

A Semantic Profile of Early Sanskrit “*buddhi*”

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Abstract The word *buddhi* is an important term of Indian philosophical discourse, but some aspects of its use have caused confusion and continue to occasion difficulties. This paper undertakes a survey of the usage of the word *buddhi* (“intellect”) in general Sanskrit literature from its earliest late Vedic occurrences up to the middle of the first millennium CE. Signifying fundamentally “awareness (of something),” the word “*buddhi*” is shown to refer often to a being’s persisting capacity or faculty of awareness (“attentiveness, mind, intelligence,” etc.) and also, often, to the content of a being’s awareness (“idea, notion, thought, disposition, resolution,” etc.). There are also instances where it is hard to determine which of these two kinds of reference are intended in our written sources, and there are other instances where both senses seem present simultaneously. Various examples attest to the use of the word to refer to an affective and volitional capacity in a being—and to affective and volitional content—as well as to a cognitive faculty and cognitive content. One feature that occurs frequently in the word’s use is that this faculty and, or, its content, regularly describe alterations of a subject’s knowledge of the surrounding situation, the transformation of surrounding complexity or multiplicity into a simpler and more manageable mental construct—an understanding, an interpretation, a decision, a plan, etc. As the word *buddhi* is related to the primary Sanskrit word-family used to describe the concrete experience of awakening—moving from no (or little, or muddled) awareness to clear awareness—it is not surprising that its more abstract usage would often incorporate a similar dynamic, a transition from less clear to more clear knowledge, a rendering of early knowledge to better and more useful knowledge, in short, a faculty of “intellect” that produces refined decisions, resolutions, and determinations. It is suggested that this element of its semantic profile contributed to the word’s eventually becoming the preferred

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word for the most important of the mental functions of beings in one of the most widespread philosophical psychologies of ancient India, that which ultimately became formally enshrined in the philosophical system “Sāṃkhya.”

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Introductory Remarks

Frequently translated as “intellect,” the noun *buddhi* became one of the most widespread and interesting words available to Indian thinkers for referring to human thought in the post-Vedic and classical ages.¹ But though “the intellect,” “the *buddhi*,” has been attended to in accounts of the philosophical systems of ideas in which it plays a role, Sāṃkhya in particular,² “*buddhi*” has not, to my knowledge, been studied systematically simply as a particular Sanskrit word. We do not have a precise and full understanding of all the different facets of the word’s use. In non-technical contexts, although it is usually possible to understand generally the gist of sentences in which the word *buddhi* is used, it is frequently not easy to resolve the exact sense in which the word is employed. And in more technical contexts—some of the more developed texts of the genre of *adhyātma* philosophy³—that difficulty is compounded as the word *buddhi* designates one of a set of fundamental entities (*tattvas*) that are said to function together to enable a being’s knowing, thinking, and feeling. Even less clearly in that

¹ One of the most recent and best characterizations of the word’s general use is furnished indirectly by Malinar (2007, p. 71), as she discusses the word at *Bhagavad Gītā* 2.39: “The word *buddhi* allows at least two different translations . . . first as a faculty of knowledge, and secondly as a content of consciousness . . . [It is] the highest cognitive faculty whose general function is to assess the data provided by the other faculties (mind, senses) and to decide on the proper reaction.” We shall see the basic bifurcation of “faculty” and “content” at the very outset of our survey; but we will also see early on that the word describes more than cognition.

² See Larson and Bhattacharya (1987) and Malinar (2014) for systematic presentations of Sāṃkhya themes and ideas.

³ The word “*adhyātma*” signifies “to, or over,” that is, “concerning, the self or person.” It is the name of an old Upaniṣadic theme of inquiry, speculation, and exhortation (not always explicitly labeled as such) that lived on in many texts of the *MBh* and the *purāṇas* and as the principal intellectual topos of the classical philosophical systems of Yoga and Sāṃkhya. Texts of this genre are deliberately formulated, clearly ‘philosophical’ discussions of persons (*ātman*s, “embodied-souls”)—their make-up, general situation in the world, and what is good, or best (*śreyas*), for them, in ultimate terms. The word *ātman* is often used abstractly to refer to the totality and, or, essence of a thing or being; it has a long history of use as a reflexive pronoun in ordinary discourse, when it is typically translated as “oneself,” “yourself,” etc., and, in more abstract contexts it is “the self,” or “Self,” of a person. Substantively, the word *ātman* can signify either or both “soul” and “body,” and I think it best to conceive of the word as typically describing the self of persons in terms of a continuum: that is, as a principle that is either an embodied soul or an ‘ensouled’ body. I would argue that, although “*ātman*” is able to mean either “body” or “transcendent soul” (or “eternal principle of consciousness,” etc.) in one context or another, its use as a word for “soul” (or “mind” or “spirit”) very frequently implies embodiment, and its use as “body” very frequently implies a body endowed with consciousness or awareness. This fundamental complexity of the word *ātman* is responsible for many of the distinct facets of *adhyātma* discussions. Lastly, additionally, the word *adhyātma* is also used at times to refer to a superior (*adhi*-) or transcendent form of the *ātman*-principle, an “Over-Self” or “Higher, or Highest, (embodied) soul.”

genre, that entity, the *buddhi*, is theorized to be the first high-level transformation of the original causal substance of the universe as a whole, “The Unmanifested” (*avyakta*); and also, by the subsequent transformation of itself, the *buddhi* is the causal source of everything else found in the universe.⁴ And in a final twist, by the time the most developed *adhyātma* systems of philosophy reached their classical formulations “The Unmanifested” and all to which it gave rise, from “intellect,” *buddhi*, on down, was held to be completely unconscious (*acetana*) material reality.

It seems that *adhyātma* theorizing and its full flowering in classical Sāṃkhya have dominated and complicated scholarly perceptions of the word *buddhi*. But as Erich Frauwallner and others have pointed out, and as the survey below will support, the word *buddhi* was a relatively late arrival in *adhyātma* discourses. A focused attention on the word itself and its occurrences will show that the word *buddhi* had a wide presence in Sanskrit literature independently of that genre. Its entrée into and then rise to prominence in *adhyātma* has a history that remains to be charted. For the most part this paper will steer clear of *adhyātma* discourse and theories and will look at the ways the word was deployed in early general usage. In a recent paper, “‘Saving *Buddhis*’ in Epic *Mokṣadharmā*” (Fitzgerald 2015, p. 98), I offered a close study of one particular use of the word *buddhi* in certain striking passages near the beginning of the *Mokṣadharmaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* (*MBh*), passages that depicted radical and ‘soteriologically’⁵ definitive changes in the psyche of suffering people by using the word *buddhi* to refer to particular ideational content as well as to a faculty of “intellect.” That paper relied upon conclusions drawn during a so far unreported examination of the word in earlier Sanskrit literature: the current paper now reports, and extends, that prior background research and reflection on the word’s usage patterns. This general inquiry will be continued in another investigation of “*buddhi*” that will form a separate contribution to this volume, “Fitzgerald 2017.” That companion piece will return to the soteriological context of *mokṣadharmā* and to the *MBh*’s *Mokṣadharmaparvan* (*MDh*), but will confine itself to one of the deliberately theoretical *adhyātma* texts of that collection, the *Manubr̥haspatisaṃvāda* (12.194-99), a text which has especially rich contributions to make regarding the word *buddhi*’s rise to prominence in epic *adhyātma* discourse.

Though the word *buddhi* is firmly grounded in the many verb forms of the root $\sqrt{\text{budh}}$ which occur frequently in the RV and after, the noun itself does not show up until the middle of the Vedic period, in the *Kauṣītaki* and *Chāndogya Brāhmaṇas* (see below). Having made that appearance, the noun occurs about a dozen times in *vedāṅga* texts and forty times in the *Mahābhāṣya* (*MBhāṣ*), after which it is observed to be commonplace in the written texts of the two epics, *Manu*, *Kauṭilya*, *Aśvaghōṣa*, and the *purāṇas*. The word is found twenty-one times among the *Praśna* (once), *Kaṭha* (5 times), *Śvetāśvatara* (6 times), and *Maitrī* (9 times) *Upaniṣads*, the relevant pericopes of which are likely contemporaneous with or later than comparable soteriological passages of the *MBh*. As briefly pointed out at (Fitzgerald

⁴ See Malinar (2014) for the most recent accounting of this psychology and ontology, based on Īśvarakṛṣṇa’s *Sāṃkhyakārikās* and the *Yuktidīpikā* commentary thereto (Wezler and Motegi 1998).

⁵ See Fitzgerald (2015, p. 128, near the end of note 14), for a brief discussion of the limitations of the word soteriology in the context of Indian thought concerned with the pursuit of ‘beatitude.’ The first part of that note discusses the word’s utility in these connections in spite of its clear limitations.

2015, p. 101), a particular sense of the word *buddhi* is justly famous for its central and critical position in the ontology and psychology of the Classical Sāṃkhya system, where it reached a high-water mark in Īśvarakṛṣṇa's *Sāṃkhyakārikās* (perhaps as late as 550 CE⁶) as the locus within a person of four fundamental aspects of the experience of sentient beings: namely, the four continua of *bhāvas* ("states or conditions") stretching between the extremes of the oppositions *aiśvarya-anaiśvarya*, *dharmā-adharma*, *vairāgya* and *rāga-dveṣa*, and *jñāna-moha*⁷—that is, a subject's power,⁸ karma,⁹ susceptibility to mental alteration from experience and thought,¹⁰ and knowledge of the truth of things.¹¹ As is obvious from this fourfold

⁶ Edeltraud Harzer argues that the *Sāṃkhyakārikās* and the *Yuktidīpikā* commentary upon them were composed partly in response to the epistemological arguments of Dignāga in the early 6th c. CE (Harzer 2006, p. 75). Pointing out further that the date of Paramārtha's translation of the *Kārikās* into Chinese, 560 CE, constitutes a terminus *ante quem* for the *Kārikās*, Harzer dates Īśvarakṛṣṇa and the *kārikās* "close to the middle of the sixth century A.D." (Harzer 2006, p. 28). This dating supersedes that of Larson and Bhattacharya (1987, p. 13), who assigned the date of 350-450 to Īśvarakṛṣṇa in their "tentative chronology for early philosophical Sāṃkhya," which synthesized a quick review of "disparate (and admittedly problematic) historical observations."

⁷ *Sāṃkhyakārikās* 43-45 in the context of *kārikā* 23. *sāmsiddhikāś ca bhāvāḥ prākṛtikā vaiṅṛtikāś ca dharmādyāḥ / drṣṭāḥ karaṇāśrayiṇaḥ kāryāśrayiṇaś ca kalalādyāḥ // 43 // dharmeṇa gamanam ūrdhvaṃ gamanam adhastād bhavaty adharmeṇa / jñānena cāpavargo viparyayād iṣyate bandhaḥ // 44 // vairāgyāt prakṛtilayaḥ samsāro bhavati rajasād rāgāt / aiśvaryād avighāto viparyayāt tadviparyāśah // 45*. These follow Īśvarakṛṣṇa's earlier basic statement regarding the *buddhi* in *kārikā* 23: *adhyavasāyo buddhir dharmo jñānam virāga aiśvaryam / sāttvikam etad rūpam tāmasam asmād viparyastam // 23*. Translation of *Sāṃkhyakārikās* 43-45 and 23: "The mind-states (*bhāvas*) *dharmā* and so on [*aiśvarya*, *vairāgya*, and *jñāna*] (which are *sāmsiddhika*, *prākṛtika*, and *vaiṅṛtika* ["perfect, 'natural,' and effected"]) [jlf: I do not enter into the irresolvable complexities of interpreting these descriptions here; see (Kimball 2016)] are observed to depend upon the mental instrument (*karaṇa* [which has the *buddhi* as its culminating member]). The first-stage-embryo (*kalala*) and those stages of embodiment after it are understood to be based on the body (*kārya* [regarding this technical sense of *kārya*, see Oberlies (1996, p. 136, n. 64) and Oberlies (1998, p. 115, n. 240) and his reference to the helpful (Schultz 1958, pp. 32-35); see too Kimball (2016, note 53)]). [43] By means of *dharmā* ("merit, good karma, doing right") there is going upward [up the scale of life-forms and, or, up to heaven]; by means of non-*dharmā* ("bad karma, doing wrong") there is going downward; release (*apavarga*, *mokṣa*) comes through Knowledge (*jñāna*); bondage results from its opposite. [44] From passionlessness (*vairāgya*) comes dissolution [suspension] in the primordial realities [I follow the *Yuktidīpikā*'s glossing of *prakṛti* with *aṣṭāsu prakṛtiṣu* (Wezler and Motegi 1998, p. 236)], transmigration comes to be from passion (*rāga*) that is from the Attribute (*guṇa*) *rajas*. From masterly power (*aiśvarya*) comes being unimpeded and its opposite from the opposite. [45]" The basic description of the *buddhi* was given earlier in *kārikā* 23: "The *buddhi* makes determinations"). Its *sattva*-Attribute forms are *dharmā*, *jñāna*, *virāga* [= *vairāgya*], and *aiśvarya*. Its *tamas*-Attribute forms are the opposite of these [23]."

⁸ The ability to effect one's will or not.

⁹ I use the contemporary English word "karma" here (which is a very limited adaptation of one use of Sanskrit "*karmaṇ*") to refer to the operative energy of one's past actions good and bad, expressed in terms of "good karma," "merit," etc., or the opposite; that is, *dharmā* (*dharmakarmaṇ*, *puṇyakarmaṇ*) or *adharma* (*pāpakarmaṇ*). The word *dharmā* can and does at times refer to the *puṇyakarmaṇ* attached to an agent's soul; see Fitzgerald (2004, p. 676).

¹⁰ On the one hand, passion, which takes the forms of *rāga*, "attraction," or *dveṣa*, "aversion," toward what one experiences, and, on the other hand, *vairāgya*, "being non-impassionable," being indifferent to what one experiences, being characterized by detachment or aloofness, *upekṣā*, being *udāsīna*, or "being the same in all circumstances," *samatva* or *sāmya*.

¹¹ Whether the content of one's abiding intellect corresponds to reality (being possessed of *jñāna*, "Knowledge"), or is in error, in a state of *moha*. The word *moha* is often translated with the words confusion, delusion, bewilderment, and the like. These translations are not without good foundation, but

specification, while “*buddhi*” may often be understood as a cognitive faculty of “mind” or “intellect,” it is, at least in the developed Sāṃkhya philosophy, much more than that.¹² The role of the *buddhi-faculty* in Classical Sāṃkhya was prepared by a long period of development in *adhyātma* discourses across the centuries of the middle Upaniṣads, the soteriological treatises of the *MBh*, the lost texts of Sāṃkhya systematization in the first few centuries of the Common Era,¹³ and the simultaneously developing tradition of Yogācāra Buddhism, where the word itself does not show up,¹⁴ but some of its nature and functioning was specially adapted as the *ālayavijñāna* (Schmithausen 2007, pp. 28–29) in that school. Paradoxically, though some aspects of the word’s use seem very well suited to describe a central theme of the early Buddhist re-visioning of apperception through mindfulness meditation (the effecting of *prajñā*, “seeing things as they really are”), and though various related words and Pāli cognates of *buddhi* are frequent in the Pāli Canon (*buddha*, etc., *bodhi*, *bojjhaṅga*, and finite forms of *bujjhati*, for example), *buddhi* occurs only rarely in the Canon and there is no Pāli form of *buddhi*.¹⁵ The word *buddhi* occurs once in the principal *nikāyas* of the *Suttapiṭaka*,¹⁶ though in the

Footnote 11 continued

the critical feature of *moha* in this soteriological context is that it is a failure to recognize that one’s experience, especially one’s psychological sense of him- or herself, must be understood to be a phenomenon separate from one’s absolute soul; this point is not completely unlike contemporary western debates in the philosophy of mind over the status of “*qualia*.”

¹² As I briefly sketched above, at the end of the first paragraph.

¹³ See Larson and Bhattacharya (1987, pp. 9–10) for a summary statement of the pioneering work of Frauwallner and others to chart these early traditions of a self-conscious Sāṃkhya philosophy.

¹⁴ And collaterally, a check of the digital text of Nāgārjuna’s *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās* (Mahoney and de Jong 2003) reveals only one instance of the word *buddhi* used at 5.8b in the form of the routine possessive compound *alpabuddhayaḥ*, “unintelligent men.”

¹⁵ Much of the semantic space of the Brahminic word *buddhi* (see below) is distributed among the four mental members of the early Buddhist inventory of the constituents of sentient beings called the five *skandhas*: *vedanā*, *saṃjñā*, *saṃskāra*, and *viññāna*, though the final member of this series, *viññāna*, *viññāna* (“mind, consciousness, understanding,” etc.) goes from being the highest component of mental operations in the earliest Buddhist accounts of mental function (“das höchste geistige Organ ... im Buddhismus”) to the central one, “[das] geistiges Zentralorgan,” [see Frauwallner (1926, pp. 58–59)], which among other points states in regard to the functioning of *viññāna*: “Es ist dieselbe Rolle, die in der Kauṣītakilehre der alteren Upaniṣaden die *prajñā*, in der Yājñavalkyalehre das *viññānam* und im Mokṣadharmā M. XII 194 [= CE 12.187] die *buddhi* spielt”). Perhaps the Buddhist terminology for the functioning of the mind was adequately ‘outfitted’ with *prajñā* and *viññāna* before “*buddhi*” became an important word in Brahminic discourses.

¹⁶ The word is used once in the *Lakkhaṇa Suttanta* in a verse glorifying the Mahāpurisa, where he is said to wish for those around him many good things (virtues, human connections, physical attributes), including *buddhi*, which the Rhys-Davids render as “wisdom.” “*Saddhāya sīlena sutena buddhiyā cāgena dhammena bahūhi sādūhi / Dhanena dhaññena ca khetta-vatthunā puttehi dārehi catuppadehi ca // Nātīhi mītehi ca bandhavehi ca* balena vaññena sukhena cūbhayaṃ / Kathaṃ na hāyeyuṃ pare ti icchati attha-ssamidhī ca panābhikaṅkhati.*” (Carpenter 1947, p. 165; *Carpenter omits the *ca* found in some of his mss.; but all the other *pādas* of these two stanzas scan as ‘classical’ *jagatī-triṣṭubh*, thus it seems likely the line should end with the *ca*). “In faith, in morals, teaching, wisdom . . .—how shall my neighbour lose nowise in these? this was his [the Buddha’s, jlf] wish.” Transl. Rhys-Davids 1957.

The word is also found in some mss. of a passage in the seventh section of Chapter IV of Part II (the *Bhojjaṅga-Saṃyutta*) of the *Mahāvagga*, the fifth section of the *Saṃyutta-Nikāya* (Feer 1898, p. 94). Feer, however, adopted the reading *vuddhi* rather than *buddhi*, and the Rhys-Davids rendered that with “increase.” As the term in question here is juxtaposed to *parihāna* (“diminution;” it is also paired

Khuddakanikāya there do occur a few uses of the word itself and several dozen instances of compounds and secondary adjectives formed from it.¹⁷

The Basic Semantics of the Word *Buddhi*

The ‘root’ from which “*buddhi*” derives, \sqrt{budh} , describes concretely, in the *RV* and ever after, “waking up, becoming conscious; or, being or becoming aware of or attentive to something, learning about something,” and similar mental transitions. In the *RV*, \sqrt{budh} words are used alongside a number of other important word-families that describe various aspects of knowing or thinking, such as those based on the roots $\sqrt{jñā}$, $\sqrt{dhī}$, \sqrt{man} , $\sqrt{ci-cit}$, and \sqrt{vid} , to name only the most important. These words of knowing often overlap in usage with words that refer to looking, seeing, observing, etc.,¹⁸ some of which mingle the senses of both “look” and “illuminate” (as does $\sqrt{khyā}$ when describing the looking done by the God Sun or sun-related beings; e.g., the sun-eagle in *RV* 1.35.7-8 and the Dawn at *RV* 1.113.4).¹⁹

As a member of the \sqrt{budh} family of words, the sense of the noun *buddhi* that underlies all its different uses is its stating the fact of a subject’s being aware or attentive. Besides being easily deducible from many attestations of the word and its

Footnote 16 continued

appositionally with *aparihāna*), it seems to me that *vuddhi* (“increase, growth,” Skt. *vṛddhi*) is the reading to be preferred. There are, however, some modern Buddhists who base their understanding of this passage on the reading *buddhi*: see <https://suttacentral.net/pi/sn46.37>.

¹⁷ Mainly forms of *buddhimat*, but also *buddhisampanna*, *buddhisāgara*, *buddhibala*, etc.

¹⁸ In ordinary discourse in the *MDh* verbs for “seeing” are used as a matter of course to signify “know, realize, understand.”

¹⁹ Of the verb *vi-√khyā* in *RV* 1.35 Renou commented (at 1.35.4), “*vi-khyā- est à la fois ‘éclairer’ (sens récessif) et ‘regarder’ (dominant), notions superposées dans cet hymne-ci . . .*” $\sqrt{khyā}$, of course, stands at the base of the later word *Sāṃkhya* and the words upon which that name is based. In light of some of the later *adhyātma* themes we shall come to in the companion paper and the emergence of *Sāṃkhya* philosophy (which might be glossed verbosely as the philosophy of “The Comprehensive Knowledge [Seeing] of All Things”) from some of those *adhyātma* themes, some occurrences of $\sqrt{khyā}$ verbs in the *Rg Veda* appear to be pregnant. For example in *RV* 1.35 the verb *vi-√khyā* is used to describe an eagle’s, that is the sun’s, looking at (and illuminating) the sky and then mountains, plains, and rivers in a way that reminds one of the later *puruṣa draṣṭṛ* of *Sāṃkhya* and Yoga (and the later *kṣetrajñā*, “knower of the land,” image of the soul, and the *kūṣastha*, “the one positioned at the top of the mountain,” also used of the soul and of the person approaching final beatitude), as well as suggesting too the “*vijñāyeha gatīḥ sarvāḥ*” that precedes the liberating *vairāgya*, “passionlessness,” in the summary description of liberating *Sāṃkhya* knowledge at *MBh* 12.289.4, and illustrated in *MBh* 12.290. Here is *RV* 1.35.8: *vi suparnó antāriḥśāny akhyad gabhīrāvepā āsuraḥ sunūthāḥ / . . . RV* 1.35.7 // *aṣṭaiḥ vy ākhyat kakūbhaḥ prthivyās trī dhānva yōjanā sapta sindhūn / hiranyākṣāḥ savitā devā āgād dādhad rātmā dāsūṣe vāryāni*. Staying with Renou for this: “*L’aigle (solaire) a regardé les espace-médians, lui l’Asura au profond langage-inspiré, au bon guidage. . . (7) Il a regardé les huit eminences de la terre, l’étendue-plane (longue de) trois lieues, les sept fleuves. Dieu aux yeux d’or, Savitar est venu-à-l’instant, conférant les trésors, les biens-d’élection à l’adrateur. (8)*” *RV* 10.158.4 involves a mingling of the cosmic and the personal in a way that anticipates a similar conflation of those perspectives in later *adhyātma* accounts, especially *Sāṃkhya adhyātma* accounts: (addressed to the Sun) *cāksur no dhehi cāksuṣe cāksur vikhyai tanūbhyah / sām cedam vi ca paśyema // RV* 10.158.4 // Which I, in close agreement with Renou, would render, “Furnish to us your eye to serve as an eye (for us), an eye for us to look about for ourselves, that we might see here everything all together and separately.”

cognates in earlier literature, this point is eventually affirmed explicitly in the Nyāya tradition of epistemology and logic. Early in the *Nyāyasūtras*, “*buddhi*” is listed (alongside *ātman*, *manas*, and *indriyas*, and other things) as one of the dozen *prameyas* (the basic realities that “can be known with certainty”) (Ruben 1928: sūtra 9, 4). There *buddhi* is an attribute of the *ātman* and is glossed as a kind of awareness by way of two synonyms: *jñāna* and *upalabdhi*, “knowledge” and “perception,” respectively.

Nyāyasūtra 1.1.15:²⁰ ***buddhiḥ upalabdhir jñānam iti anarthāntaram*** (“**Intellection (*buddhi*), perception, knowledge—there is no difference in meaning**” [transl. jlf; in what follows, all translations not attributed to others are my own].)²¹

As we work through examples of the word’s usage, we shall see that the fundamental “awareness” to which it refers becomes concretized and extended. And we shall also see that “*becoming aware*,” a transformation in the state of awareness is perhaps the most important extension of the basic sense.

Five Early Instances

In one of the two earliest examples of the noun’s appearances, *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa* 1.4.12–14, the word expresses simple wakefulness. Here the noun *buddhi* (appearing with the possessive suffix *–mat*) refers to the God Agni’s having been “awakened”—that is the ritual fire has been kindled:

*agnim stomena bodhaya ity agnaye buddhimate*²² *pūrvam kuryād iti haika āhuḥ* | 1.4.12 | *svapitīva vā etasyāgnir yo ‘gnim udvāsayate* | 1.4.13 | *tad evainam tat punaḥ prabodhayatīti* | 1.4.14 |

Now, [given the injunction] “He should make the first (*prayāja* offering) **to Agni who (will now be) awake**²³ with [the mantra, *RV* 5.14.1:] ‘(Kindling

²⁰ Ruben (1928, p. 6). Karl Potter places the finished form of the *Nyāyasūtras* at “around the time of Nāgārjuna” (Potter 1977, p. 4). Potter’s dating amounts to saying first or second century of the Common Era.

²¹ Walter Ruben’s translation and comment here are interesting, though they lead us away from the cultural-historical focus of this survey toward serious philosophical issues that this paper will not enter into: “Denken, Erkennen, Wissen, das ist dasselbe.” Ruben comments: “This is a characterization of thinking by way of two synonyms, which according to the *Nyāyabhāṣya* comprise a polemic against Sāṃkhya. In Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, thinking is a property of the soul that arises and disappears; is not an eternal substantial organ in addition to the soul as it is in Sāṃkhya, not an independent element of personhood without a soul as it is in Buddhism, not the original real nature of the soul as it is in Vedānta, and not an attribute of the body as the Cārvākas think” (Ruben 1928, p. 6). In the paper on the *Manubrhaspatisaṃvāda* we shall see that the nature of the *buddhi* was less fixed than these later doctrines understood it to be, a point also made by Bakker and Bisschop (1999) with regard to the much-discussed text-pair 12.187 and 12.239–41: the authors of these texts saw in the *buddhi*-organ some of the transiency of the later Nyāya, its enduring separateness from the soul, and its participation in the reality of the soul.

²² This injunction here is quoted at *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra* 2.5.13.

²³ The word *buddhimat* here is taken to mean that Agni is now ‘awake, aware, conscious’ (that is, has been kindled). Should anyone suspect that the word might refer instead to the sense of *buddhi* as “organ of

him,) awaken the immortal Agni with praise, [that he may place our offerings with the Gods],” some say [that is, explain], “He who makes the fire dwell elsewhere [by letting it go out or die down], has a fire that is more or less asleep. So he wakes him up again in this way.”

As we shall soon see, the sense of “awareness, being awake, being aware,” lies at the bottom of all later uses of the word. While most later uses of the word *buddhi* lack the explicit concreteness of this example—the presence here of sleep and wakefulness on the semantic surface—we shall see that a contrast between two degrees or levels of awareness of the same phenomena is very often present, at least implicitly.

At *Chāndogya Brāhmaṇa* 2.4.14 “*buddhi*” is an attribute that is desired alongside the desire for physical beauty, power, and vitality; it is an attribute for which Bṛhaspati is famous, a connection that is prominent in the epics.²⁴

bhūr bhuvah svar om sūrya iva dṛṣe bhūyāsam agnir iva tejasā vāyur iva prāṇena soma iva gandhena bṛhaspatir iva buddhyāśvināv iva rūpeṇendrāgnī iva balena brahmabhāga evāhaṃ bhūyāsaṃ pāpmabhāgā me dviṣantaḥ // Chāndogya Brāhmaṇa 2.4.14.

. . . may I be like Sūrya in appearance, like Agni in sharpness, like Vāyu in Life-Breath . . . like Bṛhaspati in Intelligence . . .

The word clearly refers to something more enduring than being awake or attentive at a given moment in time—some kind of attentiveness that endures as an attribute and significantly enhances him who has it, the way it enhances the sage priest of the Gods, Bṛhaspati. Given the sense of its root and the approximately contemporaneous example noted just above, “*buddhi*” here is some kind of mental trait such as “intelligence” or “good judgment,” or “wisdom.”²⁵

Footnote 23 continued

mind,” that is “intelligence,” which I will come to shortly—and should thus be rendered “intelligent, wise” or somesuch, a frequent sense of *buddhimat* in later Sanskrit—I would say that the overriding concern of this context with Agni’s being kindled or not (“*svapitīva*”) indicates that simple wakefulness, awareness, is clearly what is involved here. Let us note too, for whatever it may be worth, that in Agni’s case being awake means being a radiator of light and heat, whatever else it may entail.

²⁴ The phrasing “equal to Bṛhaspati in intelligence (*buddhi*)” occurs five times in the *Rāmāyana* (*Rm*), with the phrase *bṛhaspatisama- buddhyā* occurring three times (*Rm* 4.30.12c, 53.4a, 5.33.9c) and one form or another of *buddhyā tulyaḥ bṛhaspateḥ* occurring twice (*Rm* 2.1.26e, 7.17.7c). The idea occurs in the *MBh* a greater number of times (but at a lower rate of occurrence) and in a more varied way, though the *bṛhaspatisama- buddhyā* formula occurs four times. Interesting are *MBh* 4.53.4ab [Arjuna speaking about Droṇa] *buddhyā tulyo hy uśanasā bṛhaspatisamo naye* (which assigns *buddhi* to Bṛhaspati’s rival Śukra and *nūti* to Bṛhaspati) and 7.8.14cd [Dhṛtarāṣṭra speaking about Droṇa] *bṛhaspatyūśanas tulyo buddhyā sa nihataḥ katham*. Interesting too is 5.84.4 [Dhṛtarāṣṭra speaking about “Janārdana,” Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva] *vṛṣṇyandhakāḥ sumanaso yasya prajñām upāsate / ādityā vasavo rudrā yathā buddhiṃ bṛhaspateḥ //* with the interesting equation of *buddhi* and *prajñā*. See too in the *MBh*: 5.154.2, 6.103.94, 12.116.8, 120.19, 13.27.1, and 14.4.20.

²⁵ “Wisdom” in the sense of bringing a combination of discernment and knowledge together in making decisions; but not “wisdom” that is primarily an accumulation of knowledge and experience, as the word is often used in English.

Another possibly early²⁶ instance, *Bṛhaddevatā* 8.130, enjoins “*buddhi*” as one of a set of things in a particular context. That context and the list provide a third revealing instance.

*yogena dākṣyeṇa damena buddhyā bāhuśrutya tapasā niyogaiḥ /
upāsyās tāḥ kṛtsnaśo devatā yā ṛco ha yo veda sa veda devān /
yajumṣi yo veda sa veda yajñān sāmāni yo veda sa veda tattvam // 130 //*
(Macdonell 1904, vol. I, p. 102)

130. These deities are altogether to be adored with concentration, assiduity, self-control, **intelligence**, deep learning, austerity, and by injunctions (to others). He who knows the stanzas (of the Ṛg-veda) knows the gods. He who knows the sacrificial formulas (*yajus*) knows the sacrifices. He who knows the chants (*sāman*) knows the truth (*tattva*). Transl. (Macdonell 1904, vol. II, p. 331).

Unlike our second instance above, we have here a list of behaviors (or, in the case of *bāhuśrutya* and *tapas*, ‘assets’ resulting from behavior cultivated habitually in the past) in which a subject is exhorted to engage as he worships the Gods with the focused attentiveness of *upāsana*.²⁷ Macdonnell’s “intelligence” is not implausible, but does not suit the context very well. The basic sense of “*buddhi*” as “attention, awareness,” suits the context better, for it refers to a requirement even more fundamental than intelligence for carrying out *upāsana*. It suits better too because constant attentiveness, unlike intelligence, is something that does require injunctions and exhortations, for it is something that is often difficult for a person to maintain. I would translate *buddhyā* here with “attentiveness,” “full awareness,” or, in connection with the *bāhuśrutya* (see note 27 just above) “alertness, intellectual sensitivity, insight, perceptiveness.” The word *buddhi* here refers more to the sustained activity of being attentive than to a faculty of attentiveness, but of course such a sustained activity requires a faculty or capacity to do so.²⁸

This instance introduces a pragmatic factor not seen in the first two: the “attention” signified by “*buddhi*” here implicitly includes some object within its frame of attention, that is, the deity or deities to be worshiped with *upāsana*. While the word *buddhi* itself latently implies awareness of some object, neither of the *Brāhmaṇa* instances cited above suggested or implied any particular object of

²⁶ Given the findings of M. Tokunaga’s reconstruction of the textual history of the *Bṛhaddevatā* (Tokunaga 1997, pp. xiii–xlv) we cannot know with certainty whether this instance is from the late Vedic stratum of the text or from one of the *purāṇa*-era strata. However, the loquacious style here would seem to suggest the *Bṛhaddevatā* revision of Śaunaka’s *Devatānukramaṇī*; see Tokunaga (1997, p. xliii).

²⁷ The context suggests that *bāhuśrutya* is not merely a static aggregation of “learning,” but something the subject applies actively. If we expand the Sanskrit with “extensive aural acquisition of the compellingly realized oral tradition of the Veda,” we can imagine the subject being exhorted to actively bring to the forefront of his mind, and then attend to, many of the praises of the God which are stored in his memory.

²⁸ But see the distinctions about “thinking” in Indian schools of philosophy succinctly summarized by Ruben and quoted in note 21 above. As per Ruben’s summation, if there is not a separate faculty “*buddhi*,” then the activity of thinking is attributed to a capacity of the *ātman*.

Agni's or Brhaspati's attentiveness or intelligence. But the *triṣṭubh* stanza here does indicate that the *buddhi* it enjoins has an object. This addition leads us directly to other early instances in which the word states or implies some object of the awareness, some ideational content of the *buddhi*.

Āpastamba Dharmasūtra (*ĀpDhs*) 1.4.25 speaks of “*buddhi*” and is explicit about its having ideational content:

ĀpDhs 1.4.25: *pramādād ācāryasya buddhipūrvaṃ vā niyamātikramam rahasi bodhayet* |

If his teacher transgresses a rule, whether from inattention or **knowingly**, he (the pupil) should make him aware of it privately.²⁹

Here an action that transgresses a rule is done either with awareness of the rule and the act's violating the rule, or without awareness of one or both those items. The word *buddhi* indicates the positive awareness of the content, and its sense is defined in part by its juxtaposition to its antonym *pramāda* (“inattention, neglect”). Note too the way the content held in view by the agent's *buddhi*, or not (in the case of his *pramāda* of it), is actually explicit as the object of the causative verb *bodhayet* (“he should make him aware”), the core semantics of which are synonymous with those of “*buddhi*.” This example includes another element of the semantics of “*buddhi*” absent from the previous three instances. That is, while the content of the awareness is a cognitive matter in the first place, the notion of violation points to a volitional component as well: the teacher may have knowingly, that is willfully, transgressed the rules. Furthermore, while the opposition of “*buddhi*” and “*pramāda*” here adds only the element of volition to the teacher's awareness here, the broader context of this example raises issues of affect and emotion that, we shall see below, are often part of the “awareness” signified by the word *buddhi* with some frequency. This example's emphasizing a reversal of the status relationship of teacher and pupil, and its correlative stipulation that the pupil's apprising the teacher of his error is to be done privately, both point to affective elements of such situations that are potential content of a person's awareness.

In the next example, *ĀpDhs* 2.26.18-19, we have the same content-complexity in the paired occurrences of the same compound adverb *buddhipūrvaṃ*; in these, however, the ideational content of the *buddhi*-awareness is present only implicitly:

ĀpDhs 2.26.18-19: *abuddhipūrvaṃ alaṃkṛto yuvā paradāram anupraviśan kumārīm vā vācā bādhyah* | 18 | *buddhipūrvaṃ tu duṣṭabhāvo daṇḍyah* | 19 |

If a young man all primped up barges **accidentally** into the presence of another man's wife or a young woman, he should be verbally reprimanded; but if he does so **deliberately** and with pernicious intent, he should be punished. (Transl. Olivelle.)

²⁹ The following *sūtra*, *ĀpDhs* 1.4.26, makes it clear that the genitive *ācāryasya* here is a subjective genitive modifying *niyamātikramam* (that we are indeed concerned with a pupil calling breaches of the rules by his teacher to his teacher's attention) and not a genitive used in loose construction to express an indirect object of *bodhayet*. Before I had read *sūtra* 26, I assumed *sūtra* 25 must be prescribing a pupil's confessing any and all wrongdoing to his teacher.

Olivelle’s emphasizing the volitional dimension of the implied content of the awareness here is exactly right; without any further specification of what the subject was aware of or not, the adverbs boil down to describing the unacceptable behavior as either inadvertent or intentional. And these qualities of mind attending the behavior determine the relative severity of the wrongdoing. Let us note further that the characterization of the boy’s doing this intentionally as the result of his being *duṣṭabhāva*, “having a rotten mind” or “having evil notions” or “having an evil nature,” points to affective and emotional elements of a person’s mind and awareness, as did the last example.

These five examples manifest the main elements of the word *buddhi*’s use and meaning in Sanskrit through at least the middle of the first millennium CE.³⁰ The word signifies, at the center of its semantic range, a general, unspecified sense of “wakefulness,” “awareness,” “attentiveness.” In the five examples looked at, the first one was used with this sense without any further specification or implication. In the other four examples, that core sense was extended and made more definite in

³⁰ While our chronological and semantic information alike are too sparse and indefinite to allow rigorous diachronic arguments about the nuances of meaning in the various examples cited in this paper, it may still be worthwhile to sketch the relative dates of the main texts under discussion. The two *Brāhmaṇa* texts are relatively old oral texts that likely existed prior to 400 BCE (Witzel 1997, p. 258). Macdonell dated the *Brhaddevatā* to no later than 400 BCE (Macdonell 1904, p. xxiii), but the recent researches of Tokunaga have plausibly shown that that date applies only to Śaunaka’s *Devatānukramaṇī* that underlies the *Brhaddevatā*, a much later, *purāṇa*-era revision and enlargement of that *Devatānukramaṇī*. This *Brhaddevatā* itself was expanded in the late *purāṇa*-era (Tokunaga 1997, pp. xli–xlv). Olivelle argues that the *Āpastamba Dharmasūtra* is the earliest text of that genre and places the upper limit of its date “around the beginning of the third century BCE. (Olivelle 2000, p. 10). He would date the earlier parts of the *Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra* to the latter few decades of the second century BCE by virtue of a thematic dependence on Patañjali’s *MBhā*, the basic text of which is mid-second-century BCE (idem). Olivelle dates *Manu* at about 200 CE (Olivelle 2005, p. 25) and he dates Aśvaghōṣa to the second c. CE (Ashvaghosha 2008, p. xxii). Much of the *Mahābhārata* existed in oral form prior to its commitment to writing sometime around the beginning of the Common Era, but at the same time much of what we have in the received text is likely younger than that, having been composed orally or in writing, or re-written, subsequent to the first written promulgation and incorporated into the promulgation of a later, effectively the last, written redaction sometime in the Gupta era. Similar vagueness applies to the *Rāmāyaṇa*, which seems to have had a history broadly similar to that of the *MBh* (i.e., oral storytelling eventually committed to written form with subsequent refinement) in approximately the same time frame (mid-first millennium BCE to ca. 400 CE). Lastly, in a masterful discussion of the history and dating of the *Arthaśāstra*, Patrick Olivelle argues persuasively that the earliest sources of that text go back into the early centuries BCE, with the first major redaction—“the Kauṭilya Redaction”—having been effected “sometime between 50 and 125 CE” and the final, “Śāstric Redaction” sometime between 175 and 300 CE (Kauṭilya 2013, pp. 25–31). The three “early” Upaniṣadic passages that attest the word *buddhi* were likely composed in the same centuries—100 BCE to 200 CE that saw the composition of most of the didactic philosophical texts of the *MBh*, as found especially in the *MDh*. The *Maitrāyaṇīya Upaniṣad* is likely later than all these. As mentioned earlier, (Harzer 2006) argues persuasively that the *Sāṃkhyakārikās* date from about 550 CE.

two main ways. In example 2 there was added to the core sense the element that the awareness or wakefulness persisted across time, with the effect of its thus referring to a standing organ or faculty of awareness, perception, or intelligence. We shall see that this particular expanded use of the word becomes a frequent and commonplace form of the word's existence. This sense, "persisting awareness, faculty of intelligence," serves as one basis for the theoretically developed soteriological use of the word we shall touch upon at the end of this survey and attend to in the companion piece on the *MDh*—the "Intellect" of some *adhyātma* accounts mentioned earlier. But the core sense is extended and made definite in another way that is distinct from this first one. This second extension of the core meaning is clear in examples 4 and 5: they extend and make the core sense of simple "awareness" more definite by adding the element of some kind of "ideational content." In their usage the word *buddhi* means "awareness of something." That content of awareness may either be made explicit in the context, as in example 4, or left vague and implicit, as in example 5. We shall see this semantic factor—"buddhi pointing to ideational content"—in much of the word's later usage as well. This sense is present also in example 3, which is more complex than examples 4 and 5 because it uses "*buddhi*" in a way that combines both of these "extensions" of the "core sense." In that instance, there is, at the very least, awareness of the Gods being worshipped with *upāsana*, if not also attention to the remembered knowledge referred to with "*bāhuśrūtya*" (see the discussion of this example above). There "*buddhi*" signifies the senses of "sustained (faculty of) awareness" and "content of awareness" at the same time: "a mind with content," "a mind thinking a thought," "awareness filled with thoughts, feelings or motives." Implying a general psychology of mind, these three senses of this word are obviously closely related to each other at bottom, and it is important not to overemphasize their differences and turn the verbal nuances of pragmatic utterance-situations into an explicit psychological theory. Finally, we have seen too that the content of *buddhi*-awareness is not limited to cognitive awareness alone: examples 4 and 5 make clear that the content of the word has volitional and emotional features as well as cognitive-perceptual ones: the awareness and content signified by "*buddhi*" in them points to the subject's making decisions and taking actions in the presence of other people significant to the subject. And both those examples imply affective or emotional elements to the content of the *buddhi*-awareness as well. This multivocalic use of the word *buddhi* is a very common way the word came to be used, as will be evident below. In what follows, we will come to see too that "*buddhi*" is often put to use in a particular kind of cognitive setting and is associated with a particular kind of cognitive and volitional function.

Here is a tabular depiction of these four different types of the word's use.

Schematic of the four basic senses of the word *buddhi*

A. Word used without particular specification	B. More clear and definite uses of the word	
Core semantic value	Other semantic or pragmatic factors added to “core” in particular discourse-situations	Resulting Sense of “ <i>buddhi</i> ”
1 <i>buddhi</i> “Being awake, awareness,” not further specified Example #1	Time, persistence	2 <i>buddhi</i> as FACULTY “intelligence, intellect, mind, will, ‘heart,’” etc. Trans-temporal faculty of awareness Example #2
	Cognitive or Affective Object or Content of Awareness	3 <i>buddhi</i> as CONTENT expresses or implies awareness of content “notion, decision, motive, feeling” Examples ##4 and 5
	Persistence & Content Both	4 <i>buddhi</i> as FACULTY and CONTENT simultaneously “content rich attentiveness, conscious knowledge, disposition” Example #3

Later Instances

Chronologically later examples display the same nexus of meanings, with some instances sharply distinctive in one way or another.

At *Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra* (*BaudhDhs*) 1.8.2 we have a straightforward instance of the word signifying a basic faculty of attention or intelligence:

adbhiḥ śudhyanti gātrāṇi buddhir jñānena śudhyati /
*ahimsayā ca bhūtātmā manaḥ satyena śudhyati // (iti) BaudhDhs 1.8.2 //*³¹

Water cleanses the body, and **knowledge the understanding** . . . (Olivelle).

The word *buddhi* clearly refers to a persisting faculty holding ideational content. “Knowledge” here would refer to some kind of true or ideal intellectual content, which washes away error or imperfect knowledge. It would be good to know exactly what sort of blemishes of the *buddhi* Baudhāyana had in mind, but the context here does not help. It may conceivably be fundamental ignorance in a soteriological sense (*moha*), but more mundane errors or faults may be intended (see the example

³¹ It seems not to have been noticed before that a variant of this stanza is found at *Manu* 5.109.

of the middle prince in the discussion of *Arthaśāstra* (*AŚ*) 1.17.44-47 below, immediately following the discussion of examples from Patañjali's *MBhāṣ*). Further straightforward examples of this usage are those cited above in note 24 in connection with Bṛhaspati and many more are easily found.

The basic nexus of “awareness-faculty of intelligence-mental content” is on display in a passage found in Patañjali's *MBhāṣ*, which, however, uses “*buddhi*” in a strictly cognitive sense, with no hint of volition or affect in it. In a discussion seeking to maintain the principle of the eternality (*nityatva*) of words, Patañjali makes the argument that uttered words effect transformations of ideas (*buddhis*) in the mind (*buddhi*) without having any effect on the things themselves (under *vārttika* 14 on *sūtra* 1.1.56, regarding the status of replacements in grammatical operations [paragraphs (57–64)³² in (Joshi and Roodbergen 1990)]). Having made the point that the meaning of the word *buddhi* is not different from that of the word *saṃpratyaya*, “idea,” Patañjali goes on to use the word *buddhi* twice at the end of a compound to signify a particular “idea,” with the prior member of the compound specifying the content of the idea: *āmrabuddhi* (“the idea ‘mango [tree]’”) and *nyagrodhabuddhi* (“the idea ‘banyan tree’”).

api ca buddhiḥ saṃpratyaya ity anarthāntaram | MBhāṣ [60] (Joshi and Roodbergen 1990: Text: 18) |

And further (we may consider that the words) *buddhi* and *saṃpratyaya* don't have a different meaning. (Joshi and Roodbergen 1990: Transl.: 81)

This interesting observation is shortly followed by an argument in which the word *buddhi* is clearly used to represent “mental awareness holding specific content,” that is “an idea,” as well as to represent the “persisting faculty of awareness.”³³

tad yathā | kaś cit kasmāi cit upadiśati prācīnaṃ grāmād āmrā iti | tasya sarvatra āmrabuddhiḥ prasaktā | tataḥ paścād āha ye kṣīriṇo 'varohavantah pṛthuparṇās te nyagrodhā iti | tatra āmrabuddhyāḥ nyagrodhabuddhiṃ pratipadyate | sa tataḥ paśyati buddhyāmrāṃś cāpakṣyamānān nyagrodhāṃś cādhyamānān | nityā eva ca svasmin viśaya āmrā nityāś ca nyagrodhā buddhis tv asya vipariṇamyate | MBhāṣ[64] (Joshi and Roodbergen 1990: Text, 18–19)

Take an example. Someone points out to somebody else: ‘to the east of the village you have mango trees’. That (other person) is liable to have **the notion of mango trees** with regard to all (trees east of the village). Then (the speaker) says: ‘those (trees) which have a milky juice, which have roots sent down by the branches, (and) which have large leaves are banyan trees’. At that point (the listener) acquires **the notion of banyan tree** through (the medium of) **the**

³² The bracketed (or, here, parenthesized) numbers refer to the paragraph numbers used by (Joshi and Roodbergen 1990) to demarcate Patañjali's text and their translation within each Pāṇinian *sūtra*.

³³ In the expression “*buddhyāmrān*,” which seems likely best understood as the compound (*buddhi-āmrān*, “mango-trees in the mind that are being removed and *nyagrodha* trees replacing [them]”). It is also conceivable that we should read the collocation as *buddhyā-āmrān* (“he sees with his mind . . .”).

notion of mango tree. Then he notices that both the mango trees are removed **from his mind**,³⁴ and that the banian trees are installed (there). But (as a matter of fact,) the mango trees just remain permanent in their own domain, and so do the banian trees. **Only the notion of that (listener) has changed.**” (Joshi and Roodbergen 1990: Transl, 82–83; all emphasis by jlf.)

We see here that Patañjali says a listener’s faculty of awareness, *buddhi*, takes on the form of an object—induced in this instance by verbal communication—an object that persists as part of a lasting activity or faculty of awareness.³⁵ I prefer to render words or phrases such as “*āmrabuddhi*” with phrasing such as “the idea of mango (trees),” since the word “idea” puts the emphasis on the content of the awareness; but the underlying reality of *buddhi* as “content-laden awareness” is not essentially different from the underlying reality of *buddhi* as a persisting faculty or activity of awareness. As touched upon briefly above, we have here one word being used to refer to different aspects of a single complex phenomenon: awareness, awareness that persists across time (that is, an intelligence or mind), awareness of one or several objects in the mind (an idea or notion). Which aspect of that nexus is salient in a given utterance will depend upon the speaker’s pragmatic intention and the other words employed. Though the translations of different instances of “*buddhi*” may give the illusion that there exist different words with distinct meanings, in reality the line between these meanings is often quite thin. Below we shall see several other instances of “*buddhi*” pointing to ideational content as it does here, and the contexts will color the word *buddhi* with different species of “ideas,” such as “understanding,” “interpretation,” “belief,” “meaning,” “decision,” “plan,” “intention,” “resolve,” and various others. But on the other side of the ledger, we shall also see numerous instances in which the word is used to refer clearly and more or less simply to a definite faculty of “mind.”

ĀŚ 1.17.44-47 provides another example of the same continuum, though here the context described gives rise to affective and volitional psychological features as well as cognitive ones. Here again the word *buddhi* signifies a persisting faculty of mind that is processing conceptual content:

buddhimān āhāryabuddhir durbuddhir iti putraviśeṣāḥ | 44 | śiṣyamāno dharmārthāv upalabhate cānutiṣṭhati ca buddhimān | 45 | upalabhamāno nānutiṣṭhaty āhāryabuddhiḥ | 46 | apāyanityo dharmārthadveṣī ceti durbuddhiḥ | 47 |

The three kinds of son are: One with a fine mind, one whose mind needs prompting, and one whose mind is no good.[44] The one with a fine mind apprehends Right and Profit when they are taught to him and puts them into practice.[45] He whose mind needs prompting apprehends them, but does not

³⁴ Joshi and Roodbergen seem to interpret the collocation *buddhyāmṛān* in the Sanskrit here as a double *sandhi* for *buddhyā(s) āmrāmś cāpakṣyamānān*.

³⁵ Coming to rest, somewhat, in “memory,” which we have not yet directly encountered in our examples (though the *bāhuśrutya* of example 3 abuts the topic).

put them into practice.[46] He whose mind is no good is always going astray and is averse to Right and Profit.[47]

Again, as in example 3 above, we have here an instance that has both of the semantic extensions to the core sense, persistence across time and content of awareness.³⁶ In addition, the persisting *buddhi*-faculty here is qualitatively manifold: capable, first, of apprehending conceptual content (the *buddhimān* person is “capable of receiving instruction [*śiṣyamāna*]” and of “apprehending the instruction’s content [*dharmārthāḥ upalabhate*]”)³⁷ and, second, of exercising choice and volition, putting the lessons into practice (“he [*dharmārthāḥ*] *anutīṣṭhati*”). While we may think of wakefulness, attentiveness, as first and foremost a matter of seeing the world around ourselves, this example makes even more clear than did our examples 4 and 5 that “*buddhi*” embraces desire, will and action as well as perception and understanding (as does the older word *manas*).³⁸ Furthermore, the content of the *durbuddhi*’s *buddhi* is an affective and volitional aversion, *dveṣa*, to *dharma* and *artha*.

The *AŚ* has many passages in which *buddhi* occurs as the final member of a possessive compound the first element of which expresses ideational content, not unlike what we saw in the *MBhāṣ* passage earlier. But where the content expressed in Patañjali was strictly cognitive, the ideational content of the following examples are primarily volitional and affective. At *AŚ* 1.17.39 we read *pitari vikramabuddhiṃ tathā ity anupraviṣya bhedayeyuḥ* (“If he [a prince] were to entertain the idea of

³⁶ Let us note here in passing the frequently observed trait of Sanskrit linguistic culture to use the unmarked sense of a word with normative connotations: being “possessed of *buddhi*” (*buddhimat*) here is to learn well, choose well, and act well. When the son’s *buddhi* is sub-optimal, it is marked in some way, he is *āhāryabuddhi* or *durbuddhi*. Of course, this factor of meaning has nothing to do with the intrinsic semantics of the word *buddhi* as such. And let me note in passing that Kauṭilya’s gradation of persons here, which turns upon the qualities of the *buddhi* of each, carries the strong implied assertion that all persons have a persisting faculty of *buddhi* at their core. This point will be developed further in the discussion of *Manu* 1.96-97 below.

³⁷ Unlike the Patañjali example above, the word *buddhi* itself is not used as a direct marker for that content, does not here signify any kind of “idea.” But on the other hand, note that in the case of the son who is *durbuddhi*, his being *durbuddhi*, that is his *duṣṭa buddhi*, is inventoried by the descriptions of him as *apāyanīya* and *dharmārthadveṣin*. It is safe to say that his *buddhi*-faculty is the seat of his preference for *apāya* and his antipathy to *dharma* and *artha*. At the same time, the first son’s being “*buddhimat*” is inventoried by his being teachable, his apprehension of the substance of the teaching, and his conforming his behavior to that substance. Again it seems safe to impute all this directly to his possessing a (good [see the previous note]) *buddhi*.

³⁸ The intimate alliance of cognitive and volitional aspects of mind are nicely registered in a famous hymn to the Dawn, Uṣas, who “awakens all beings” (but the verb used here is √gr, not √budh) *RV* 1.113.4-6: *bhāsvatī netrī sūnṛtānām āceti citrā vi dūro na āvaḥ | prārpyā jāgad vi u no rāyō akhyad uṣā ajgar bhūvanāni viśvā || 4 || jhamaśvè cāritave maghōnī ābhogāya iṣṭāye rāyā u tvam | dabhrām pāśyadbhya urviyā vicakṣa uṣā ajgar bhūvanāni viśvā || 5 || kṣatrāya tvam śrāvase tvam mahīyā iṣṭāye tvam ārtham iva tvam ityai | visadīśā jīvītābhipracākṣa uṣā ajgar bhūvanāni viśvā || 6 ||* (“4. The luminous one has appeared, bringing in generous gifts; Brightly colored, she has opened the doors for us; She has lighted up our riches and roused the living world—Dawn has awakened all creatures. 5. One, sprawled out, that he might move, One to seek for food and wealth, Others, seeing little, that they might see far—Generous Dawn has awakened all creatures. 6 One to seek dominion, one fame, One greatness, one to go about his work, Diverse living beings to look about—Dawn has awakened all creatures.” Transl. jlf in [Friedrich 1978, Appendix I: 193–196].)

attacking his father [the king], they [the keepers of the prince, jlf] should enter into his confidence [by pretending to agree] and then dissuade him . . .” [Kangle].) Further examples: *AŚ* 2.7.10: *anugrahabuddhi* (“inclined to treat favorably”) and *hiṃsābuddhi* (“inclined to inflict harm”); *AŚ* 1.17.32 *navabuddhi* (“naïve,” or “inexperienced”); *AŚ* 7.6.27 and nine other loci, *kalyāṇabuddhi* (Kangle: “one with benevolent intentions”, and later “with honourable intentions” and “with honest intentions”). Similarly, from beyond the *AŚ*: *Manu* 9.263 and in many other texts *pāpabuddhi* (“inclined toward evil deeds,” “evil-minded” [Olivelle]); *MBh* 14.19.9 *vairāgyabuddhi* (“inclined toward, or aiming at, affective detachment,” or, “whose Intellect has arrived at affective detachment”); *MBh* 12.212.44 *vimokṣabuddhi* (“resolved upon getting free”); *MBh* 12.277.15 and 12.290.39 *mokṣabuddhi* (“resolved upon escape”); *MBh* 1.87.17 and many other places, *dharmabuddhi* (“law-minded” [van Buitenen]). In the previous example (from *AŚ* 1.19.47 above) we saw *durbuddhi* used in the sense “he whose mind is not good,” and often *durbuddhi* simply signifies “wicked, evil, etc.”³⁹ And it is also true that *durbuddhi* often has only cognitive or intellectual reference, signifying someone who is “stupid, ignorant, etc.”⁴⁰

In the same vein is the following bit of polite cajoling addressed by Yudhiṣṭhira to Bhīṣma in the first half of the following stanza, at one of the interstices of their long instructional session following the great Bhārata war.

yadi te 'nugrahe buddhir asmāsv iha satām vara /
etad bhavantam prechāmi tad bhavān prabravītu me // MBh 12.224.3 //

O most excellent of the piously observant, if your disposition is favorable toward me, then I ask you this and you must tell me.

As in several of the examples above, the *buddhi*-faculty is the seat of a complex configuration of interpersonal history, mutual obligations, and emotions.

Somewhat More Complex Examples

We could continue to multiply indefinitely such relatively straightforward examples of “*buddhi*” used with reference to volitional-affective states of mind,⁴¹ but it will be more interesting to shift to instances of the word that depict richer situations, such as the example above rating princes according to the qualities of their minds.

³⁹ The word *durbuddhi* is often applied to Duryodhana and other villains in the *MBh* and indicates their disposition to do wrong: *MBh* 1.61.80c (“evil-spirited”); 3.46.4c “[he] will in his folly massacre the earth;” 3.273.28a, “evil-minded” [said of Rāvaṇa]; 5.26.10c, “villainous;” at 5.160.7a, “villain,” said of Duryodhana’s ambassador Ulūka by Arjuna; and so on and so forth—all renderings of van Buitenen.

⁴⁰ So Bhīmasena addresses Hiḍimba at *MBh* 1.141.2c and 4e (“nitwit”) and 5c (“dimwit;” van Buitenen both times). While *durbuddhi* seems best understood as “wicked, evil, etc.” when applied to Duryodhana in the *MBh* (see the last note), van Buitenen is correct at 5.90.7c to see it used to label Duryodhana “dimwitted,” for the evidence cited there is an error of judgment—though one that was motivated by his enduring character flaws. At 5.62.13 it describes two birds that were captured by a fowler because they quarreled rather than cooperated—“the silly things” (van Buitenen).

⁴¹ Including compounds in which the prior element condenses a verbal phrase. For example, *Rm* 6.116.23: After Rāma has completed his fourteen years of forest-sojourn and is about to re-enter

Again from the *AŚ*, at 1.10.19 Kauṭilya offers a caution regarding the effects of loyalty tests directed at a king's retainers—tests that suborn participation in suggested treasonous plots. A possible by-product is that a royal retainer's mind that may have been dangerously “muddied,” or “befouled,” cannot be returned to its prior state of loyalty, may in fact be beyond being *āhārya* or *śodhita* (to allude to earlier examples).

kr̥tā ca kaluṣā buddhir upadhābhiś caturvidhā | nāgatvāntaṃ nivarteta sthitā sattvavatāṃ dhṛtau | AŚ 1.10.19 |

A mind that has been muddied [“perverted,” Kangle; “tainted,” Olivelle] by the four tests—one that may have the tenacity of the brave—may not desist without going all the way to the end [of the treasonous plot suggested in the course of the tests.]”)

Let us note here the description of a *buddhi*-faculty that may be “*sthitā sattvavatāṃ dhṛtau*.” The *buddhi*-faculty can “remain, stay in, abide, or ‘reside’ in the volitional activity of “holding firm” to something. This phrasing is not far from constructions to be discussed shortly below in which the *buddhi*-faculty occurs as the direct object of the verb \sqrt{kr} , “make,” in which the mind is “set, put, committed, etc.” to some purpose.

At *MBh* 3.95.24 “*buddhi*” is an enduring faculty that is the seat of important intellectual activity and also embraces states that are volitional and affective. Here the sage Agastya acquiesces to his wife Lopāmudrā; he prefaces his capitulation with a reference to her settling upon what she is requesting by means of her mind, *buddhi*.

yady eṣa kāmah subhage tava buddhyā viniścitaḥ / MBh 3.95.24ab /
If, my lovely, you have settled upon this wish in your mind, . . .

Which is then followed with

hanta gacchāmy ahaṃ bhadre cara kāmam iha sthitā // 24cd //
Then, all right! I am going, good woman [that is, he is departing on a journey in an effort to effect her wish] . . .”

This example makes explicit the *buddhi*-faculty's being the seat of desire, emotion, and motivation that we have seen often to be only implicit. Agastya's words describe the *buddhi* as a faculty of *viniścaya* (“settling, deciding, or resolving upon”) that here operates with reference to a particular complex wish that had been stated a bit earlier in the episode. This instance anticipates what comes to be a

Footnote 41 continued

Ayodhyā, the chief ministers of the kingdom go out from the city “with the **intention** of seeing Rāma” (*rāmadarśanabuddhayaḥ*); *Rm* 4.30.3: Lakṣmaṇa describes Sugrīva as “attached to coarse pleasures because of his wasted mind (*matikṣayād grāmyasukheṣu saktah*)” and says he “**plans** not to repay your favor” (*prasādāpratīkārabuddhiḥ*). transl. jlf.

typical description of the function of the *buddhi*-faculty, namely *vyavasāya*, “arrival at a decision or resolution.”⁴²

We have a similarly multi-faceted example from the section of the *Mokṣadharmā* that juxtaposes a series of enlightened Asuras who have been militarily defeated by Indra in the past to the unenlightened, sometimes crudely bullying Indra, who has tracked down his former victims many years later in order to gloat before them.⁴³ In terms that I will describe shortly, Indra here is what the *MDh* might describe as *akṛtabuddhi* (“of unformed mind”) while the Asuras are *kṛtabuddhi* (“of formed mind”). Indra is portrayed as an insecure, ego-centric warrior governed by crude emotions. Over against him, the Asuras Prahrāda, Bali, Namuci and Vṛtra are presented as humble savants who espouse the ideas and attitudes of the *mokṣadharmā*, each having learned from his defeat that all one enjoys and suffers in life is only temporary.

Bali Vairocana uses the word *buddhi* to describe the attitude all beings had formerly as they came and bowed down before him: “They were *buddhimātsaryamohitāḥ* (‘besotted with envy [in their] minds’),”⁴⁴ he tells Indra. But now, he says of himself,

*nāhaṃ tad anuśocāmi nātmabhraṃśaṃ śacīpate /
evaṃ me niścītā buddhiḥ śāstus tiṣṭhāmy ahaṃ vaśe // 12.217.31 //*

I do not grieve for that, O lord of Śacī, nor over my fall—that is how my **mind** has decided. I stand in the control of the commander (God).[217.31]

In a later account of Indra’s interview with Bali, after Bali presumed to lecture Indra on ethics, Indra “checked his anger (at what Bali had just said to him) and then marveled at Bali’s mind:

Whose **mind** would not waver—even that of Death himself on the point of striking—when he saw my arm raised high with the lightning bolt in it? Or when he saw the lassos of Varuṇa?[220.89] But your unshakeable **mind**, which sees the fundamental truths, never wavers. O you who were truly boldly aggressive, you show no agitation as you make this speech.[220.90]⁴⁵

In the occasional characterization of *buddhi* as *śānta*, “made calm, quiet, tranquil,” we see the word referring simultaneously to both a faculty and its content, but in this usage the *buddhi* is being represented in entirely affective-volitional

⁴² In Fitzgerald (2015, p. 126, n. 5) operating on an erroneous sense of the root $\sqrt{so/si/(sā)}$, I mistakenly stated that *vyavasāya* is a “cutting off and apart.” Rather it is most concretely an “unhitching” a “halting,” a “coming to rest.” See the brief discussion of this word in the penultimate section of this survey.

⁴³ See *MBh* 12.215, “The Conversation between Indra and the Asura Prahrāda,” 12.216–18, “The Conversation among Indra, the Asura Bali, and the Goddess Śrī,” 12.219, “The Conversation between Indra and the Asura King Namuci,” 12.220, “The Second Conversation between Indra and the Asura King Bali,” and 12.221, “The Conversation between Indra and the Goddess Śrī.” To this connected series of texts should be added 12.270–71, “The Song of the Asura Vṛtra.”

⁴⁴ *iti mām abhyapadyanta buddhimātsaryamohitāḥ // 12.217.30cd.*

⁴⁵ *evam uktaḥ sahasrākṣo bhagavān pākaśāsanāḥ / pratisaṃhṛtya saṃrambham ity uvāca śatakratuḥ // 220.88 // savajram udyataṃ bāhuṃ dr̥ṣṭvā pāśānś ca vāruṇān / kasyeha na vyathed buddhir mṛtyor api jighāmsataḥ // 220.89 // sā te na vyathate buddhir acalā tattvadarśinī / bruvan na vyathase sa tvam vākyam satyaparākrama // 220.90.*

terms. We see this at *MBh* 12.168.47, when the saving conversion of Piṅgalā is introduced:

*saṃkete piṅgalā veśyā kāntenāsīd vinākṛtā /
atha kṛcchragatā śāntāṃ buddhim āsthāpayat tadā // 168.47 //*

Piṅgalā was a prostitute and she was jilted by a lover when they had arranged a tryst. In the midst of her crisis **she made her mind stand at peace**. [168.47]

The same usage is found at *MBh* 12.247.13, in an important *triṣṭubh* stanza that records Vyāsa's final words at the end of his extensive and important instruction of his son, the *Śukānupraśna* (*MBh* 12.224-247).⁴⁶

Thematic Discussion of *Buddhi* Faculty in Non-*adhyātma* Contexts

There are some important routine uses of the word *buddhi* in connection with forms of the verb-root \sqrt{kr} , “make, do,” that need to be noted, but the best way to open up this topic is with the first of a series of passages I will present that make deliberate qualitative points about the *buddhi* faculty. While providing us with an interesting discussion of the role of the *buddhi*-faculty in sentient beings generally, the *dharmaśāstra* of Manu provides a good example of an important *buddhi*-compound, *kṛtabuddhi*.

*bhūtānāṃ prāṇinaḥ śreṣṭhāḥ prāṇināṃ buddhijīvinaḥ /
buddhimatsu narāḥ śreṣṭhā nareṣu brāhmaṇāḥ smṛtāḥ // Manu 1.96⁴⁷ //*
*brāhmaṇeṣu ca vidvāṃso vidvatsu kṛtabuddhayaḥ /
kṛtabuddhiṣu kartāraḥ karṭṛṣu brahmavedinaḥ // Manu 1.97 //*

Of beings (stationary and mobile)⁴⁸ the best are the animate ones; of animate beings **those that live by means of intelligence** are best; **among beings with intelligence**, humans are best; among humans, brahmins are taught to be best [1.96]; among brahmins, those with learning are best; among the learned, the best are **those who have formed resolves** (to perform the rituals prescribed in Vedic learning; or, more generally, to act in accordance with their learning); **among those who have formed resolves**, the best are those who act (in accordance with those resolves); among those who act, the best are those who know the recited text of the Veda (the *brahman*).

This is a richly instructive pair of stanzas, in which both “*buddhijīvin*” (used synonymously with *buddhimat*) and “*kṛtabuddhi*” repay scrutiny. Beings (*bhūtas*) are inanimate (“trees and so forth,” says the commentator Medhātīthi) or animate (“worms, insects, and so forth,” Medhātīthi); among the animate some use

⁴⁶ *tat putra cintākalitaṃ yad uktaṃ / anāgataṃ vai tava saṃpratīha / bhūtārthatattvaṃ tad avāpya sarvaṃ / bhūtaprabhāvād bhava śāntabuddhiḥ // 12.247.13.*

⁴⁷ A closely similar variant of *Manu* 1.96 occurs at *MBh* 5.6.1, while *MBh* 5.6.2 and *Manu* 1.97 are looser co-variants.

⁴⁸ I insert this clarification from Medhātīthi. (Mandlik 1886, vol. I, p. 74)

intelligence (*buddhi*) to survive (“dogs, jackals, and so forth:” Medhātithi⁴⁹) and humans are a subset of this category. The further distinctions drawn among humans also turn upon aspects of intelligence and learning (including the qualification “*kṛtabuddhi*”), thus making the *buddhi-faculty* the most important feature in all embodied creatures, by the lights of the author and the endorsers of these stanzas. According to Medhātithi’s explanation, all *buddhijīvin* animals “distinguish what suits their welfare from what does not,” finding shade from the heat of the sun, seeking the sun when cold, leaving behind places with inadequate food-supplies.⁵⁰ The subsequent commentators Sarvajñanārāyaṇa and Kullūka make the same points with less detail.⁵¹ Medhātithi’s sensible explanation involves an organism’s sensing its environment, making intellectual distinctions about what is good for it and what is not, and effecting bodily movement to realize its welfare. The *buddhi-faculty* of animals senses, distinguishes the possibilities of “benefit and cost” (*hitāhita*), chooses, and wills.

Kṛtabuddhi-1

Further on in the progression, a distinction is made among brahmin humans who are learned. Some among them are also “*kṛtabuddhi*,” “have an intelligence that is ‘*kṛta*,’” a description that is ambiguous because we find the adjective *kṛta* used in instances of this compound to describe the *buddhi-faculty* in two different ways: “committed to, resolved upon” or “completed, finished.” And in the two different versions of this progression, the one at *Manu* 1.96-97 and the one at *MBh* 5.6.1-2,⁵² it is likely we have first one and then the other sense of *kṛta* at work. In *Manu* 1.97 *kṛtabuddhi* most likely means “(learned men) whose minds are ‘set upon some goal,’” that is these learned men have *buddhis* that are “resolved” or “committed” to a relevant goal or goals.⁵³ In *MBh* 5.6.1 (see note 52 above) *kṛtabuddhi* most likely

⁴⁹ Kullūka, Rāghavanānda, and Nandana gloss the *buddhijīvinah* as *paśus*, “beasts.” Given the descriptions that Medhātithi, Sarvajñanārāyaṇa, and Kullūka give for *buddhijīvin* (see next in the text), one wonders why they would exclude the worms and insects (*kṛmikīṅṅādayah*) from the *buddhijīvin*. Of these non-intelligent animate beings Medhātithi says: *āhāravihārādīceṣṭāsamarthāḥ* “(they are) capable of moving (their bodies) to fetch things, roam about, and so on.” And of them he says, “*te hi paṭutaram sukham anubhavanti*” “They experience pleasure more intensely [than do non-animate beings].”

⁵⁰ Medhātithi glosses *buddhijīvinah* with “*teṣāṃ [prāṇinām] ye buddhyā jīvanti hitāhite vicinvanti śvaśṛgālādayaḥ | te hi gharṇenopataptāḥ chāyām upasarpanṭi śītenārditā ātapaṃ nirāhāraṃ sthānāṃ tyajanti | teṣāṃ adhikatarā manusyaṣ teṣāṃ ca brāhmaṇāḥ te hi loke pūjyatamāḥ*.”

⁵¹ Sarvajñanārāyaṇa puts it: “They are suited to acting for their own welfare with movements effected by their own intelligence (*buddhijīvinah: svabuddhikṛtaceṣṭayā svahitācaranākṣamāḥ*). Kullūka says: “Beasts and so on act to approach places that are beneficial and leave places that are useless (*buddhijīvinah: sārthanirarthadeśopasarpanāpasarpanākāriṇaḥ paśvādayaḥ*).”

⁵² *bhūtānām prāṇinaḥ śreṣṭhāḥ prāṇinām buddhijīvinah / buddhimatsu narāḥ śreṣṭhā narāṇām tu dvijātayaḥ // MBh 5.6.1 // dvijeṣu vaidyāḥ śreyāṃso vaidyeṣu kṛtabuddhayaḥ / sa bhavān kṛtabuddhīnām pradhāna iti me matiḥ // MBh 5.6.2.*

⁵³ The interpretation behind my translation above, “(they have) formed resolves,” agrees with that of Olivelle, who rendered this with “those who have made the resolve.” Given the particular progression laid out in *Manu* 1.96-97, it is likely that the relevant resolutions here refer to the performance of one or more Vedic rituals. See the note of Olivelle to his translation of 1.97 and consider the explanation of the commentator Kullūka: *kṛtabuddhayaḥ: anāgate ‘pi kṛtaṃ mayeti buddhir yeṣāṃ śāstrotkāmūṣṭhāneṣūpannakartavyatābuddhaya ity arthaḥ*.

means “(learned men) whose minds, or intellects, have been ‘(fully) formed,’” or which have been “completed, finished (in education, training, learning),” that is, “(learned men) whose minds have been made to have full understanding and mastery of their learning.”⁵⁴

Let’s pause here to note that the first (and only the first) of these senses of *kṛta* is closely connected to a frequent usage-pattern in which forms of the verb-root √*kr* (“do, make”) take nouns referring to an intellectual faculty (*manas*, *mati*, *buddhi*, *bhāva*) as a direct object and then connect that faculty to the infinitive of another verb or to the case form of a noun, so indicating that the mind has been “set” or “put” toward the activity or goal indicated by the infinitive or the noun.⁵⁵ Collateral English renderings for such constructions are “resolve upon,” “decide to . . .,” “commit to . . .,” and the like. The usage with “*buddhi*” is frequent in the *MBh* and *Rm*⁵⁶ and two examples can be cited from Aśvaghoṣa. At *Saundarananda* 5.22 the Buddha advises Nanda *śamāya tāvat kuru saumya buddhim* (“Set your **mind** toward inner calm [**Decide upon, or resolve upon, calmness**] as long as . . . [the time of his death has not come:]” transl. jlf. See Johnston (1928) and Johnston 1975, p. 31).) At *Buddhacarita* (*BC*) 3.2 the future Buddha “*bahiḥprayāṇāya cakāra buddhim*” (“made a **decision** to go outside [the palace compound:]” transl. jlf [Aśvaghoṣa 1972, p. 20]).

Kṛtabuddhi-2

To return to *kṛtabuddhi*; the second sense of *kṛta* mentioned above is also well represented in the epics and in the commentaries to *Manu*. Medhātithi, differing with Kullūka, explains *kṛtabuddhi* at *Manu* 1.97 with “fully conversant with the meanings of the fundamental truths of the Vedas,” to which he adds, “(who are) not muddled up by Buddhists and the like;”⁵⁷ Sarvajñanārāyaṇa says it means “fully

Footnote 53 continued

“The word *kṛtabuddhayah* (refers to those) who have the resolve, ‘I am completely finished (*kṛta*) with what is outside the Vedic tradition,’ which means there has arisen within them the intention to carry out the performance of what has been declared in the normative texts.” Kullūka’s explanation here takes the word *buddhi* to refer to mental content rather than a faculty. But as we have seen and will see again, the distance between using the word as a “faculty” and the “contents” of the same implied faculty can be vanishingly small.

⁵⁴ So van Buitenen: “[among brahmins learned in the Veda] those are best who have achieved understanding.”

⁵⁵ This pattern of usage is familiar to us with *manas* as early as the *RV* (1.54.9cd: *āthā māno vasudēyāya kṛṣva*: “. . . und richte deinen Sinn aufs Schenken von Gut!” (Geldner 1951).

⁵⁶ *Rm* 1.64.8: *buddhiṃ na kurute yāvan nāṣe deva mahāmuniḥ / tāvat prasādyo bhagavān agnirūpo mahādyauiḥ*. *Rm* 2.21.16ef *yadi te gamane buddhiḥ kṛtā pitur apekṣayā*. *Rm* 4.12.20cd: *tato na kṛtavān buddhiṃ moktum antakaram śaram*. *Rm* 6.28.35: *sa rāmaḥ kāryasiddhyartham evam uktvā vibhīṣaṇam / suvelārohaṇe buddhiṃ cakāra matimān matim* (Suvela is a particular mountain). *MBh* 1.1.119ab: *yadāśrausaṃ karṇaduryodhanābhyām / buddhiṃ kṛtām nigrahe keśavasya*. *MBh* 1.99.31: *ayaṃ śāntanavaḥ satyaṃ pālayan satyavikramaḥ / buddhiṃ na kurute ‘patye tathā rājyānuśāsane*. *MBh* 12.277.46cd: *gārhasthye yadi te mokṣe kṛtā buddhir aviklavā*. *MBh* 12.297.25cd: *vinivartya manah kāmād dharme buddhiṃ cakāra ha*.

⁵⁷ *kṛtabuddhayah pariniṣṭhitavedatativārthāḥ na bauddhādibhiḥ kaluṣīkriyante*. The word *kaluṣa* refers to cognition that has been made turbid, muddy, cloudy, blurred, unclear.

competent, having a perfect understanding of fundamental truths.”⁵⁸ This understanding of *kṛtabuddhi* corresponds to Nīlakaṇṭha’s gloss of the version at *MBh* 5.6.2: “those who know the final conclusions of various disciplines of learning.”⁵⁹ This second understanding of *kṛtabuddhi* is quite apt in the *MBh* instance, where the Pāñcāla King Drupada is addressing his *purohita*, preparing to charge him as an ambassador to the Kauravas. The progression of excellences found in both *Manu* and the *MBh* continues in its *MBh* instantiation with *dvijeṣu vaidyāḥ śreyāṃso vaidyeṣu kṛtabuddhayaḥ / sa bhavān kṛtabuddhīnāṃ pradhāna iti me matiḥ || MBh* 5.6.2. We do not have here the tight progression of the ritual context we had in *Manu*; here some kind of general formation of the mind of the educated person definitely seems preferable to the sense “resolved upon.”

Regardless of the exact sense of *kṛta* in any particular instance of this compound, an interesting feature of the *kṛta* usage is that it makes explicit what has been taken for granted in the survey above—the *buddhi* is highly variable; it can have many different states and is susceptible to alteration by a person’s will.

But the compound *kṛtabuddhi* is just one of an extensive range of possessive compounds describing or qualifying “*buddhi*” in a variety of ways.⁶⁰ There are also many instances such as those we saw with Patañjali’s “*amrabuddhi*” and “*nyagrodhabuddhi*,” possessive compounds ending with “*buddhi*” referring to intellectual content rather than to a faculty.⁶¹

⁵⁸ *kṛtabuddhayaḥ kuśalāḥ samyaktattvajñāḥ*.

⁵⁹ *siddhāntajñāḥ*. See note 52 above for the text of *MBh* 5.6.1-2.

⁶⁰ We saw a number of possessive compounds ending with “*buddhi*-as-faculty” or “persisting awareness” or “disposition” above (see pp. 416–438). “*Buddhi*-as-faculty” occurs at the end of a number of other possessive compounds in which the prior members describe some aspect of how that faculty exists or functions. So a person’s mind or intelligence may be “capacious” (*mahābuddhi*) or “fine and good” (*subuddhi*) or the opposites of these: “small-minded” or “dim-witted” (*alpabuddhi*), “slow-witted” (*mandabuddhi*), “thick-witted” (*sthūlabuddhi*, *MBh* 12.293.27b, 294.2c), and “unintelligent” (*abuddhi*) and “stupid,” “foolish,” etc. (*durbuddhi*), but, as we saw above, the “*dur*-” element may describe the contents of the *buddhi* as well; see below). People may also be “firm-minded” (*dyḍhabuddhi*) or “wandering-minded, distracted, labile, fickle-minded” (*calabuddhi*), and “resolved upon, decided for [something]” (*kṛtabuddhi*, see above regarding *Manu* 1.97), or “fully formed of mind” (*kṛtabuddhi* again, parallel here to the compound *kṛtāman*; *MBh* 1.38.12, 136.11, 3.69.5, 6.40.16 [= *BhG* 18.16])—all *akṛtabuddhi*. See too *Manu* 7.30). Compounds like these, describing the minds of people, are not confined only to compounds ending with “*buddhi*.” Similar compounds made with *mati*, *manas*, *prajñā*, and *dhī* are also found. At least in the *MBh* there are a greater number of compounds ending in “*mati*,” a word also meaning “intelligence, intellect, or mind” and “thought:” *mahāmāti*, *sumāti*, and *durmati*, occur more times in the *MBh* than the corresponding compounds in *buddhi*. Conceivably the range of compounds ending in “*buddhi*” might be wider than for those ending in “*mati*”—a point for further investigation. Interestingly, *vṛthāmāti* is found more than half a dozen times, but neither *vṛthābuddhi* nor *vṛthāprajñā* occurs. Another point regarding \sqrt{man} and \sqrt{budh} words: persons have judgments and opinions that are called “*matas*,” but the corresponding \sqrt{budh} word is *buddhi* rather than the grammatically analogous *buddha*. Finally, at least in the *MBh*, almost all compounds ending with *dhī* are preceded by the adjective *udāra*-, “noble.”

⁶¹ The rare compound *bahubuddhi*, “many-*buddhis*,” occurs twice in *MBh* 13.134; first in connection with Gaṅgā, whom the Goddess Umā is about to question on the topic of *strīdharmā*, and second, describing the “everyman” of moral generalizations. Gaṅgā is first described as *bahvībhir buddhibhiḥ sphītā strīdharmajñā śucismitā* (“swollen with many thoughts, one who knows the Meritorious Laws of women, brightly smiling;” 13.134.23ab) and then a moment later as *bahubuddhyāḍhyā* (“teeming with many thoughts;” *MBh* 13.134.24c). A bit further on a moral generalization also speaks of a man who is *bahubuddhyāḍhya*, but who nonetheless speaks foolishness when he fails to consult with others before

Return to Thematic Treatments of *Buddhi* as a Faculty

The *Arthaśāstra* appears to be keenly interested in “the *buddhi*”—it contains a couple of further observations on its nature and functioning. At *AŚ* 1.8.10, in a discussion regarding the king’s appointing ministers, the dictum is offered: [The king]

should appoint as his ministers those who have supported him during calamities that threatened his life, because they have demonstrated their loyalty (Olivelle).⁶²

But this is followed immediately with:

“No,” says Piśuna. “That’s devotion, not an excellent quality of intelligence.”⁶³

Footnote 61 continued

speaking (*MBh* 13.134.27-28). A similar compound use of the word *buddhi* is seen at *Rm* 5.50.9. As Vibhīšana reproaches King Rāvaṇa for ordering the execution of a messenger (Hanuman), he flatters him with: *na dharmavāde na ca lokavṛtte na śāstrabuddhigrahaṇeṣu vāpi / vidyeta kaś cit tava vīratulyas tvam hy uttamah sarvasurāsūrāṇām // Rm* 5.50.9. “There is no one, mighty king, who is your equal in the exposition of righteousness, the conduct of worldly affairs, or grasping **the meanings** of the traditional texts. For in such matters, you surpass all the gods and *asuras*.” (Goldman and Sutherland Goldman 2009, p. 253). The compound “*śāstrabuddhi*” here could be understood as the “ideas,” “concepts,” “arguments” or even “teachings,” etc., of the *śāstras*, but “meanings” is a fine interpretation of this sense of “*buddhi*”-as-content in the context. (It should be noted too that in other contexts this compound might be interpreted with “*buddhi*” as resolve or intention: “intent upon *śāstra*” in the sense of devoted to a *śāstra* or intent on mastering a *śāstra*.) Another example is “*vandhyabuddhi*” found at *AŚ* 9.1.11: *mantraśaktisampanno hi vandhyabuddhir aprabhāvo bhavati*. “For even one fully equipped with the power of good counsel has understanding that is fruitless if he lacks strength.” (jlf) Here the word *buddhi* is both the faculty that acquired and processed all the counsel of the ministers, but, more importantly, the resultant knowledge, insight, and planning that will lead to nothing without strength. Again in the interesting, perfectly formed *jaḡatī trīṣṭubh* at 2.68.8 “*buddhi*” at the end of such a compound refers to a particular, though complex, thought—a judgment: (the villain Duṣśāsana is speaking about the Pāṇḍava heroes): *na santi lokeṣu pumāṃsa tdrśā ity eva ye bhāvitabuddhayaḥ sadā / jñāsyanti te ’mānam ime ’dya pāṇḍavā viparyaye ṣaṇḍhatilā ivāphalāḥ // MBh* 2.68.8. “Their spirits kept fattening themselves on the thought / That there were no men like them in the worlds, / But the Pāṇḍavas now shall know themselves / In adversity, fruitless like barren seeds.” (van Buitenen) The Pāṇḍavas ever had the puffed up notion (*bhāvitabuddhi*) that they were exceptional. (I think van Buitenen’s seeing biting derision in *bhāvita* [his “fatten”] is warranted and preferable to John Smith’s flatter, “Always they fed their minds with the one thought: . . .” (Smith 2009, p. 160). The fact that van Buitenen’s “thought” and Smith’s “minds” both fit the Sanskrit well attests to the inherent ambivalence of the word: a “thought” or “idea” is “a mind with an idea or thought.”) A similar possessive compound occurs in Patañjali’s *MBhāṣ*: *vipratipannabuddhi* (“[students] whose thinking was opposed to [the study of grammatical analysis],” or simply “[students] with the mistaken idea that said ‘such and so’ [*evam*, pointing back to the previous sentence]”) on p. 5 of Kielhorn’s edition of the *paspaśa*. (*tebhya evaṃ vipratipannabuddhibhyo ’dhyetr̥bhya ācārya idaṃ śāstram anvācāṣṭe* (Kielhorn 1878, vol. 1, p. 5), (Joshi and Roodbergen 1986, p. 16[44]) The adverb *evam* modifying *vipratipannabuddhi* points back to the objection quoted in the immediately preceding sentence, thus specifying precisely the ideational content of the *buddhi*-thought.

⁶² *ya enam āpatsu prāṇābādhayuktāsv anugr̥h̥ṇīyus tān amātyān kurvīta dr̥ṣṭānurāgatvāt | AŚ* 1.8.10.

⁶³ *neti piśunaḥ | AŚ* 1.8.11 | *bhaktir eṣā na buddhigunaḥ | 12*. Both Kangle and Olivelle take the word *guna* in the sense of mere “trait” (Kangle, “not a trait of intellect”) or “quality” (Olivelle, “not the quality of intelligence;” Olivelle is slightly inaccurate in this rendering, taking the compound as a *karmadhāraya* equating the two terms, rather than as a *tatpuruṣa*).

We have seen explicitly (in the example at *AS* 1.17.47) that the *buddhi-faculty* can be a seat of aversion (*dveṣa*), which implies its commonly paired antonym, *rāga* (“attraction, fondness,” etc.), and various other examples connect *buddhi* to motives, feelings, desires and dispositions. Given our earlier examples, the assistance various men afforded a prince in moments of great danger would be actions seated in their *buddhi-faculties*, as too would the psychic state that motivated them, namely *anurāga* (“passionate or affectionate attachment;” both Kangle and Olivelle rendered this aptly with “loyalty”). So it cannot be that Piśuna is here implying that *bhakti* (a sense of “mutuality, commonality, partiality, loyalty, devotion” with or toward another being) is not seated in the *buddhi-faculty*. But, interestingly, he is asserting a distinction between such feelings and some more excellent attribute of *buddhi*. At the very least such excellence would be a power of discrimination and action based on something “better” than affectionate attachment.⁶⁴

The *AS* gives an indication of one such excellent *buddhiguṇa* near its very beginning, in an instance of the word that argues that the mind (*buddhi*) of the king consistently benefits from prior systematic investigation of the fundamental matters of *dharma*, *artha*, and governance.⁶⁵ Kauṭilya states at 1.2.11 that systematic investigation (*ānvīkṣikī* *ānvīkṣamāṇā*), by means of the comparative evaluation of stronger and weaker rationales (*hetus*), of the fundamental “knowledge systems” (*vidyās*)—Vedic Learning (*trayī*), economics (*vārttā*), and government (*daṇḍanīti*)—“benefits the people and gives the mind (*buddhi*) fixity in both calamity and good fortune and effects proficiency in thought, speech and action.”⁶⁶ Here the *buddhi-faculty* gains firm footing, that is, it becomes immune to wandering, uncertainty, and impulsiveness, through education: rigorous, reasoned investigation of the known bodies of important learning prior to any actual need for that knowledge having arisen.

A few paragraphs further on, at *AS* 1.5.5, Kauṭilya specifies the attributes of intellect (*buddhi*) that are required for systematic learning (*vidyā*) to be effective. He lists eight states of, or operations carried out by, the *buddhi* that are necessary:

śusruṣāśravanagrahaṇadhāraṇavijñānohāpohatattvābhiniviṣṭabuddhim vidyā vinayati netaram.

A knowledge system [I use Olivelle’s rendering of *vidyā*] trains only one whose **intellect** is intent to gain the fundamental truths [*tattvas*] by means of

⁶⁴ This implied ranking of different levels of *buddhi* operation here is based on my interpretation of *guṇa* as “good or excellent quality,” rather than simply as “attribute.” We shall have occasion to notice a distinction between “higher” and “lower” *buddhi* in the *Manubrhaspatisaṃvāda* (12.199.27) in the companion piece in this volume.

⁶⁵ This passage is preceded by the statement *sāmkhyaṃ yogo lokāyataṃ cety ānvīkṣikī* // *AS* 1.2.10. This statement does not look to me like an effort to define “*ānvīkṣikī*” for the purpose of the following discussion. It seems rather an attempt to put on the record the observation that these three systems of theoretical, philosophical, reasoning are also examples of *ānvīkṣikī*. Recording all genuinely authoritative statements germane to a subject is one of the fundamental purposes for creating and transmitting texts in the ancient Brahminic tradition.

⁶⁶ *dharmādharmau trayyāṃ arthānarthau vārttāyāṃ nayānayaṃ daṇḍanīyāṃ balābale caitāsāṃ hetubhir anvīkṣamāṇā lokasya upakaroti vyaṣane ’bhyudaye ca buddhim avasthāpayaṃ prajñāvākyaḥ kriyāvaiśār-adyaṃ ca karoti* // *AS* 1.2.11.

seeking instruction, listening to teachers, grasping their teachings, retaining their teachings, understanding their teachings, and affirming (what is true) and rejecting (what is not).⁶⁷

This statement takes the existence of the *buddhi* as a persisting intellectual faculty for granted and ascribes to it the intention (*abhiniveśa*) to get to the knowledge of the fundamental realities (*tattvas*) underlying the appearances of things and conventional reports about them. It then offers a progression of activities on the part of a person who seeks fundamental truths. While the ultimate goal is a cognitive one, every item on the list involves the marshalling of the will to acquire, retain, and judge reported knowledge about matters. As the variants of this statement attest (see note 67 just above), this listing is not exclusive to the faculty “*buddhi*,” as the concern is for the actual faculty pointed to by these various words, “intellect.”

The Critical Feature of the Word *Buddhi*

We come now to instances in which “*buddhi*” refers to content that is not simply a unitary idea or disposition; is, rather, a more complex synthesis of ideas in relation to some kind of surrounding situation or some preceding speech or argument. The registration of a desire to know “*tattvas*” in the last example points to one of the most interesting and important general facets of the use of the word *buddhi*. Such an intention is intrinsic to science and philosophy, for the very notion of *tattva*, ‘fundamental reality,’ implies a distinction between what appears on the surface of experience, or of a situation, and the not-immediately or not readily apparent ‘realities’ that are truly present or at work. As the following examples will show, the word *buddhi* often refers to awareness of a content-field that is numerous or complex in some way and the *buddhi* faculty effects some kind of simplification of that content to good practical effect, from the point of view of the centrally concerned person. In many of these instances “*buddhi*” is used to represent a second stage of knowing such matters, that is, the interpreted (or re-interpreted), sorted,

⁶⁷ I suggest that this particular statement—which gives seven activities as the means by which an intellect that is intent on gaining fundamental truths (an intellect that is *tattvābhiniviṣṭa*, which is itself an eighth *guṇa* of this ideal student’s *buddhi*) might arrive at those *tattvas*—is the original formulation of this listing, which is known elsewhere in other forms. If I am right, this phrasing was later transformed into a list of eight *guṇas* (attributes, features, activities) of the mind, with the mind being designated variously with the words *prajñā*, *dhi*, and *buddhi*. A form of our listing here occurs again at *AS* 6.1.4, where these items are instead said to be “*prajñāguṇas*.” There our “*tattvābhiniviṣṭabuddhim*” has been broken up—its first part has become an eighth item, “*-tattvābhiniveśa-*,” at the end of what is now a *dvandva* compound. The term *buddhi* at the end of our compound here has given way to “*prajñā*” in the compound *prajñāguṇāḥ*. The eight *guṇas* of the mind at *AS* 6.1.4 are, as Olivelle observes in a note to our *AS* 1.5.5 here, very likely to be the eight “*aṅgas*” of the *buddhi* that might inform good speech mentioned at line 4 of *Rm* 6.101.22.3181* (Sītā exhorting Hanuman: *buddhyā hy aṣṭāṅgayā yuktam tvam eva arhasi bhāsitum*). (Goldman and Sutherland Goldman 2009, p. 1415) notes that *Rm* commentators explain this *aṣṭāṅga buddhi* by citing a verse from the *Nīṭisārakāmandaka* (at 4.22) that gives essentially the same listing as eight “*dhīguṇas*.” As Olivelle points out in his note, three mss. of the *Vanaparvan* of the *MBh* include a close variant of the *Nīṭisāra* verse, again as *dhīguṇas* (3.2.17.7*). These parallels are of interest in part by virtue of their freely interchanging the terms *buddhi*, *prajñā*, and *dhi*; Goldman and Sutherland Goldman note further changes of terminology in some of the terms of the list.

arranged, summarized, judged, or decided form of knowledge that has resulted from the operation of the *buddhi* faculty. Discovering or learning about the *tattvas* of any matter represents a recasting of what is known at one stage into a better form of knowledge at a subsequent stage. I am not suggesting that this kind of ‘value-added’ knowing is unique to the *buddhi*-faculty; various $\sqrt{\text{man}}$ -words and words from *pra-* $\sqrt{\text{jñā}}$ are also used for these functions sometimes. My point is simply that this intellectual dynamism is frequently referred to with “*buddhi*.”

BaudhDhs 1.1.156 calls for a qualified expert (a *dharmavid*) to conduct a multi-stranded examination (*sam-* $\sqrt{\text{īkṣ}}$) of a wrongdoer and his deed in order to ground a finding regarding appropriate expiation.

*śarīraṃ balam āyus ca vayah kālaṃ ca karma ca /
samīkṣya dharmavid buddhyā prāyaścittāni nirdīśet // BaudhDhs 1.1.15 //*

Someone who knows Law should specify expiations after examining altogether the (wrongdoer’s) body, strength, vitality, and age and also the time and the deed **with discernment.**”

Here “*buddhi*” might well be rendered with “intellect” or “intelligence” and the like, but the context emphasizes the multiplicity of considerations and the exercise of the faculty’s functions of discrimination and selection in connection with the overall purpose of administering public punishment. Thus I have appropriated Bühler’s apt rendering (Bühler 1879) of *buddhi* here—“He . . . shall fix the penances **with discernment.**”⁶⁸

At *BC* 12.100cd we have the phrase “*imāṃ cakre buddhim,*” which superficially resembles the usage described above consisting of the verb “to make,” $\sqrt{\text{kr}}$, with nouns for mind as their direct object in the sense of “resolve upon.” But here the word *buddhi* is a realization (or a decision, or a judgment) on the part of the future Buddha which, we are told next, takes the specific form of the sentence: “This is not the right thing to do for [my goal].” In this instance the future Buddha is deciding to abandon the way of extreme austerities as a means to the highest reality. The judgment is the propositional *buddhi*, “This is not the right thing to do (*dharmā*) for freedom from passion, for awakening, for escape.”⁶⁹ This realization is expanded by the former prince’s adding that what he attained on an earlier occasion under the rose-apple tree (see the discussion of *BC* 5.11-15 below) *is* the reliable means to his goal: “What I arrived at then [earlier, serendipitously] under the rose-apple tree is the sure method.”⁷⁰ The word *buddhi* here refers to a judgment connecting a subject, the way of harsh asceticism, and a predicate, “it is not effective”, and this judgment is complemented by a further judgment assigning the opposed predicate, “effective,” to what he had done at an earlier time. The intellectual content referred to by “*buddhi*” here is not a simple idea or concept, but, rather, a chain of propositions explicitly stated in a narrative.

⁶⁸ Olivelle inadvertently fails to register “*buddhi*” in his translation of this passage.

⁶⁹ *bhavabhīrur imāṃ cakre buddhim buddhatvakāṅkṣayā // BC 12.100cd // nāyaṃ dharmo virāgāya na bodhāya na muktaye / 101ab (Ashvaghosha 2008, pp. 360, 362).*

⁷⁰ *jambūle mayā prāpto yas tadā sa vidhir dhruvaḥ // BC 12.101 // (Ashvaghosha 2008, p. 362).*

Another example of the word referring to an explicitly indicated proposition occurs in the highly involved theological exposition presented by Nārāyaṇa to Nārada at *MBh* 12.326.45. Nārāyaṇa has just told Nārada, amidst other important points, that “I am what is designated as the Soul, and Soul is concentrated in me.”⁷¹ But, using the word *buddhi* to refer to a quoted proposition, Nārāyaṇa immediately counseled Nārada, “Do not get **the idea** that you have seen the Soul here,” *maivaṃ te buddhir atrābhūd dr̥ṣṭo jīvo mayeti ca* (*MBh* 12.326.45ef). “Idea” here refers not to an intellectual image like Patañjali’s *amrabuddhi*, but, is rather, a conclusion that might be drawn from a complex experience, not unlike that of the Śākya prince in the last example.

Other examples of explicit propositions being labeled a “*buddhi*” are not hard to find,⁷² but I turn now to an example that lacks the quotative particle “*iti*,” but where the word clearly refers to a propositional kind of understanding. As Rāma Dāśaratha’s brother Bharata went into the wilderness with his army to try to persuade Rāma to return to Ayodhyā as king, the fisher-king Guha, a loyal ally of Rāma’s, worried about Bharata’s intentions. Bharata had to assure Guha he meant Rāma no harm:

*taṃ nivartayituṃ yāmi kākutsthaṃ vanavāsinam /
buddhir anyā na te kāryā guha satyaṃ bravīmi te // Rm 2.79.10 //*

I am setting forth to bring back Kākutstha (Rāma), who is living in the forest.
Do not **imagine** otherwise, Guha. I am telling you the truth. (Pollock 1984, p. 248)

Again we have *buddhi* as the object of \sqrt{kr} .⁷³ More literally, “Do not make any other **judgment** (or **interpretation**).” Guha’s suspicions had been aroused by what he had observed: a potential rival following after Rāma with many troops. Bharata offers Guha a reassuring explanation, which is to be understood as a *buddhi* by virtue of the word’s use in *pāda c*. Guha should form no different *buddhi* about what he has seen. As in our first example in this group, *BaudhDhs* 1.1.15, the word *buddhi* is used to describe the mind synthesizing a unitary judgment with regard to a complex set of observations in connection with an agent’s goals.

Likewise, at *MBh* 2.63.26, we have the word used to refer to surrounding circumstances or events that have just been narrated—the public abuse of the princess Draupadī and the subsequent eruption of evil omens. In the face of

⁷¹ *ahaṃ hi jīvasamjño vai mayi jīvaḥ samāhitaḥ // MBh 12.326.45cd.*

⁷² For example, a little earlier in the Nārāyaṇīya with regard to King Vasu Uparicara. This ‘friend of Indra’^s had been cursed to drop from the sky into the pit of hell by some seers because he defended to them his having offered the Gods a meat-sacrifice rather than substituting grain for the offering. The Gods then resolved they should free him: *anenāsmatkr̥te rājñā śāpaḥ prāpto mahātmanā / asya pratīpriyaṃ kāryaṃ sahitair no divaukaśaḥ // MBh 12.324.18 // iti buddhyā vyavasyāsu gatvā niścayam īśvarāḥ / 12.324.19.* Again, at *BC* 11.4, the future Buddha made a point about friendship to the mighty king of Magadha: *ye cārthakṛcchreṣu bhavanti loka samānakāryāḥ suhṛdāṃ manasyāḥ / mītrāṇi tānīti paraimi buddhyā svasthasya vṛddhiṣv iha ko hi na syāt.* “In the world, some men make common cause with their friends (when their friends are) in difficult straits: To those (men) I fly **with the judgment**, ‘They are my friends.’ For really, who does not (make common cause) with (another) who is doing well amidst thriving fortunes.”

⁷³ Since the verb is passive, however, the object of the verb’s transitivity is the subject of the sentence.

disagreement about the significance of the abuse and the omens, the blind king Dhṛtarāṣṭra scolded his eldest son Duryodhana, the leading perpetrator of the abuse, as a “dimwit” (*mandabuddhi*, using the word in one of the common senses we considered earlier). And then, we are told:

*evam uktvā dhṛtarāṣṭro manīṣī*⁷⁴
hitānveṣī bāndhavānām apāyāt /
kṛṣṇāṃ pāñcālīm abravīt sāntvapūrvam
vimṛśyaitat prajñayā tattvabuddhiḥ // MBh 2.63.26 //

. . . the thoughtful Dhṛtarāṣṭra, in pursuit of the welfare of his kinsmen, relented. **Aware of what really happened (and was happening)**—having considered it with his intellect (*prajñā*)—he spoke to the Pāñcālī princess Kṛṣṇā (Draupadī) in a conciliatory way.

Here, rather than repeating differing interpretations of these events and omens, the text simply sums up the interpretation of Dhṛtarāṣṭra with the word *tattva*, “what is truly or really present in or behind events” (as opposed to what appears on the surface). The blind Dhṛtarāṣṭra was *tattva-buddhi*, “aware of what had happened at the fundamental level [regarding *dharma* and *adharma*] and what [the omens] really signified,” because he had reviewed what had happened with his mind, intellect, here *prajñā* (a sometime synonym of *buddhi*). Once again, the word *buddhi* refers to a synthesis of fact, interpretation, argument, and judgment.

The word *buddhi* is used at times to refer to an entire body of argumentation that has just been presented. The word makes its first appearance of many in the *Bhagavad Gītā* (*BhG*) at 2.39.⁷⁵ There it refers to the understanding, attitude, or resolve that Kṛṣṇa has just been encouraging Arjuna to adopt (in stanzas 2.11-38). Kṛṣṇa’s first sustained answer to Arjuna’s refusal to fight had argued an absolute separation between souls and the succession of bodies they inhabit and had urged Arjuna to bring his mind to view the events of the world of bodies with indifference (*samatva*). This grounding of an ethical stance in those ontological principles was followed, starting from 2.31, by exhortations based in the world of bodies urging Arjuna to fear accusations of cowardice and pursue the goods of this world and the next that a righteous war makes available to kṣatriyas. This more mundane phase of Kṛṣṇa’s argumentation culminated with Kṛṣṇa’s returning to his earlier exhortations

⁷⁴ I do not have an answer to the question how best to construe the adjective *manīṣin* as applied to the blind and often unwise Dhṛtarāṣṭra. But it is the case that there are about two dozen instances in the *MBh* where this adjective is used in connection with an individual person and in fully sixteen of those instances it is Dhṛtarāṣṭra who is so described. In one verse that occurs twice in the *MBh*— the “great tree” metaphor comparing the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas at 1.1.65-66, which recurs at 5.29.45-46—the critical text reads “*dhṛtarāṣṭro ’manīṣī*.” I suspect, however, in light of the other fourteen positive ascriptions of *manīṣitva* to Dhṛtarāṣṭra that these two readings of privative *avagrahas* are not warranted and should be amended. This adjective has an indirect bearing on the theme of this paper insofar as *manīṣitva* is correlated with intelligence, as in this verse here. It is also the case that Dhṛtarāṣṭra is described as “seeing with the eye of *prajñā*” more than once in the epic (e.g., 1.1.101, 9.1.21, 11.1.2, and 15.36.15), a description that alludes to his physical blindness.

⁷⁵ The majority of the instances of “*buddhi*” in the *Gītā* occur in the context of *adhyātma* teaching and analyzing them and the complex issues surrounding their use in the *Gītā* fall beyond the scope of this paper. Readers interested in these matters would do well to study the analysis of the *Gītā* by Angelika Malinar in Malinar (1996) and the English adaptation of that Malinar (2007).

to *samatva* as he told Arjuna, in 2.38c, “*yuddhāya yujyasva*,” “harness yourself for, or to, (this) war,” and then assured him he would incur no evil, “*naivam pāpam avāpsyasi*.” Kṛṣṇa then pivoted in 2.39, labeling some or all of what he had said as a *buddhi*, a “mind-set,” that had been articulated in one fashion and would now be articulated in another, which would allow Arjuna to get rid of the bondage of *karman*.

eṣā te 'bhīhitā sām̐khye buddhīr yoge tv imām śr̥ṇu /

buddhyā yukto yayā pārtha karmabandham prahāsyasi // BhG 2.39 //

This **mind-set** has been presented to you in terms of “Sām̐khya;” hear it now in terms of “Yoga.” Joined up to this **mind-set**, you will get rid of the bondage of deeds, O son of Pr̥thā.

As Malinar (1996, pp. 138–39) has pointed out, it is not easy to see a unified doctrine or “wisdom” in the stanzas that precede 2.39’s “*eṣā buddhiḥ*,” and it is even more difficult to understand exactly what Kṛṣṇa means when he seems to say that that *buddhi* had already been presented to Arjuna “in terms of Sām̐khya.”⁷⁶ But the words “*eṣā . . . buddhiḥ*” clearly use “*buddhi*” to point to something Kṛṣṇa has just said.⁷⁷ And if we see 2.38⁷⁸ as a deliberate attempt to synthesize the overall purport of 2.11–37, then we have a twofold psychological and motivational argument brought into the kind of unified focus that the word *buddhi* is often used to describe. The teaching to which Kṛṣṇa refers is essentially “indifference,” *samatva* or *sāmya*, which I briefly described as an essential aspect of *mokṣadharmā* in “Saving *Buddhis*” (Fitzgerald 2015, p. 103). I would paraphrase Kṛṣṇa’s teaching here in this way: “Set the cognitive and evaluative sensors of your *buddhi* to see events in terms of ‘sameness’ and resolve upon the action before you that your duty requires: Fight in the war.” The word *buddhi* here signifies the *buddhi-faculty* configured with particular *content* blended with a volitional resolve.⁷⁹ What is important about the

⁷⁶ The self-consciously used labels “Sām̐khya” and “Yoga” for these two traditions should not be taken as references to the fully developed, systematized forms of thought that eventually emerged in the *Sām̐khyakārikās* of Īśvarakṛṣṇa and the *Yogasūtras* of Patañjali. To use the older terms that Angelika Malinar has brought back to our attention in her keynote address in this volume, I believe these labels refer to traditions of philosophizing that are “in transition” toward their classical forms. In her earlier writing on this passage, Malinar, while always judicious and well-grounded, sometimes takes terms such as *avyakta* and *buddhi* as more indicative of the classically developed Sām̐khya thought than I am wont to do; see Malinar (1996, pp. 137–145) and Malinar (2007, pp. 69–75).

⁷⁷ It is grammatically possible to construe the *eṣā* as coordinate with the relative adjective *yayā* in *pāda c* and take 39cd as a restrictive relative clause (which would give a reading such as, “The *buddhi* **with which** you will get rid of the *karmabandha*, **this** *buddhi*, has been presented to you in Sām̐khya; now hear it in Yoga.”). The stanza reads more immediately, however, as a reference to what has recently been said and the second half of the *śloka* is simply a trailing, non-restrictive relative clause specifying a highly desirable feature of the *buddhi* that is the focus of the two sentences of 39ab.

⁷⁸ *sukhaduhkhe same kṛtvā lābhālābhau jayājayau / tato yuddhāya yujyasva naivam pāpam avāpsyasi // BhG 2.38.*

⁷⁹ I thus agree generally with the interpretation of Deussen and Strauss (1906, p. 41) who rendered “*buddhi*” with “Ansicht.” My compound “mind-set” is not the most felicitous English, but it does the translational job better, I think, than Zaehner’s somewhat fuzzy “wisdom” (Zaehner 1969) or van Buitenen’s “the spirit” (van Buitenen 1981). (In the second half of the *śloka*, Zaehner [Zaehner 1969, p. 139] used his usual translation for *buddhi* that is, “the soul,” which is misleading in this context.) The “mental attitude” of Edgerton (1972) might be preferable for a proper formal translation,

word for my purposes here is that it points to, and stands in for, an intellectual-volitional fusion of a number of different points germane to the situation at hand, points that have been explicitly presented earlier in the context. The word is describing the intellect’s creation of different kinds of arguments (logical, practical, etc.) and its arranging, sorting, and deciding upon some of them for the purpose of acting while rejecting others.

A similar fusion of intellectual arguments and affective-volitional attitudes is presented at *BC* 5.11-15, where Āśvaghōṣa describes the future Buddha’s spontaneous first experience of meditative trance (*maṇaḥsamādhi*, at the foot of a *jambu*, rose-apple, tree). He outlines the fundamental philosophical reflections which the Śākya prince considered within that meditation⁸⁰ and the effects of his contemplation within his psyche. He recounted various judgments the prince made regarding human behavior (5.12-13) and the general judgments he made about the ultimate nature of the world.⁸¹ These thoughts and judgments wrought a profound transformation in the future Buddha, one highly reminiscent of the “saving *buddhis*” I discussed in Fitzgerald (2015): “In an instant the intoxication with himself that proceeded from his strength, his youth, and his being alive left him.”⁸² And the prince’s ensuing state of equanimity (*samatva*, though Āśvaghōṣa does not use the word here) is depicted:

He did not give in to dejection or delight;
 he did not give in to doubt, or to sloth or sleep;
 he felt no attachment to sensual delights;
 he did not hate others or treat them with contempt. (Olivelle)⁸³

Āśvaghōṣa draws this rich description to a close by referring to all of it—the intellectual ponderings, the judgments, the transformation of the future Buddha’s mind—in one word as a *buddhi*: “Thus this passionless **outlook**⁸⁴ grew to be

Footnote 79 continued

but is less concrete and positive than “mind-set.” While Malinar is well aware that the word is both a faculty and the content of the faculty, the phrasings she endorses (“Erkenntniskraft” [Malinar 1996, p. 138] and “the faculty of discrimination” [Malinar 2007, pp. 70–71] both seem too weighted to the faculty side of the balance. She is concerned to register the ontological aspect of the word *buddhi* that is a significant part of how it is theorized in the *ādhyātma* treatises that developed eventually into the classical Sāṃkhya philosophy. I think, however, that that aspect of the word’s meaning cannot be captured in a set translation-formula; nor is it clear that sense is actually present here. It is hard for me to evaluate the “Bewusstheit” of (Schreiner 1991, p. 62). The word seems to imply both a faculty and an object simultaneously, but appears to become a forced *terminus technicus* in places, as at *BhG* 2.66a, where *nāsti buddhir ayuktasya* is rendered with “Wer nicht geeint (*a-yukta*) ist, hat keine Bewusstheit” (Schreiner 1991, p. 65).

⁸⁰ ... *pradadhyau manasā lokagaṭiṃ niśāmya samyak* // *BC* 5.11cd (Ashvaghosha 2008, p. 128).

⁸¹ ... *tasya vipaśyato yathāvaj jagato vyādhijarāvīpattidoṣān* / 5.14ab (Ashvaghosha 2008, p. 128).

⁸² *balayauvanajīvitapravṛtto vijagāmātmagato madaḥ kṣaṇena* // 5.14cd (Ashvaghosha 2008, p. 128). Note that *bala*, *yauvana*, and *jīvita* are direct antonyms of the famous triad of *doṣas* listed in 5.14ab: *vyādhi*, *jarā*, and *vipatti* (sickness, old age, death).

⁸³ *na jaharṣa na cāpi cānutepe vicikitsaṃ na yayau na tandrindre / na ca kāmaguṇeṣu saṃrarañje na vidīdveṣa paraṃ na cāvamene* // *BC* 5.15. (Ashvaghosha 2008, pp. 128–129).

⁸⁴ In passing, the English word “outlook” is an interesting rendering of the Sanskrit word for “awareness conditioned with specific mental content” (*buddhi*).

crystal-clear to the exalted one” (“*iti buddhir iyaṃ ca nīrajaskā vavrdhe tasya mahātmano viśuddhā*,” BC 5.16a). The episode ends after the prince receives instruction from a deity disguised as a *mokṣa*-seeking *sādhu* and the Śākya prince “set his mind on how he might leave home” (BC 5.21, Olivelle).⁸⁵

Not long after the meditation under the rose-apple tree, Aśvaghōṣa described the Śākya prince’s seeking his father Śuddhodana’s permission to “wander forth in pursuit of escape” (*parivivrajiṣāmi mokṣahetor*, BC 5.28). Śuddhodana tried to dissuade him, “*imaṃ vyavasāyam utsṛja*” (“Set this decision aside”). But his son, “with the sounds of a *kalaviṅka* bird” (*kalaviṅkasvara*),⁸⁶ agreed to stay if his father could provide him certain guarantees:

*iti vākyam idaṃ niśamya rājñāḥ
kalaviṅkasvara uttaram babhāṣe /
yadi me pratibhūś caturṣu rājan
bhavasi tvaṃ na tapovanaṃ śrayiṣye // BC 5.34 //
na bhaven maraṇāya jīvitam me
viharet svāsthyam idam ca me na rogaḥ /
na ca yauvanam ākṣipej jarā me
na ca saṃpattim imāṃ hared vipattiḥ // BC 5.35 //*

I will not go off to the groves of ascetic torture if you, king, stand surety for me on four things [34]: My life not end in death, disease not remove this good health I have, old age not dispel my youth, and fatal dissolution not take away the harmonious integration of my being [35].

The King of the Śākyas answered his son’s “impossible to fulfill” (*durlabha*) demand, using the phrase “**this buddhi**” to refer back to both his son’s decision to wander forth and the just-listed goals he intends to realize through that action:

*tyaja buddhim imāṃ atipravṛttām
avahāśyo ’imanoratho ’kramaś ca // BC 5.36cd //*

Give up this extravagant **plan!** It is a ridiculous fantasy and not a step⁸⁷ to take.”

The word *buddhi* is used here synthetically to refer to the whole of the future Buddha’s complex reasoning, his judgments, his intentions, and his plan of action—in short, to the end-result of a chain of reasoning leading to action, the work of the intellect and its end-product.

⁸⁵ *abhiniryāṇavidhau matiṃ cakāra*, BC 5.21d. Note the use of the word *mati* with the verb \sqrt{kr} , a phrase equivalent to those we noted above employing *buddhi*. Part of ‘the story’ of the word *buddhi*, one we will touch upon again in the companion piece, is its coming to be the main word used for ‘intellect’ in Sāṃkhya *adhyātma* theorizing.

⁸⁶ Though identified by Western dictionaries as a sparrow or as a cuckoo—without naming any species or giving any warrant—one must wonder exactly what bird is meant here and what its song was like. If a sparrow, the sound would have likely have consisted of rapid, high-pitched chirps and trills. If a cuckoo what? A more sonorous, repeated ‘rocking’ between an ascending tone and a descending one?

⁸⁷ The suggestiveness of the word *krama*, “step”, in the context has been nicely pointed out by Olivelle in a note to his translation of this passage (Ashvaghosha 2008, p. 449).

Similarly, at *BC* 7.54, as the future Buddha sets out to leave the ascetic grove to pursue loftier teachings, a brahmin ascetic blesses his leaving with “If **this intention to do that** is settled for you (*tadbuddhir eṣā yadi niścītā te*), then go right away to Vindhyaakoṣṭha. The sage Arāḍa lives there, who has gained insight into the ultimate good.” The “that” referred to by the *tad* of *tadbuddhi* has been described at length in the preceding passage and refers to the same kind of complex synthesis of reasoning and judgment discussed in some of the earlier examples.

There is very interesting praise of the idea that words and thoughts expressing an array of complex notions simultaneously is a virtue of speech or thought, praise put into the mouth of the female renouncer and yogin Sulabhā. This praise forms a passage in her famous debate with king Janaka of Mithilā on the possibility that a person might have the mind-set of someone who is completely detached and liberated while still fulfilling his duties in the social world. See Fitzgerald (2002). Sulabhā defines such simultaneity as *saukṣmya*, “subtlety” or “refinement”—I think her basic idea is what we call “sophistication”⁸⁸—and she describes it using the word *buddhi* in a way that expresses well my larger point here, that *buddhi* is a word frequently used to denote the mind’s simplifying, that is unifying, complex matters into coherent ideas and singular resolutions.

King Janaka has just finished lecturing and scolding his dazzling but challenging guest with words that were “unpleasant and inappropriate and that ill became him” (*ity etair asukhair vākyair ayuktair asamañjasaiḥ*, 12.308.76ab) and then she, unshaken, “began to make a much lovelier speech” (*tataś cārutaram vākyam pracakrāmātha bhāṣitum*, 308.77cd). She began by listing various attributes of a proper speech, among which was “*saukṣmya*,” “subtlety, sophistication” (308.79b). She characterized *saukṣmya* as follows:

jñānam jñeyeṣu bhinneṣu yathābhedena vartate /
tatrātiśayinī buddhis tat saukṣmyam iti vartate // 308.81 //

When there are several discrete things to be known, but the sense (*jñāna*) moves among them seamlessly (*abhedena*), the **extraordinary**⁸⁹ understanding operating there is ‘sophistication.’

Again the word *buddhi* is employed to represent the mind’s pleasing transformation of many into one.

A different kind of “sophistication” is intended in an *Arthaśāstra* passage emphasizing the importance of the king’s being thoroughly conversant with the “six measures of foreign policy” (*ṣāḍgunya*).⁹⁰ It concludes with the exhortation:

⁸⁸ Nīlakaṇṭha glosses *saukṣmya* as “its being hard to understand” (*durjñeyatva*).

⁸⁹ Relevant to the general point is the possibility that *atiśayinī* here means not merely “surpassingly excellent,” but refers, rather, to the understanding that transcends the boundaries of the discrete matters. This idea fits the adjective etymologically and nicely suits the sense here, giving something like “overarching awareness,” or “the transcending sense.” But the only sense recorded in the lexica for this word and its cognates is the one I translate here. The reading in the vulgate edition, *adhivāsini* renders earlier translations irrelevant. Nīlakaṇṭha and DS also read the critical edition’s *yathābhedena* of *pāda* b as *yadā bhedena*.

⁹⁰ According to *AŚ* 7.1.2 the six measures of foreign policy are: *saṁdhi*, *vigraha*, *āsana*, *yāna*, *saṁśraya*, and *dvaidhībhāva*. (1) alliance, or concluding a treaty, or peace; (2) war; (3) sitting in place; (4) marching; (5) reliance on allies; and (6) dividing the army in two. Each of the words of 7.18.44ab here emphasizes

*evam anyonyasaṃcāraṃ śāḍḡuṇyaṃ yo 'nupaśyati /
sa buddhinigalair baddhair iṣṭaṃ krīḍati pārthivaiḥ // AŚ 7.18.44 //*

The (king) who comprehends in this way [referring to the preceding points] the mutually interdependent, coordinated operation of the six measures toys at will with (other) kings who are hobbled by the foot-chains of his **policies**.

The word *buddhi* here refers to the “ideas,” that is, the understandings, plans, ploys and measures, “the policies,” that he will devise or select, on the basis of his comprehensive knowledge of the complexities of statecraft, as he deals with his rivals in one critical situation after another. In each instance he will arrive at a policy that will fetter his rival and make his success a matter of play. While understanding *nigala* as “hobble” works very well here and seems to be the primary sense of the stanza, we should probably also understand *nigala* at the same time as the linked chain it often was physically. The compound *buddhinigala* then would refer not only to the “hobble” formed by a given sophisticated policy (*buddhi*), but as a “succession of,” a “concatenation of policies,” by which the savvy king “ties his rivals up” (makes them *baddha*). Each policy or stratagem (*buddhi*) of the king being itself a sophisticated and decisive synthesis of many considerations, the succession of them would form an overwhelming cascade of stratagems. Such a delightfully recursive sense of multiplicity and abundance is at least suggested by the verb-phrase “*iṣṭaṃ krīḍati*,” “toys with at will.” At the center of this flurry of maneuvers stands the one king and his one *buddhi* faculty in which the *copia* finds unity. Kangle’s “the chains of his intellect” and Olivelle’s “the chains of his intelligence” are not erroneous, but rendering *buddhi* here as simply the thinking faculty leaves too much of the real import of the word back in the Sanskrit text.

Two nice illustrations of this use of “*buddhī*” from the *MBh* were presented and discussed in Fitzgerald (2015, pp. 99–101). One of them is simply another illustration in which *buddhi* represents a “plan,” a distillation of circumstances and intentions into a resolve to effect a particular chain of actions toward a desired end. I am referring to Satyavati’s presenting to Vicitravīrya’s widow Ambikā Bhīṣma’s plan that Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa engender a son in her in her late husband’s name.⁹¹ The second, however, is a fuller illustration of the way in which *buddhi* represents an esteemed attribute, as well as of the way *buddhi* operates to interpret surface appearances in terms of underlying realities, *tattvas*. I quote this example at some length from that earlier paper. It is from Dhṛtarāṣṭra’s prefatory statement to

Footnote 90 continued

complexity: the “sixfold” science of statecraft (*śāḍḡuṇya*) in which each element “operates together in mutually interdependent coordination” (*anyonyasaṃcāraṃ*); the *anu-* of *anupaśyati* refers explicitly to the king’s cognizing a series of multiple items one after the other.

⁹¹ *vyathitām māṃ ca saṃprekṣya pīṭvaṃśaṃ ca pīḍitam / bhīṣmo buddhim adān me 'tra dharmasya ca vivṛddhaye // MBh 1.99.46 // sā ca buddhis tavādhīnā putri jñātaṃ mayeti ha / naṣṭaṃ ca bhārataṃ vaṃśaṃ punar eva samuddhara // 47.* “When he saw both how upset I was and how threatened the line of his fathers was, **Bhīṣma gave me a plan for this** that would augment the Lawful Merit (of the family, rather than diminish it). (96) **That plan depends upon you**, daughter, I know it! Help lift the ruined line of the Bharatas up again! (97).

his long *yadāśrauṣam*⁹² lament at the opening of the *MBh* reprising key moments of the feud between his sons and the sons of his brother Pāṇḍu.

tatra yad yad yathā jñātaṃ mayā saṃjaya tac chr̥ṇu /
śrutvā hi mama vākyaṇi buddhyā yuktāni tattvataḥ
tato jñāsyasi mām saute prajñācakṣuṣam ity uta // MBh 1.1.101 //
yadāśrauṣam dhanur āyamyā citraṃ
viddhaṃ lakṣyaṃ pātitaṃ vai pṛthivyām /
kṛṣṇāṃ hṛtāṃ paśyatāṃ sarvarājñāṃ
tadā nāśaṃse vijayāya saṃjaya // MBh 1.1.102 //

(Dhṛtarāṣṭra speaking) Hear from me, Saṃjaya, what and how I learned about this [the unfolding conflict between his sons and Pāṇḍu’s sons]. Then surely, after you hear what I say together with **my interpretation (*buddhi*) of what it really meant**, you will realize, herald, that I do see with the eye of understanding. (101)

When I heard that (Arjuna) had bent the marvelous bow [at Draupadī’s *svayamvara*] and pierced the target and made it fall to the ground, and that Kṛṣṇā [Draupadī] had been taken while all the kings looked on, then, Saṃjaya, I had no hope of victory. (102) (jlf)

The lamenting recital of incidents goes on for another 55 *triṣṭubh* stanzas.

At Fitzgerald (2015, p. 100) I wrote further about this: “The king rehearses this litany in the wake of the war⁹³ from within the darkness of his blindness as part of the recurrent theme of Saṃjaya’s criticizing Dhṛtarāṣṭra for having failed to act decisively to curb his wicked son Duryodhana as events spiraled down to catastrophic war. His prefatory suggestion turns upon his confidence that the judgment (*buddhi*) he would pronounce in each case (his no longer having hope of victory) would persuade Saṃjaya to appreciate the acuity of his insight. The use of the word *tattvataḥ* (“with regard to the [underlying] reality or truth of things”) simply makes explicit what is implicit in the word *buddhi*, namely that there is more than one layer of understanding involved: the events and their meaning”.

As we conclude the presentation of the above examples, let me mention in connection to them the overall point of Fitzgerald (2015), which presented instances in which the word *buddhi* was used to highlight complex, propositionally expressed mental content which was said to occasion a person’s ‘jump’ from the suffering consciousness of ordinary life to a liberated consciousness, to a species of *mokṣa*—a kind of ‘conversion.’ While the examples just presented above do not involve any leaps of consciousness nor conversions, they do describe transformations of knowledge, an adding value to existing knowledge, one’s becoming more or better aware of what is already known. After reviewing instances where the word was employed simply as “awareness” or as a “faculty of awareness” or as “awareness of some content,” we have come to a usage of the word that is the foundation of its

⁹² “When I heard . . .” The blind king was referring to hearing reports of the war’s events from Saṃjaya, his herald and ‘eyes’ for the whole of the unfolding disaster.

⁹³ Though Dhṛtarāṣṭra is imagined to have made this lament to Saṃjaya at the end of the war, it was quoted in our written Sanskrit text at the very beginning of the entire work as a moving, previewing reprise of the main action of the story.

being understood distinctively as “intellect,” as “(a faculty of) progressing or deepening or improving awareness” and, or, as the ideational content such a process produces. This dynamic and recursive quality is part of the basic semantic ‘shape’ of Sanskrit \sqrt{budh} words, which signify, concretely, the experience of “waking up” in addition to the state of being awake or aware.

In Closing: A General Note of Psychological (*Adhyātma*) Theory

The dynamism that is “built into” this word semantically corresponds to one of the words used most frequently to describe the functioning of the *buddhi* faculty, namely *vyavasāya*, “decision, determination, resolution.” As a survey of usage this paper has avoided Indian statements of theory almost entirely. I will, however, as a kind of postscript and as a brief anticipation of the different kind of inquiry coming in the companion piece, conclude with brief indications of the theorizing of the psychological functioning of the *buddhi* faculty from a couple of *MBh*-era *adhyātma* passages. I do so to connect these theoretical descriptions of the operation of “intellect” to the usage we observed in our final batch of examples.

In the psychological theorizing of *adhyātma* philosophy, the *buddhi* is often described as working in conjunction with the sensory faculties (*indriyas*) and the “(lower) mind,” *manas*. In the *adhyātma* account at 12.187 there occurs the following description of the functioning of the psychic organs amidst the physical elements of the world:

mahābhūtāni pañcaiva śaṣṭhaṃ tu mana ucyate // 12.187.10cd //
indriyāṇi manaś caiva vijñānāny asya bhārata /
saptamī buddhir ity āhuḥ kṣetrajñāḥ punar aṣṭamaḥ // 11 //
caḥṣur ālokanāyaiva saṃśayaṃ kurute manaḥ /
*buddhir adhyavasāyāya kṣetrajñāḥ sākṣivat sthitaḥ // 12 //*⁹⁴
ūrdhvaṃ pādatalābhyāṃ yad arvāg ūrdhvaṃ ca paśyati /
etena sarvaṃ evedaṃ viddhy abhivyāptam antaram // 13 //

There are five Elements, and Mind (*manas*) is declared (the) sixth (fundamental entity, *tattva*).[187.10] (There are the senses and the Mind and its cognitions, Bhārata.)⁹⁵ The Intellect (*buddhi*) is seventh, and the Knower of

⁹⁴ These first two *ślokas* occur in variant form at 12.239.14-15 and a variant of 13ab is found at 239.18ab.

⁹⁵ I construe the succession of statements as a coherent text as best I can, though it is highly likely that many of the statements have distinct origins, were not composed together as a single text. They were, however, brought together by someone as a single text at some point in time (though what kind of text and for what purposes?) and taking that collocation as seriously as we can must be our first hermeneutic principle. Here it cannot be certain that “*asya*” refers to *manas*, but that seems most plausible: conceivably it could refer to the unnamed subject, the embodied conscious person, often taken for granted in these teachings; conceivably it could refer to the *mahābhūtas* perceived by the senses, in which “*asya*” would be the equivalent of “*ekaikasya bhūtasya*,” and if we bear in mind that in this genre of text *vijñāna* is an old word for the intellect, what is here called *buddhi*, then *vijñānāni* could conceivably refer to “understandings” that occur in subjects, embodied persons, listed in sequence after the senses and the mind. 187.11ab interrupts the counting sequence begun in 187.10cd and continued in 11cd, so I construe it as some kind of explanatory or supplemental aside and enclose it in parentheses.

the Field (*kṣetrajñā*) is eighth.[187.11] The eye is for seeing,⁹⁶ the Mind produces something uncertain, the Intellect is for deciding, the Knower of the Field stands present as an observer.[187.12] It (the *kṣetrajñā*) sees what is above the soles of its two feet, what is before it, and what is above—know that it reaches everything that is here within it.[187.13]

The senses mind intellect and witnessing consciousness are here said to work in a succession in which the senses give the ‘higher’ faculties impressions or cognitions of the physical world; the mind and the intellect then operate upon those cognitions in distinctive ways. The *manas* “*saṁśayaṃ kurute*,” “produces something uncertain (?),”⁹⁷ and the *buddhi* is “*adhyavasāyāya*,” “is (or acts) for deciding.”⁹⁸ Regardless exactly how these processes work, the relation between the operations of the *manas* and the *buddhi* is one in which the prior organ’s output is somehow unclear and the latter resolves the confusion by making a decision or determination within the product of the *manas*. This is the same kind of transformation of knowledge that has been illustrated in our last set of examples.

The *adhyātma* passage in the first chapter of the *Śarīrasthāna* of the *Caraka Saṁhitā* points to a distinction between the *buddhi*’s operating cognitively and its operating volitionally: it uses two different words to describe two separate additions to the product of the *manas*—*nīścaya* for cognitive resolution and *vyavasāya* for volitional resolution. While a number of the details describing the functioning of the *manas* and *buddhi* faculties in the passage as a whole are murky, the passage concludes clearly enough with:

indriyeṇendriyārtho hi samanaskena grhyate /
kalpyate manasā tūrdhvaṃ guṇato doṣato ’havā || Caraka Saṁhitā 4.1.22 ||
jāyate viṣaye tatra yā buddhir nīścayātmikā /
vyavasyati tayā vaktuṃ kartuṃ vā buddhipūrvakam || 23 ||

An object of sensation (*indriyārtha*) is acquired by a sensory faculty (operating in conjunction) with the Mind (*manas*). It is subsequently conceptualized (*kalpyate*)⁹⁹ by the Mind in terms of virtues and faults [good and bad points]. One decides (*vyavasyati*) to speak or act with the deliberation of the Intellect (*buddhipūrvakam*) by means of the fully determined idea (*buddhir nīścayātmikā*) that arises in the Intellect with regard to that object.

⁹⁶ One sense and one sense-function are used emblematically for the entire set of five senses and sense-functions.

⁹⁷ I have taken this phrase and as a description of the operation of the *manas* in general; which is to say that, as a general matter of course the product of its work with the senses is lacking in sufficient clarity for an agent’s purposes. The other translators whom I have consulted here (see the next note) all seem to see this phrase describing a formal dialectical operation of the *manas*, which I think would be only a particular and occasional enterprise of the *manas*.

⁹⁸ DS rendered these two phrases as follows: “das Manas erhebt die zweifelnde Überlegung, die Buddhi hat als Aufgabe die Entscheidung.” (Edgerton 1972, p. 257) translated: “the thought-organ causes doubtful consideration, the intellect is for determination.” (Bakker and Bisschop (1999, p. 462) rendered them with: “the mind causes reflection, the intellect serves determination.”

⁹⁹ (Sharma 1981, pp. 1, 399) renders with “the mind analyzes it.”

It is not possible to generalize this distinction here and claim that *vyavasāya* and its cognates always signify decisions and resolves to act, as opposed to cognitive determinations, though in the *MBh* narrative this word and its cognates do typically describe practical rather than cognitive decisions. Also, it is interesting to note that the very beginning of Vātsyāyana's explanatory commentary to the *Nyāyasūtras* begins by subjugating exact and accurate knowledge (*pramāṇena ... jñātārtham*) to the practical pursuit of the good.¹⁰⁰

As a final note to this brief presentation of theory accounting for the 'value-added knowledge' of the intellect, I quote a passage recited by Vyāsa in the *MBh* as part of a concluding comprehensive specification of the features of (all) things (*bhūtānāṃ guṇasamkhyānam*, 12.247.1a) at the end of his extensive instruction of his son Śuka in the *Mokṣadharmā* (the *Śukānupraśna*, *MBh* 12.223-247). Here Vyāsa itemized the features or traits of the *buddhi* in this way:

*iṣṭāniṣṭavikalpaś ca vyavasāyaḥ samādhitā /
saṃśayaḥ pratipattiś ca buddhau pañceha ye guṇāḥ // 12.247.10 //*

The five attributes (found, or occurring) in the intellect are choosing between desired and undesired alternatives, making decisions, bringing oneself to a focus,¹⁰¹ doubting, and full ascertainment.

There would seem to be a bifurcation of volitional and cognitive elements similar to that of the *Caraka Saṃhitā*, with the word *pratipatti* referring to the ascertainment of objects of knowledge following some process of questioning or interrogation, *saṃśaya*. In the preceding stanza Vyāsa had itemized nine features of the *manas*, not all of which are fully clear:

*calopapattir vyaktiś ca visargaḥ kalpanā kṣamā /
sad asac cāśutā caiva manaso nava vai guṇāḥ // 12.247.9 //*

The nine attributes of the mind are variability, reasoning,¹⁰² making known (to consciousness), diffusion,¹⁰³ mental figuration (imagining), malleability,¹⁰⁴ the existent [i.e., it deals with substances that are real and true];¹⁰⁵ the non-existent [i.e., it deals with fictive ideas that are not real or true];¹⁰⁶ and quickness.

¹⁰⁰ *pramāṇam antareṇa nārthapratipattiḥ, nārthapratipattim antareṇa pravṛttisāmarthyam/ pramāṇena khalv ayaṃ jñātārtham abhīpsati jihāsati vā/ tasyepsājihāsāprayuktasya samihā pravṛttir ity ucyate/ sāmarthyam punar asyāḥ phalenābhisambandhaḥ/ samihamānas tam artham abhīpsan jihāsan vā tam artham āpnoti jahāti vā/ arthas tu sukhaṃ sukhahetuś ca, duḥkhaṃ duḥkhaḥetuś ca.*

¹⁰¹ The word *samādhī* does not refer exclusively to yoga meditation, but at the very least meditation is one of the types of focus intended here.

¹⁰² Nīlakaṇṭha glosses *upapatti* with *ūhāpoha*, though I wonder if something less intellectually elaborate might be meant since we have the opposition here of *upapatti* to the upcoming *pratipatti* trait of the *buddhi*.

¹⁰³ Nīlakaṇṭha glosses *visarga* with *viparīta*, *sarga*, *bhrānti*.

¹⁰⁴ I follow the "Nachgiebigkeit" of DS here.

¹⁰⁵ Nīlakaṇṭha takes the word ethically: *vairāgyādi*.

¹⁰⁶ Nīlakaṇṭha ethically again: *rāgaḍveśādi*.

The Last Word on “*Buddhi*” for Now

In the companion piece, we shall see the *buddhi* functioning as a critically important faculty for the gaining of the highest human end, both as a means to finding the right way to it and as a means of pursuing the control (*yama, yoga*) of the body and mind needed to effect that highest good in the regimen of yoga-control.¹⁰⁷ But I will close this survey of “*buddhi*” usage by quoting the following general praise of the practical value of the *buddhi*, praise for its operation as synthetic, constructive imagination.

In one the several dialogs between Indra and enlightened Asuras mentioned earlier, Bali says to unenlightened Indra at one point:

*nāgāminam anarthaṃ hi pratighātaśatair api /
śaknuvanti prativyodhūm ṛte buddhibalān narāḥ // MBh 220.32 //*

Truly! Men are not capable of parrying future misfortune except by the power of Intellect, not even with hundreds of other countermeasures.[220.32]

Abbreviations

<i>ĀpDhs</i>	<i>Āpastamba Dharmasūtra</i> . See (Bühler 1879) and (Olivelle 1999)
<i>AŚ</i>	<i>Arthaśāstra</i> . See under (Kangle 1960)
<i>BaudhDhs</i>	<i>Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra</i> . See (Bühler 1879) and (Olivelle 1999)
<i>BC</i>	<i>Buddhacarita</i> . See entries under Ashvaghosha and Aśvagoṣa
<i>BD</i>	<i>Bṛhaddevatā</i> . See under (Macdonell 1904) and (Tokunaga 1997)
<i>jlf</i>	James L. Fitzgerald
<i>MBh</i>	<i>Mahābhārata</i> . See under Fitzgerald, Smith, Sukthankar, and van Buitenen in the General References
<i>MBhās</i>	<i>Mahābhāṣya</i> . See under (Joshi and Roodbergen 1990)
<i>MDh</i>	<i>Mokṣadharmaparvan (adhyāyas 12.168-353 of MBh)</i> . See under Belvalkar in the General References
<i>Rm</i>	<i>Rāmāyaṇa</i> . See under Bhatt and Shah in the General References
<i>RV</i>	<i>Ṛg Veda</i>

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¹⁰⁷ In this typical description of the operation of the *buddhi* in yoga-control, we see again the *buddhi* operating to simplify the (complex) *manas*: *dhr̥tyā dehān dhārayanto / buddhisamkṣiptamānasāḥ // MBh 210.23*. “

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