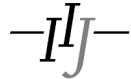




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Book Reviews

Engle, Artemus B., *The Inner Science of Buddhist Practice: Vasubandhu's Summary of the Five Heaps with Commentary by Sthiramati* [The Tsadra Foundation Series] (Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion Publications, 2009), xiii + 559 pp., \$ 34,95, ISBN 978 1 559 39322 5.

The publication under review aims at the unusual combination of two seemingly unrelated topics from within the Buddhist tradition: the Tibetan *lam rim* (“stages of the path”) concept on the one hand and two Indian Abhidharma treatises, namely Vasubandhu's *Pañcaskandhaka* and Sthiramati's commentary *Pañcaskandhakavibhāṣā*,¹ on the other. According to the information provided in the blurb of the book, the motivation for integrating the translation of these texts into the context of the *lam rim* system was “to show how greater understanding of the classical Buddhist doctrines can enhance practice of [...] the instruction [of the *lam rim*]”. This statement and the style of the first part of the book (pp. 11–224) make it clear that Engle's work is primarily directed at contemporary Western Buddhist practitioners. This focus is in line with the aims of the Tsadra Foundation Series—in which the book has been published—to “support the activities of advanced Western students of Tibetan Buddhism, specifically those with significant contemplative experience”.

The book consists of two parts, the first of which provides an overview of some basics of Buddhist theory and practice in general and the Tibetan *lam rim* tradition in particular. The four chapters constituting the first part are “The Lamrim Teaching and Its Three Essential Forms of Knowledge” (pp. 19–36), “The Fundamentals” (pp. 37–98), “Renunciation, the Four Noble Truths, and Closely Placed Recollection” (pp. 99–192), and

¹) Engle refers to these two texts under the titles *Pañcaskandhaprakaraṇa* and *Pañcaskandhaprakaraṇavibhāṣya*, that is under the titles which are reconstructed on the basis of the titles given in the Tibetan translation. As Sthiramati himself entitles his commentary *Pañcaskandhakavibhāṣā* in the only extant manuscript, *Pañcaskandhaka* seems to be the actual title of Vasubandhu's treatise on the five *skandhas*. Therefore, I refer to both texts under these titles in the present review.

“Mahāyāna Practice” (pp. 193–224). As already indicated, the nature of this part of Engle’s book is that of a Buddhist teaching manual presenting the *lam rim* and the *Pañcaskandhaka(vibhāṣā)* in the context of the right way to liberation, and not so much that of a scholarly investigation.

As the present reviewer does not feel in the position to comment on the first part of the book under review, the following remarks refer mainly to the second part of Engle’s work. It may merely be noted that some aspects of the methodology applied by Engle in the first part of his book might be considered problematic from the viewpoint of a scholar of Buddhist studies. It is notable, for instance, that the author only marginally refers to modern studies of the *lam rim* and of the *Pañcaskandhaka(vibhāṣā)*, merely mentioning that there are “several English and French translations of Vasubandhu’s [*Pañcaskandhaka*]” (p. xiii; for a recently compiled detailed bibliography on the *Pañcaskandhaka*, see Xuezhu Li and Ernst Steinkellner, *Vasubandhu’s Pañcaskandhaka*, Beijing/Vienna 2008, pp. 57–62). It should also be noted that Engle names—in accordance with the Tibetan tradition—Asaṅga as the author of the *Yogācārabhūmi* without any reference to the disputed authorship of this text in modern scholarship. As has been convincingly shown by a number of scholars, the *Yogācārabhūmi* is very likely to be a compilation and not the work of a sole author (for a brief overview of the various opinions on the authorship, see Sung-doo Ahn, *Die Lehre von den Kleśas in der Yogācārabhūmi*, Stuttgart 2003, pp. 1–4). Engle also leaves the controversy in connection with the author of the *Pañcaskandhaka*, Vasubandhu, unmentioned (for an overview of this controversy, see Florin Deleanu, *The Chapter on the Mundane Path [Laukikamārga] in the Śrāvakabhūmi*, Tokyo 2006, pp. 186–194).

Engle’s approach in the second part of his book (pp. 225–394), which includes very skilful and generally reliable translations of the Tibetan versions of the *Pañcaskandhaka* and the *Pañcaskandhakavibhāṣā*, differs considerably from the first and reveals the author’s academic background and very profound knowledge of Abhidharmic technical terminology. The footnotes to his translation offer a great number of references to parallels and further explanations in related Abhidharma works, as for instance the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* and the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*. As Engle notes on p. 227, the main source for his English translation was the Tibetan rendering of the *Pañcaskandhakavibhāṣā* preserved in the Derge edition. Additionally he used a Tibetan manuscript, scans of which are preserved in the collection of the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center (see text number

WICZ1271),² in order to identify “a number of minor errors” (p. 227). It would have been of great use if Engle had either included an edition of the Tibetan text in his book or at least had specified the instances in which he has corrected the Derge edition, as it is sometimes difficult to determine the exact wording of the Tibetan text upon which he based his translation.

Given the fact that the Sanskrit original of the *Pañcaskandhakavibhāṣā* was not accessible to Engle, since it has only recently become available in the “China Tibetology Research Center” (Beijing) and will soon be published in a critical and a diplomatic edition by the present reviewer, his translation is remarkably accurate. There are only some minor points of criticism that could be brought forward in connection with Engle’s translation. The first point to be noted in this context are some inconsistencies and inaccuracies in the way the author translates single terms. On p. 327, line 4, Engle translates *viññapti* as “knowledge”, whereas in line 6 he renders it as “awareness”. On p. 328, line 28, he uses the term “awareness” again, but it is not clear which Tibetan term is referred to here, as there is no counterpart to this translation found in the Tibetan text. In connection with the definition of *prajñā* Engle adds on several occasions (p. 280, lines 21–27 and 34) the terms “discrimination” and “wisdom” without using brackets. As is obvious from the context, these expressions are supposed to refer to the term under discussion in this passage, i.e. *prajñā*, and to its synonym *pravicaya*. When using the expression “discrimination” Engle seems to have in mind *pravicaya*, whereas “wisdom” apparently relates to *prajñā*. As *prajñā* can obviously not only be correct but also incorrect or neither correct nor incorrect according to the *Pañcaskandhaka(vibhāṣā)*, the question arises whether its rendering as “wisdom” is appropriate in the present context (is it suitable to speak of “incorrect wisdom?”). Engle seems to have been aware of this problem and apparently tried to deal with it by using the term “wisdom” only in the context of correct *prajñā* and “discrimination” in the other instances. However, at another occasion, namely in connection with the definitions of the five [false] views (*dyṣṭi*), Engle uses the term “wisdom” also in the context of “afflicted” (*kliṣṭa*) *prajñā* (e.g. p. 300, line 36). Again, one could ask whether the concept of an “afflicted wisdom” makes any sense and if such a wrong view as, for instance, *satkāyadyṣṭi* (“view of the five *skandhas* [as being the self]”) might

²) According to information received from Gene Smith of TBRC (e-mail of 10th October 2009) the manuscript belonged to the manuscript collection of Drepung and dates from before 1642.

be described as “wisdom”. Notably, on p. 302 (in connection with the definition of *śīlavrataparāmarśa* [“clinging to observances and practices”]) Engle translates *prajñā* as “discriminating awareness” and remarks in the corresponding footnote 335 that “it does not seem appropriate to translate this term, where it is appearing alone, as ‘wisdom’”. But why then does the author not simply translate *prajñā* as “discrimination” or “judgement” throughout?

Another difficult term to translate is *rūpa*, the first of the five *skandhas*, which Engle renders as “form” (e.g. p. 247, line 32). To understand *rūpa* in this way, that is in the restricted sense of the particular mode or (visual) shape of something (as this is what the term “form” usually indicates), results in a number of inconsistencies. How are we, for instance, to understand *avijñapti* (which is invisible and does not have any shape at all) being translated as “noninformative form” (p. 262)? Even in the context of the limited meaning *rūpa* has as the object of the faculty of seeing (*caḥṣurindriya*), its rendering as “form” would not be sufficient to include all the aspects of *rūpa*, as for example its aspect of being “colour” (*varṇa*). Although I do not have a suggestion for a definitively appropriate translation of the term *rūpa*, rendering it as “matter” (in the general context of the first *skandha*) and “visible matter” (in the context of the object of *caḥṣurindriya*) might be a better solution in the context of the *Pañcaskandhaka(vibhāṣā)*.

On p. 296, line 27 f., Engle translates the Tibetan term *shes pa yod pa*, which according to Sthiramati characterizes the Sāṅkhya notion of the self, as “the knowing existent”. This expression was probably chosen by Engle in order to render the Tibetan in a literal way. Since Engle does not explain the term in any detail, it might be difficult to understand the meaning of “the knowing existent”. A better solution might have been to mention the Sanskrit equivalent of *shes pa yod pa* which is *caitanya* and which represents an expression for the (Sāṅkhya) concept of consciousness.³ Moreover, Engle does not translate the sentence *tshor ba la sogs pa yang de bzhin no* (Skt. *evam vedanādīnām*), which concludes Sthiramati’s depiction of the Sāṅkhya view of the self and which is difficult to understand, because its relation to the preceding passage is unclear.

In connection with the explanation of the meaning of the term *bhūta* (“element”) Sthiramati states *na cānyeṣāṃ bhūtatvaprasaṅgo mahiṣādivad rūdhiśabdatvāt*, which is translated into Tibetan as *gzhan dag la yang ’byung*

³ See Richard Garbe, *Die Sāṅkhya-Philosophie*, Leipzig 1894, pp. 170 and 297.

ba nyid thal bar mi 'gyur tel ming grags pa yin pas sa (Derge: *pas sa*; Peking: *pas*) *steng nyal la sogs pa bzbin no*. Engle (p. 249) renders the Tibetan phrase as “No other entities [besides these four] possess the nature of being elements. Their names are well known, as evidenced in phrases such as ‘lying on the surface of the earth’.” In the corresponding footnote 35 Engle explains that Sthiramati’s intention here is to show that the names of the elements are well known as is clear from their occurrence in ordinary expressions, like for instance in the example “lying on the surface of the earth”. Based on the Sanskrit original, however, a different understanding of this explanation seems more plausible. *Mahiṣa* is a common Sanskrit term for a buffalo, whereas *rūḍhiśabda* is an expression for a word used in its conventional sense. Thus, the actual meaning of the phrase is most probably that “there is no false consequence of other [entities having the nature of] being elements[, although they also have come into being (*bhūta*)], because the word [*bhūta*] is used in its conventional (and not literal) sense, as, for instance, [in the case of] the buffalo (*mahiṣa*) [that is the only animal to be called *mahiṣa* (i.e. “lying/sleeping on the floor” according to traditional Indian etymology [see T.W. Rhys Davids and W. Stede, *Pali-English Dictionary*, s.v. *mahiṣa*)], though there are also other animals that sleep on the floor and are not referred to as *mahiṣa*”].

On pp. 235, lines 8, 11, 17, and 20, and 301, line 17, Engle translates the phrase *lta ba'i shes rab nyon mongs pa can* (Skt. according to the edition in Li and Steinkellner, op. cit., p. 9, line 13 [and against Engle’s reconstruction, p. 389, line 1 f.]: *samanuṣāsyato yā kliṣṭā prajñā*) as “afflicted wisdom that regards”. As is obvious from the Sanskrit wording *samanuṣāsyataḥ* is not an adjective relating to *prajñā* but has to be understood as relating to a person, “who regards”. Thus, a more appropriate translation of the phrase would be “afflicted discrimination of someone who regards”.

On p. 327, line 18, Engle’s rendering of the phrase *yid rten byed pa'i phyir* (Skt. *manahsanniśrayatām upādāya*) as “because mind (i.e. *manas*) serves as its support” does not express Vasubandhu’s argument in an exact way. As the phrase is used by Vasubandhu to explain why *manas* is a synonym of *vijñāna*, it has to be understood in the sense of “because it (i.e. *vijñāna*) is the basis, which is *manas*”.

On several occasions Engle translates phrases, in which Sthiramati explains the suffixes of abstract nouns employed by Vasubandhu, in an unclear way. See for instance p. 336, lines 19 f., where *de yod pas rnam pa gzhan du 'jug pa nyid do* (*tadbhāvaḥ prakāraṅtaravṛttitā*) is rendered as “because this condition exists, [the root text] refers to it as ‘the occurrence of different

aspects’ and would better be translated as “the *tā* [suffix attached to] *prakārāntaravṛtti* [indicates] the state of its being.” Another example is found on p. 342, lines 31 f., where Engle translates *de’i dngos po ni kun gzhi nyid do (tadbhāva ālayatā)* as “to have that nature is what it means [to say the storehouse consciousness possesses] ‘the quality of being a storehouse’” (better: “The *tā* [suffix attached to] *ālaya* [indicates] the state of its being.”). On the same page, lines 13 f., Engle correctly understands a parallel phrase (however, *tā* has to be emended to *tva*): “when the *tā* suffix is attached to the word ‘storehouse consciousness,’ that denotes the state of being the storehouse consciousness” (*gzhi rnam par shes pa’i dngos po ni kun gzhi rnam par shes pa nyid do; ālayavijñānabhāva ālayavijñānatvam*).

On p. 341, lines 24 ff., Engle’s translation of the sentence *rgyun ’gyur ba’i bye brag gi (read gis) stobs ji lta ba bzhin du bsgos pa ’jug pa rnyed nas (santatiparināmaviśeśād yathābalaṃ bhāvanāvṛtilābhe sati)* as “[These imprints] continue to exist as an [ever-changing, impermanent] continuum [within the storehouse consciousness]. And, whenever they become sufficiently strong to exercise their function” should be corrected to “after, by virtue of a particular transformation of the [mind] continuum, [these imprints] have become effective in accordance with their strength ...”.

On p. 261, line 18, Engle translates *spu can (lomaśa)* as “a yak hair whisk” and obviously very much writes from a Tibetan perspective, when Stthiramati only thought of “something hairy” in general.

On p. 306, line 8, the translation of Tibetan *lus dang ngag gi tshul ’chos pa’i zin pa’i mal cha la sogs pa nye bar ’tsho’i/ yang dag pa’i rtsol bas rnyed pa ni ma yin pas ni log pas ’tsho ba zhes bya’o (kāyavākkuhanopāttāḥ śayyāsanādāya upajīvyante, na ca vyāyāmalabdhā iti mithyājīva ucyate; “if lodging and so on acquired through hypocritical [activities] of body and speech and not through correct practise serves for one’s livelihood—[this state] is called wrong livelihood”)* is missing.

Moreover, there are instances in Engle’s translation in which he includes words or phrases that have no counterpart in the Tibetan without using brackets. In particular, phrases referring to the root text (i.e. Vasubandhu’s *Pañcaskandhaka*) are added in a rather inconsistent manner, as for instance on page 278, line 13, where Engle translates the phrase *mos pa gang zhe nal [...] zhes bya ba* as “In response to the question, ‘What is conviction?’ [the root text] declares [...]”, whereas in line 32 he renders the parallel passage *dran pa gang zhe nal [...] zhes bya ba* as “In response to the question, ‘What is recollection?’ the root text declares [...]”. The same applies to p. 262, lines 5 f. and 28, and p. 275, lines 26 f. On p. 245, lines 18 f., the sentence

“an alternative explanation of why it is not meaningless to compose this summary is the following” is supplemented by Engle without brackets. Other instances are found e.g. on p. 251, lines 3 f. (“collectively” and “other classifications of the constituents”), p. 281, lines 19 f. (“the ripening” and “karma is that ripening of the desire realm”), p. 285, lines 32 f. (“of attachment”, “from attachment”, and “to attachment”), p. 327, lines 10 f. (“this explanation is similar for the other [...] forms of consciousness”), or p. 328, line 20 (“with appropriate changes”).

Other important points to mention are the Sanskrit equivalents provided by the author in the footnotes and in Appendix 2, which contains the reconstruction of Vasubandhu’s *Pañcaskandhaka*. As is obvious from a comparison of the Sanskrit equivalents suggested by Engle in the footnotes to his translation with the Sanskrit original of the *Pañcaskandhakavibhāṣā*, the majority of the Sanskrit terms and phrases presented by Engle is correct. Some of them, however, do not correspond to the original Sanskrit text. For instance on p. 467, n. 109, Engle gives *sarvathā* for *rnam pa thams cad du*, whereas the phrase that appears in the original text is *sarvākāra-*. On p. 469, n. 127, *kāraṇe kāryopacāraḥ* for *rgyu la ’bras bu’i ming gis btags* should be corrected to *nimitte naimittikopacāram*, on p. 494, n. 415, the correct equivalent for *rang gi gnas la* is *svāśraye* (instead of *svādhiṣṭāne*), for *sna tshogs pa’i phyir* on p. 497, n. 479, *citratām upādāya* (instead of *citravāt*), and for *rnam par gzhan ’byung ba nyid* on p. 500, n. 520, *prakāraṅtaravṛttitā* (instead of *anyākāravṛttitām*). On p. 471, n. 153, *bye brag rtog pa med pa’i phyir* has to be translated as one phrase corresponding to Sanskrit *viśeṣāṣaṃlakṣaṇāt* (Engle’s equivalent *nirvikalpaḥ* for *rtog pa med pa* is not correct).

Although most of the divergences between Engle’s equivalents and the original Sanskrit text do not represent serious mistakes, they prove how cautious we have to be when equating Tibetan with Sanskrit phrases. This is particularly true for Engle’s reconstruction of Vasubandhu’s *Pañcaskandhaka* included in Appendix 2 of the book. As Engle notes in the preface (p. xiii), shortly before his book was going to press he was able “to make a number of last-minute revisions” to the reconstruction relying on the recently published edition of the Sanskrit original of the *Pañcaskandhaka* by Li and Steinkellner. The question that immediately arises here is: Would it not have been more appropriate for the author to exclude the artificially created Sanskrit text from his publication in the light of the newly available Sanskrit original? The only reason not to abandon a reconstruction after the original becomes available could be the condition of a Tibetan translation

showing substantial differences that make it likely for the Indian source of the Tibetan translation to have differed significantly from the available Sanskrit text. But as Engle states in the preface (p. xiii) “the differences are only minor” and most of the phrases in Engle’s reconstruction that differ from the Sanskrit original cannot be deduced from the Tibetan translation. A great number of these alternatives represent syntactic variants and synonyms, the exact original wording of which is difficult to determine only on the basis of the Tibetan.⁴

Apart from the reconstruction of the Sanskrit text Engle also provides a critical edition of the Tibetan translation of the *Pañcaskandhaka* in Appendix 1. In contrast to the reconstruction, Engle’s edition of the Tibetan is very useful and goes beyond the edition found in Li and Steinkellner 2008, because it reports the variants in Derge, Cone, Narthang and Peking. The book concludes with indices of English terms, English titles of Tibetan works, and personal names. As there is no index of Sanskrit-English terms, it is extremely difficult to find technical terms and work titles in the book.

Despite the (minor) problems noted above Engle’s book is a highly valuable contribution to our understanding of the Yogācāra Abhidharma tradition, providing clear and reliable translations of two of its most relevant texts. The author is to be thanked for drawing the attention of Western Buddhist practitioners and of scholars of Buddhism alike to the importance of the *Pañcaskandhaka(vibhāṣā)*.

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⁴ For some examples see p. 386, line 18, where Engle has *-sambhūtaṃ* for the Tibetan *’byung ba* instead of *-jaṃ* of the Sanskrit original; line 20: *yasminn utpanne vijogecchā* for Tib. *gang byung na bral bar ’dod pa’o* instead of *yasyoipādād vijogacchando bhavati*; line 24: *cittasamprayuktāḥ* for Tib. *sems dang mtshungs par ldan pa rnam* instead of *cittena samprayuktāḥ*; p. 393, lines 4f.: *aṣṭādaśadhātavo vyavasthāpyante* for Tib. *kham bco brygad du rnam par gzbag go* instead of *aṣṭādaśadhātuvyavasthānam*; line 7: *sapta cittadhātavaś ca* for Tib. *dang sems kyī kham bdun* instead of *cittadhātavaś ca sapta*; line 8: *sahāsamskṛtena dharmāyatanam dharmadhātus ca* for *’dus ma byas dang bcas pa ni chos kyī skye mched dangl chos kyī kham so* instead of *dharmāyatanam dharmadhātus ca sahāsamskṛtena*.