Huanhuan He 何歡歡


The author of the book under review, HE Huanhuan is a graduate of Minzu 民族 and Peking Universities. At Peking University’s Department of Philosophy [and Religion], she mainly studied under Yao Weiqun 姚卫群, a student of Huang Xinchuan 黄心川, himself a colleague of the much better known Ji Xianlin 季羡林, the dean of Indian and Buddhist Studies in the PRC.¹ HE also spent three years at the University of Tokyo, where she studied with Saitō Akira 斎藤明 and his colleagues, first as a visiting doctoral student and then as a Visiting Scholar. Her thick study of the versified Madhyamakahṛdayakārikā [= MHK] and its Tarkajvālā [= TJ] auto-commentary in prose by the sixth century Buddhist thinker Bhāviveka or Bhavya is a somewhat reworked version of her Peking University doctoral dissertation, submitted to the Department of Philosophy [and Religion] in 2011. It promptly won two prestigious academic awards: The Most Excellent Ph.D. Dissertation of Peking University, and The Most Excellent Ph.D. Dissertation of Beijing City. It is therefore hardly surprising that, on pp. 1–4, this two-volume book is prefaced by the expected laudatory remarks from HE’s two advisors, Yao and Saitō, the later of whom himself has widely published on these two important works by Bhāviveka.²

Of Bhāviveka’s oeuvre, it is only MHK that is available in Sanskrit in the form of two different manuscripts, both of which were preserved in the Tibetan region. Till now, only one of these, a slightly incomplete manuscript with fol. 18 missing, was published in facsimile, the edition of which was prepared by Jiang Zhongxin 蔣中新.³ Earlier, S.S. Bahulkar had published V.V. Gokhale’s hand-

² See his “Daijō bukkyō no kigen to jittai ni kansuru sōgoteki kenkyū [A Comparative Study of the Origin and Status of Mahayana Buddhism],” Tōkyō Daigaku kenkyū seika hōkokusho 東京大学研究成果報告書 [Tokyo University Report on Research Results] (Tokyo, 2007), 201–269. This consists of a study and translation of the fifth segment, the so-called Yogācāratattvaviniścaya, of MHK and TJ.
³ See his “Fanwen ‘Sizeyanjing’ chaoben yingyinban 梵文‘思择焰经’抄本影印版 [A Facsimile Edition of the Sanskrit Text of Madhyamakahṛdaya],” Ji Xianlin jiaoshou basijinian
written copy of the photographs taken of this same manuscript in Tibet in the
1930s and, some years later, Chr. Lindtner published an improved edition of the
latter in which he also took into full account the Tibetan translation.4 As yet
unpublished, a paper manuscript of मह्क in twelve pages is reportedly housed
in the large libraries of the Potala in Lhasa, but it is still unclear how it is stem-
matically related to the first manuscript. It is hoped that it will contain inter
alia the first twenty-seven verses that are missing from the first manuscript’s
segment on the Vaiśeṣika school of thought. Included in the Tibetan Buddhist
canon, the Tibetan version of what was evidently a differently filiated Sanskrit
manuscript of मह्क is contained in तप, which is also attributed to Bhāviveka.
This circa 1050 translation of तप is owed to Atiśa (982–1054) and his foremost
Tibetan disciple Nag tsā ba Tshul khrims rgyal ba (1011 – ca. 1070). In
fact, it would appear that the text of मह्क that we find in the Tibetan canon was
simply extracted from the तप, which, as was alluded to, includes the entire text
of a version of मह्क that, however, shows marked differences from the text of the
published Sanskrit manuscript. The texts of मह्क and तप consist of eleven “chap-
ters,” the first five of which deal with Buddhist themes, the sixth to the tenth
with expositions and critiques of non-Buddhist Indian schools of thought, and
the eleventh with a praise to the Buddha and a gloss on its title. To be sure, none
of these are really called “chapters” in the Sanskrit text of मह्क—Tibetan le’u in
the Tibetan translations of मह्क and तप is a thin “corrective” and हे follows suit
by calling them pin 品. It is perhaps better to call these “segments.” The differ-
ences between the Sanskrit and Tibetan texts of मह्क are quite formidable and
amply attest to the extremely problematic way in which this work has been
handed down.

The first volume of हे’s book consists of an introduction [pp. 3–10] in
which the reader is briefly introduced to Bhāviveka and his oeuvre, and given
a lucid overview of the contents of मह्क and तप. Five chapters follow in its
wake. Titled The Basic Texts of मह्क and तप and Related Literature, Chapter
One [pp. 11–43] opens with an introduction to the मह्क and तप, the Sanskrit
manuscript and the Tibetan translations, the problems that beset the San-

lunwen ji 季羡林教授八十华诞纪念论文集 [Papers in Honor of Prof. Dr. Ji Xianlin on the
Occasion of His 80th Birthday], ed. Li Zheng 李錚 et al. (Nanchang: Jiangxi chubanshe, 1991),
111–118.

4 See, respectively, S.S. Bahulkar, “The Madhyamaka-Hṛdaya-Kārikā of Bhāvaviveka: A Pho-
tographic Reproduction of Prof. V.V. Gokhale’s Copy,” Nagoya Studies in Indian Culture and
Buddhism Saṃbhāṣā 15 (1994), i–iv, 1–49, and Madhyamakahṛdayam of Bhavya, ed. Chr. Lindt-
of मह्क, Lindtner offers useful surveys of the contents of each of the मह्क/तप’s segments.