1. INTRODUCTION

Franklin Edgerton in his monumental *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary* (BHSGD) proposed a description of Buddhist Sanskrit texts based on the assumption of an original Middle Indic language that underwent a progressive “Sanskritization” in which these middle Indic forms gradually were purged. Edgerton proposes dividing Buddhist Sanskrit texts into three “loosely” chronological layers: in the first group prose sections exhibit as many irregular forms as the verses; in the second group, the verses show evidence of Middle Indo-Aryan forms while the accompanying prose sections are written in generally correct classical Sanskrit; and in the third group are texts whose verses “are substantially as Sanskritized as the prose parts.” The *Vinaya-viniścaya-upāliparipṛcchā*, an early Mahāyāna śūtra on monastic discipline, fits the description of Edgerton’s second group. Śāriputra, in the first section of the text, asks the Buddha general questions about moral behavior; and the Vinaya specialist Upāli asks him more specific questions in the second section. Upāli’s final questions ask how Śrāvakas and Bodhisattvas eradicate pride. The Buddha associates the elimination of pride with the repudiation of conceptual attachment to (*abhiveśa*) dharmanas. He explains further in forty four verses the inconceivable and non-dual nature of dharmanas.

Candrakīrti quotes sixteen of these forty-four verses in his commentary on Nāgārjuna’s *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. Candrakīrti uses the scriptural authority of the Buddha to enhance and strengthen his position on the empty and non-dual nature of dharmanas. He believes that scriptural authority should be relied upon in situations where perception and inference fail to give certain knowledge about things that are beyond the scope of the senses (*parokṣa*). Candrakīrti seems to recognize the language of these śūtra verses as Sanskrit. He comments on their language only once and uses Pāṇini’s *Aṣṭādhyāyī* and Patañjali’s *Mahābhāṣya* to explain why in one *Saṃddhirājasūtra* verse a case ending appears to be missing and in another a singular verb is used where a plural is expected. In this short paper I will examine the *Upāliparipṛcchā* verses which he quotes.
I will suggest that metrical license accounts for the majority of the Middle Indo Aryan forms found in these verses. The anonymous author of the *Upāliparipṛcchā* verses uses the same techniques for preserving the meter that we find employed in the composition of Pāli verses. Edgerton argues against comparing Pāli and Buddhist Sanskrit verses. “I frankly have never understood Pali meter,” he confesses, “... a great many Pali verses baffle me.”4 Had A. K. Warder’s *Pali Metre* been available to him he might have had a different opinion. As Warder observes, Buddhist Sanskrit expands the metrical license already practiced in Pāli.5

I did not have access to any of the original manuscripts of the *Prasannapadā*. I have used three sources: (1) the printed edition of the *Prasannapadā* (Pr) edited by Louis de La Vallée Poussin, (2) J. W. de Jong’s “Textcritical Notes on the Prasannapadā” (DJ) and 3) and Pierre Python’s edition of the *Upāliparipṛcchā* (P). A comparison of Tucci’s manuscript, which de Jong used in his “Textcritical Notes”, with the manuscripts used by La Vallée Poussin suggests that metrically deaf scribes ignored the verses’ meter in making changes to the text. These scribes restored consonant groups both at the beginning of words and in the middle of compounds and changed non-standard endings to more correct ones in total disregard for the effect that such “Sanskritization” would have on the meter. In some instances, such restorations not only distorted the meter but distorted the meaning as well. Despite the conflicting testimony of these manuscripts, I am operating on the assumption that these *Upāliparipṛcchā* verses scanned properly when they were first composed.

2. THE INFLUENCE OF METER ON *UPĀLIPARIPRCCCHĀ* VERSES

Warder suggests that well-established meters exert a direct influence on the word forms found in Pāli verse “through the deliberate selection of suitable forms by the poets.”6 This deliberate word selection applies to the word choices of the Sanskrit verses of the *Upāliparipṛcchā* as well. The meter of the *Upāliparipṛcchā* verses is quantitative, usually eleven syllables, with a fixed sequence of long and short syllables. Each *pāda* is a repetitive rhythmic unit. The meter is *dodhaka*7 (three dactyls and a trochee):

\[-UU - UU - UU - U \times 4\]

Most of the *Upāliparipṛcchā* verses scan only because their composer used metrical license to make these verses conform to the *dodhaka* metrical