship' is not to cast aspersions on his originality or the moral force of his message. Our foremost object has been to understand the way in which he was apprehended by his followers. Here the very existence of the category of ascetic known as **paccekabuddha** as well as the construction placed upon that category by his followers is highly pertinent to the issue of that apprehension.

Primary Sources

As far as we are aware the **paccekabuddha** is not mentioned in other than Buddhist and Jain literature. This is only to be expected, since the term has doctrinal significances specially associated with these representative traditions of the Śramaṇa Movement. In Buddhist literature our analysis of the subject of the **paccekabuddha** concentrates mainly on the Pali corpus of texts and Buddhist Sanskrit sources. Within these sources material on the **paccekabuddha** (Skt. **pratyekabuddha**) can be classified on a two-fold basis, according to 'genre' and 'topics'. There are two kinds of genre: narratives (stories and legends) and expositions of doctrine. It is often the case that doctrinal expositions are integrated into the narrative. Doctrine may be expounded at various points during a narrative; alternatively, the narrative itself may be taken to

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illustrate doctrinal truths.

All material on the **paccekabuddha** can be subsumed under the following six topics:

1. Scenes of 'devotional acts' towards a **sammāsambuddha** - these result in the attainment of **paccekabodhi** in some future rebirth.

2. Scenes showing 'devotional acts' or acts of 'abusive behaviour' towards **paccekabuddhas**, where reference is made to resultant 'merit' (P.**puñña**; Skt.**puṇya**) or 'demerit' (P.**apuñña**; Skt.**apūṇya**).

3. Scenes that depict persons becoming **paccekabuddhas** (attaining **paccekabodhi**)

4. Alleged sayings of **paccekabuddhas** (e.g., the stanzas of the Khaggavisāṇa Sutta of the Sutta-nipāta).

5. Enumeration of (a) those attributes of the **paccekabuddha** which make them an exemplar of spiritual attainment. (b) the path of the **paccekabodhisatta** (i.e., **paccekabuddha-to-be**) over numerous existences during which the requisite attributes are brought to fruition.

6. Concise statements of dogma or doctrinal formulae relating to **paccekabuddhas**.

Alleged Sayings of Paccekabuddhas

In the Buddhist and Jain traditions there are a small number of groups of 'sayings' ascribed to **paccekabuddhas**. These 'sayings' are representative of a long-standing tradition of gnomic and didactic literature in India. In

the Pali tradition, the 'sayings' are preserved in 'metrical form' (i.e., *gāthā*) and are of two kinds: *udāna* (moral utterances) and *subhāsita* ('well-spoken' words). According to Buddhist Commentarial tradition, the *udāna* states succinctly the prime cause of the *paccekabuddha*'s enlightenment, and is spoken upon the occasion of his enlightenment or immediately before his death (i.e., *parinibbāna*); it is further remarked that the *paccekabuddha* makes his *udāna* either in response to a question (*puṭṭha*) or according to his own measure of understanding if there is no question.⁶ These utterances are sometimes also referred to as *vyākaraṇa* (explanations).⁷ It is possible that they were given as mantras to meditate upon.⁸ A *subhāsita* consists, on the other hand, of a form of 'admonition' or 'general moral advice' (*ovāda*) intended to save people from the four hells (*apāya*).⁹ Quite clearly, the distinction between the *udāna* and the *subhāsita* shows that some 'sayings' were spoken to the ears of lay people who were regarded as potential initiates into the life of a *bhikkhu* and some to those who were not regarded so. In short, there seems to have existed an esoteric-exoteric distinction.

According to the later Nikāya and Pali commentarial tradition the stanzas of the *Khaggavisāṇa Sutta* (*Sutta-nipāta* vv.35-75) are *udānas* of *paccekabuddhas*.¹⁰ They are composed in *triṣṭubh* metre which marks them as belonging to the oldest stratum of Pali verse. These same stanzas have also become incorporated within the *Paccekabuddhāpadāna* section of the *Apadāna* (pp.7-14). In addition there is a somewhat truncated and repetitious Buddhist Sanskrit version to be found in the *Mahāvastu* (I.357) which likewise identifies the stanzas as *udānas* of *pratyekabuddhas*. The *Mahāvastu* identifies the authors as

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belonging to a tradition of 'five hundred' **pratyekabuddhas** who resided at Vārānaṣī and passed away into **parinirvāṇa** on learning of the imminent birth of the **bodhisattva**. In the Pali tradition, the commentaries to the Sutta-nipāta and the Apadāna, called the Paramatthajotikā and the Visuddhajanavilāsini respectively, describe how these stanzas came to enter the Buddhist tradition.¹¹ Both commentaries agree that the stanzas were first transmitted by the Buddha in response to an inquiry from his disciple Ānanda about the meaning of **paccekabuddha** and **pacceka-bodhi**. The Paccekabuddhāpadāna version reads:

'When the Tathāgata was dwelling in Jetavana The Vedeha muni (i.e. Ānanda), first paying homage, asked: "Wise one, there are said to be **paccekabuddhas**, how do they come to be?" '

The commentarial version reads:

'Whilst he was dwelling in solitariness and seclusion, the following thought occurred to Ānanda: "The aspirations (**paṭṭhāna**) and resolves (**abhinīhāra**) of Buddhas is known, likewise of **sāvakas**, but that of **pacceka-buddhas** is not known. Let me question the Lord on this." Rising from his solitariness, he approached the Lord and asked him about this matter. Thereupon, the Lord taught the saying on 'strivings in former existences' (**pubbayogāvacara**): "There are five results of 'strivings in former existences':-

One achieves knowledge (**aññā** i.e., **bodhi**)

- | | |
|-------------|------------------------------------|
| | (1) before death |
| if not then | (2) at death |
| if not then | (3) as a god (deva-putta) |

if not then (4) through 'sudden intuition' (**khippābhiñña**) in the presence of **buddha**.
 if not then finally, (5) as a **paccekabuddha**.

In the course of his description and definition of **paccekabuddha** the Buddha transmits to Ānanda the stanzas which came to comprise the Khaggavisāṇa Sutta. These stanzas are understood to represent the definitive collection of **paccekabuddha** 'sayings' from the point of view of the Buddhist tradition.

However there are a number of miscellaneous stanzas occurring in the Jātakas also imputed to be sayings of the **paccekabuddha**. The most important of these are the so-called eight **samanabhādra gāthā** (stanzas about the blessings of being a 'renouncer') stating why life as a **samana** is preferable to life as a **gahaṭṭha** (householder). They are part of the moral instruction (**ovāda**) that a **paccekabuddha** called Sonaka imparts to a king.¹² Once again an equivalent version is found in the Mahāvastu.¹³

Pali Literature

Most of the Pali literature on the subject of the **paccekabuddha** belongs to the fifth Nikāya and the Commentaries, for the reasons we have stated earlier in the introduction. The sections of the Paramatthajotikā and Visuddhajanavilāsini that comment upon the Khaggavisāṇa stanzas are almost identical.¹⁴ They follow the traditional commentarial method: a gloss on the terms in the original together with an illustrative tale; in this case the

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tale depicts the circumstances in which an individual stanza or group of stanzas came to be uttered. Altogether there are forty tales, each relating how a particular King of Bārāṇasī renounced his throne and attained **paccekabodhi**. These tales represent the fourth kind of topic, scenes in which persons become **paccekabuddhas**. The non-narrative portions of these two Commentaries provide us with material relating to topics five and six. There are also tales featured within the Commentaries which describe acts of 'service' or 'abuse' to **paccekabuddhas** (topic two). Of especial note among the commentarial tales, however, is the one depicting the birth and enlightenment of the legendary 'five hundred' **paccekabuddhas** referred to in the Isigili Sutta.¹⁵

In Pali sources the most important corpus of 'narratives' about **paccekabuddhas** occurs in the Jātakas. These ascetics are mentioned in more than thirty Jātaka stories and figure prominently in at least ten of these. The Kumbhakāra (J.III.377ff.) and the Pāṇiya Jātakas (J.IV.114ff.) together furnish nine individual examples of persons becoming **paccekabuddhas**. Jātaka material is also significant in two other respects: Firstly, some of the imagery is the same or similar to that occurring in the Khaggavisāṇa stanzas; secondly, the stories figure within the framework of 'dynasty' myths. In this kind of myth the allegedly significant religious history (the former existences of the **bodhisatta**) of pre-Sākyamuni times is charted according to 'dynasties'. Each story begins with a reference to the name of the dynasty and the particular ruler at the time the events described took place. There is no systematic or chronological scheme (except for the final Jātaka which depicts the last human existence of the **bodhisatta** prior to his entry to the

Tusita heaven). However, Buddhist chronologies of pre-Sākyamuni dynasties are found in the Mahāvamsa and the Dīpavamsa Chronicles and with the aid of these we can acquire a general picture of 'historical' or 'mythical' succession. We have therefore been able to show which stories purportedly belong to which era, and on this basis make inferences about how the Buddhists viewed the times prior to the advent of Gotama Buddha.

Buddhist Sanskrit Literature

Buddhist Sanskrit literature falls broadly into two categories: Mahāyāna and non-Mahāyāna. In the Mahāyāna, the **pratyekabuddha** has no longer a quasi-historical or mythical dimension but operates entirely at a doctrinal level to signify the idea of one who is selfish and spiritually shortsighted for not acting in the best salvific interest of others. Mahāyāna texts, therefore, have no direct relevance to the subject of this book and, with one exception, are disregarded. This exception is a short Mahāyāna text devoted entirely to the subject of the **pratyekabuddha**, and known as the Pratyekabuddhabhūmi. When some of the pronouncements on the **pratyekabuddha** in the Sanskrit Avadāna sources are paralleled in the Pratyekabuddhabhūmi, we have seen fit to draw attention to this. There may also be individual terms and concepts we come across in the course of our discussion which receive fuller expression in the Mahāyāna; in such circumstances the Mahāyāna conception will be found useful in clarifying or amplifying the meaning.

Amongst non-Mahāyāna sources we have drawn heavily upon the Sanskrit Avadāna literature,

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notably, the Mahāvastu, Divyāvadāna and Avadāna Śataka. The Avadāna texts are a literary genre designed to bolster the Buddhist doctrine of **karma** by using 'narratives' to show how present and prospective mundane and supra-mundane accomplishments are the result of (past) deeds; hence the name **avadāna** (heroic deed or act). These texts have proved important to our study because they provide a non-Theravada window on the subject of the **pratyekabuddha**: the Avadāna Śataka and Divyāvadāna are presumed mainly Sarvāstivādin works and the Mahāvastu is a product of the Lokottaravādin branch of the Mahāsamghikas. Doctrinally this gamut of literature, in contrast to the Pali, represents a shade of opinion within the **bhikkhu-saṅgha** more tolerant of the exhibition of 'magic powers' by Buddhist ascetics. So, for instance, displays of 'magic power' are often used by **pratyekabuddhas** to rouse devotional responses, as well as themselves being a form of response by **pratyekabuddhas** to devotional acts of service from the layperson. The difference is important because in one case it is the **buddha** and in the other the devotee who instigates the 'religious' or 'revelatory' experience; a difference functionally corresponding to the distinction between prevenient and cooperating grace in Christian theology.

The Avadāna Śataka is a work that warrants especial mention. The third decade of the one hundred tales (Nos.21-30) of which this work is composed are devoted entirely to the theme of **pratyekabodhi**. Two of these tales (Nos. 21 and 24) describe how in previous eras certain persons become **pratyekabuddhas** as the karmic consequence of performing 'devotional acts' towards the Buddhas Kaśyapa and Vipasyī. Both these stories give an account of the sorts of circumstances and experiences that result in **pratyekabodhi**. Candana

(No. 21), for instance, attains his **pratyekabodhi** as a result of contemplating a withering flower which in Buddhist literature is the most regularly depicted manner of realising that goal. The eight remaining stories describe how the performance of 'devotional acts' towards the Buddha Sākyamuni will lead the individual to have auspicious future rebirths and eventually to the realisation of **pratyekabodhi** itself. These stories all share the same basic format:

1. The devotee usually belongs to a lower social status.
2. He/she spies the Buddha.
3. He/she offers a gift or performs some cultic act of devotion to the Buddha.
4. The Buddha performs a feat of magic (**ṛddhi**) that brings a faith (**prasāda**) response.
5. (Sometimes) the devotee declares aloud his particular wish or aspiration (**praṇidhāna**).
6. The Buddha smiles and utters a 'prediction' (**vyākaraṇa**) - a verbal guarantee - that **pratyekabodhi** will take place for that person in some future rebirth.
7. The 'mundane' consequences of the devotee's act of merit are outlined.
8. It is stated what will be the devotee's name as a **pratyekabuddha**. The name is always derived from association with the type of cultic act which secured the assurance of **pratyekabodhi**.

The striking doctrinal feature of these stories about **pratyekabodhi** is that this attainment is only made possible by the mediation of the Buddha or Buddhas. All those who achieve **pratyekabodhi** at some point during their sequence of rebirths perform an act of devotion to a **samyaksāmbuddha** (**sammāsambuddha**), and this act is represented as the necessary and sufficient condition of that

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achievement. In other words, the authors of the Avadāna Śataka have assimilated the notion of the **pratyekabuddha** within a **samyaksaṃ-buddha** qua Sākyamuni 'cultus' framework. In addition to this decade of stories, the **pratyekabuddha** features in eleven other stories from the Avadāna Śataka (Nos.17,41,44,80, 87-90,94,98,99) as an object of alms-giving or maltreatment. Finally we have included as Appendix II a table showing recurrent formulae (topic six) used of **pratyekabuddhas** in the Avadāna Śataka and the Divyāvadāna.

Jain Literature

Jainism has a doctrinal equivalent to the notion of the **paccekabuddha** in its own religious tradition, the figure of the (Pkt.) **patteyabuddha**.¹⁶ The distinction between the **paccekabuddha** and **sammāsambuddha** which exists in Buddhism has its counterpart in the Jain doctrine of the **patteyabuddha** and **svayambuddha**. Evidence suggests, as in respect of Buddhism, that the actual term **patteyabuddha** was not known to the authors of the oldest sections of their canon. According to Schubring, the term first occurs in the Viyahapannatti, one of the eleven **angas**, where it is mentioned without any form of definition. **Patteyabuddha** first appear in narratives in the Āvaśyaka Mūla-sūtra. However, the most important Jain texts on the subject are the Uttarādhyayana Sūtra and the Isibhāsiyāim.

Charpentier describes the Uttarādhyayana as a work "in its original contents more like the old Buddhist works, the Dhammapada and the Sutta-nipāta".¹⁷ Although dating Jain canonical texts is notoriously difficult and

hazardous Charpentier assigns the composition of the essential text to a period (circa 300 BCE) similar to that when the Sutta-nipāta is believed to have been composed.¹⁸

The Uttarādhyayana contains a collective reference to four kings who are later identified by the Commentaries as **patteyabuddhas**. These same four kings also appear in early Buddhist legend and are identified as **paccekabuddhas** by Buddhist Commentaries too. We analyse the substance of this legend in chapter three and show how it sheds light on the **paccekabuddhas** early śramaṇic identity.

The Isibhāsiyāim (sayings of the Ṛṣis) is a text whose diction and vocabulary suggest contemporaneity with the first two and probably oldest of the extant Jain āṅga, the Ācār-āṅga Sūtra and Sūtrakṛtāṅga, as well as with the Mūla Sūtras, Uttarādhyayana Sūtra and Daśavaikālika. Schubring considers the Isibhāsiyāim to be among the most ancient of Jain texts with origins circa 300 BCE.¹⁹ Interestingly, however, it is not included within the Jain canonical corpus and may therefore be said to hold an apocryphal status. The text first became known to Western scholars in a printed edition, Indaur 1927, entitled 'Śrī-madbhiḥ pratyekabuddhair bhāṣitāni Ṛṣibhāṣita-sūtrāni' which also included an appendix with compendiums (**samgahaṇī**) of the ṛṣi's names and their associated maxims. The work has since been re-edited by Schubring (Isibhāsiyāim. Ein Jaina Text der Frühzeit, NAGW, 1942,- pp.489-576; 1952, pp.21-52) but has not yet been translated into a European tongue. The text is composed of 45 sections (**ajjhayana**), each section comprising the sayings of an individual ṛṣi. As the title of the Indaur edition and an inscription on the manuscript (op. cit., p.490) indicate, these ṛṣis are to be equated with **patteyabuddhas**. This might explain the apocryphal

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as opposed to the canonical status of the work. Each section has the same fourfold structure: the maxim of the rsi; name of the rsi; an account of his accomplishment; and a conclusion. A single formula is used to introduce the said name and author of the maxim e.g., 'Vajjiyaputtena arahatā isiṇā buitāṃ' (said by Vajjiyaputta the arahata, the isi), likewise, a common formula is used for the conclusion: 'evam se buddhe virate vipāve dante daviealam tātī no punaṇ-avi icc-atthāṃ havvam āgacchati tti bemi'. We have not examined this text in great detail since a translation and thorough analysis of it would constitute a major feat of scholarship and linguistic enterprise in its own right.²⁰ Instead we briefly draw attention to certain features relevant to the main thrust of our enquiry:

- a. The text is an indication that **pacceka-buddhas** held a similar status in Jainism to that in Buddhism; for their 'sayings' were considered to be of sufficient value to be retained and cherished within both traditions.
- b. The **Isibhāsiyāṃ** and the **Khaggavisāṇa Sutta** are early texts within their respective traditions. This supports our theory that the **paccekabuddha** has a significance which pertains to the early stages of these traditions.
- c. Schubring points out that the concepts of the **Isibhāsiyāṃ** are neither highly technical nor doctrinally sophisticated. This observation is important to our theory of the **paccekabuddha's** pre-sectarian identity.
- d. Within it are repeated many of the concepts which we discuss in connection with the figure of the **paccekabuddha** in the Buddhist sources e.g. **muni, vimutti, paccayya, bhaya, bandhana, savvadukkhā, etc.**
- e. There is no mention of the term **patteya-**

buddha in the sections, but the **isis** are nevertheless categorized as **buddha**. In other words this text corroborates the argument that the concept of the **paccekabuddha** is later than the ascetic figure whom it was used to denote.

This study has been arranged into four chapters. The first chapter serves very much as the pyramidal base. Here we examine and seek to clarify the meanings attached to the figures and notion of **paccekabuddhas** in the earliest references to them in the Buddhist sources. It is from this examination that we discover the idea of their archaic identity and their link with the concepts of **isi**, **samana** and **muni**. We go on to amplify the significance of their association with these categories by seeking to establish the full connotation of these terms. Each of the three remaining chapters take respectively as their theme, **isi**, **samana** and **muni**, and explore the implications of their association with the **paccekabuddha** in a wider trans-sectarian context and in respect to their projected archaic identity. Each category therefore serves as a discrete but complementary avenue of investigation, and when taken together provide a comprehensive testimony to the thesis that the word **paccekabuddha** denoted the historical forerunners of Buddhism. In the final part of the fourth chapter we evaluate the import and significance of this evidence for scholarly understanding of the origins of Buddhism.

Notes

1. The main works on the subject of **paccekabuddhas** to date are Pavolini,

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(1899) Sulla Leggenda dei Quattro Pratyekabuddha, Actes du XII Congres d'Oriental, I. pp.129ff; J. Charpentier, (1908) Paccekabuddhageschichten, Uppsala; L. de la Vallee Poussin, (1918) 'Pratyekabuddha', ERE. Vol.10. pp.152-4; H. Sakurabe, (1956) 'On Pratyekabuddhas' (Engaku ko), Otani Gahuho, XXXVI, 3, pp.40-51; Cooray, (1957) 'Paccekabuddha', pp.57-63 (an unpublished Article submitted to EB); K. Fujita, 'One vehicle or Three', J.I.P. Vol.3. Nos 1/2, March/April 1975 (published in Japanese, 1969); R.Kloppenborg, (1974), 'The Paccekabuddha - A Buddhist Ascetic. A study of the concept of the paccekabuddha in Pali canonical and commentarial literature', E.J.Brill. An amended and slightly attenuated version has since been published by the Buddhist Publication Society in Kandy (1983). Malalasekera's article (s.v., 'paccekabuddha') in DPPN is also a significant contribution to the subject; K.R.Norman, (1983), 'The Pratyekabuddha in Buddhism and Jainism' in Buddhist Studies Ancient and Modern, Ed. P.Denwood and A.Piatigorsky, Curzon Press Ltd., London.

2. Pb.Ap.3: 'they attain paccekabodhi without (the instruction of) buddhas' (vināpi buddhehi...paccekabodhiṃ anupāpuṇanti).

At Pug.14/70/73 both the paccekabuddha and the sammāsambuddha are defined as a person who 'comes to the knowledge of the dhamma on his own, without having heard the truths before' (pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu sāmāṃ saccāni abhisambujjhati). This formula appears as early as the Majjhima Nikāya (II.21) but is there used only of the Buddha.

3. 'their consideration for the world is not the transcendental (lokuttara) but the

mundane (*lokiya*) welfare of persons' (*Mahāvamsa-ṭīkā* - cite Cooray p.59).

'*buddhas* bring themselves and others to enlightenment; *paccekabuddhas* bring themselves to enlightenment but not others' (*Sn.A.51*).

Unlike the *sammāsambuddha*, the *pacceka-buddha* attains neither 'omniscience' (*sabbāññu*) nor 'mastery of the fruits' (*phalesu vāsibhavam* - *Pug.73*). Hence he lacks the faculties considered necessary for the creation of *sāvakas*.

4. cf., for example, *Pb.Ap.2*: '*Ye sabba-buddhesu katādhikarā aladdhamokkhā Jina-sāsanesu*' (Those who honoured all *buddhas* without attaining liberation during the dispensation of a *Jina*); *Sn.A.51*: '*paccekabuddhā buddhe appatvā buddhānaṃ uppajjanakāle yeva uppajanti*' (*pacceka-buddhas* are those who do not become *buddhas* in the time of the appearance of *buddhas* [i.e., *sammāsambuddha*]). See also *S.A.III.189,208*; *A.A.I.194*; *II.192*; *Sn.A.128-9*.
5. *infra pp.49-51*
6. *Sn.A.46*. See, also, the *Kumbhakāra* and *Pāṇīya Jātakas* where the *bodhisatta* asks each of the novitiate *pacceka-buddhas* what 'theme' (*ārammaṇa*) had decided them to become *bhikkhus*. In response each *paccekabuddha* divulges his own 'theme' in the form of 'a single stanza' (*ekekaṃ gātham*).
7. According to *Pb.Ap.6* and *Ap.A.151/Sn.A.63* the *gāthās* of the *Khaggavisāṇa Sutta* constitute *vyākaraṇas* and *udānas*. When a *paccekabuddha* provides another with a *vyākaraṇa*, he in fact informs that person of the 'subject of reflection' (*ārammaṇa*) which resulted in his *pabbajjā/paccekabodhi*. See *J.IV.116-117*; *Sn.A.95*.

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8. See, for example, J.III.472-3; the Nikayas acknowledge that in pre-Sakyamuni times **mantas** were used to evoke some forms of awakening: **mantāya bodhabbāṃ** (awaken through mantras) - A.IV.136-7/ D.II.246.
9. Ap.A.205. **Subhāsita** (Skt.**subhāṣita**) is a recognised genre of Indian literature and is to be found in most Sanskrit works (Sternbach IBG Vol.I.p.2). There is a **sutta** in the **Sutta-nipāta** (pp.78-9) on the subject of **subhāsitas**. Examples of the **subhāsitas** of **paccekabuddhas** may be found at Pb.Ap.55,56; J.III.241-245.
10. Sn.A.46/Ap.A.138-9; Nd.II318ff.; Ap. p.8.
11. Sn.A.147; Ap.A.139.
12. J.V.252-3.
13. Mvu.III.452-3.
14.

Ap.A	=	Sn.A.
pp.128-138		-
138-142	=	46-51
142 (slight variation)		51
142-145	=	51-54
145 (l. 10-24)		-
-		54(1.20)-55(1.29)
145ff.	=	55ff.
-		130-131
202-206		-
15. There are two versions of this tale: A.A. I.345-56; Thig.A.182-190.
16. The concept of the **patteyabuddha** in Jainism has the same significance doctrinally as in Buddhism. The principles of the three propositions which we have used in the introduction to summarise Buddhist doctrine on the **paccekabuddha** may also, therefore, apply to the Jain doctrine. For example, proposition.(1) "Not having heard" means like the **pratyekabuddha**: '**asoccā yathā pratyekabuddh' adih'**', quoted by J. Deleu, Vihāyapannatti, Brugge, 1970, p.160. cf.

also A.M. Ghatage, 'Kahanaya-tigam: A Prakrit Reader', Kolhapur 1950, p.49: Jacobi SBE. XLV.Pt.II. p.35 n.2; Schubring p.23; Stevenson p.171.
Prop.(ii): Isibhāsiyāim p.490-491.
Prop.(iii): Isibhāsiyāim p.492.

17. Charpentier (1) p.40.
18. *ibid.*, p.48.
19. Schubring p.81.
20. The text has been studied by Dr.H.Nakamura in two articles entitled, 'The Buddhism of the earliest period, as typified by Sāriputta' (Sāriputta ni daihyo-sareta sai shoki no Bukkyo), Indogakaku Bukkyo-kagu Kenkyu 14.2.1966, pp.1ff.; 'The Sage Yājñavalkya in the Jain Tradition' (Tetsujin Yajinyavarukya - Jaina-kyo no shoden) op. cit. 15.1.1966, pp.29ff.