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## ON THE CONCEPT OF “LOKĀNTARIKĀ”

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### ABSTRACT

*Lokāntarikā* is one of the strangest places in Buddhist cosmology. Typically understood as hell, it is not located in any world system (*cakravāla*) but rather in the gap between the three world systems. This article discusses the narratives and depictions of *lokāntarikā* in early Buddhist canonical and post-canonical Thai literature. The author argues that, in early canonical sources, *lokāntarikā* mostly serves as a narrative device to highlight the miraculous qualities of the Buddha. In Siam, the notion of *lokāntarikā* was gradually developed into the unique concept of *lokanta narok*. The Traiphum Phra Ruang, one of the earliest works of Thai literature, gives the most nuanced depiction of *lokanta*, and *lokanta* also appears in other Thai classical literature as a part of oath-taking.

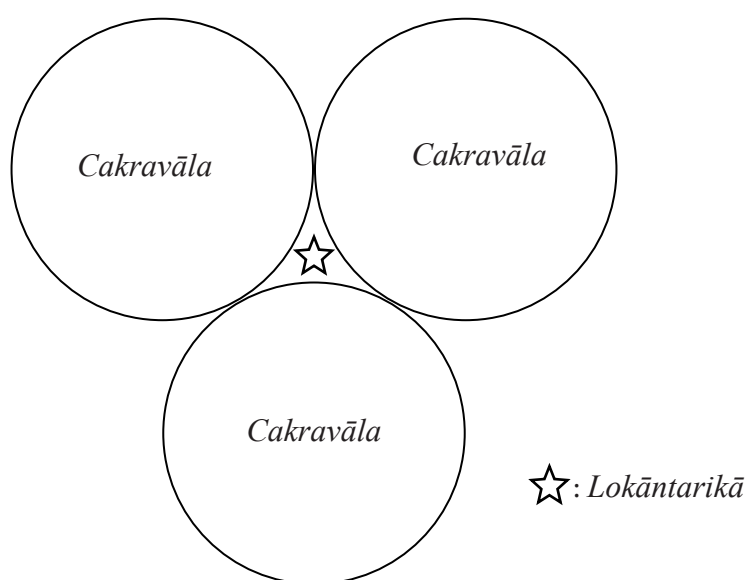
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## INTRODUCTION

*Lokāntarikā* is one of the strangest places in the Buddhist cosmology.<sup>1</sup> Typically, unwholesome destinations of rebirth, like hells and the habitats of preta, exist below the continents within a certain world system (*cakravāla*; Pali, *cakkavāla*).<sup>2</sup> A *lokāntarikā*, unlike other hells, does not belong to any world system but is the interval space surrounded by three world systems. Utter darkness dominates this hell, where coldness and blindness are the punishments for one's previous bad karma.<sup>3</sup> The legend goes, every kalpa, only on six occasions—the inhabitants of this realm can only see a split second of light when a Buddha descends into his mother's womb, goes forth, achieves enlightenment, starts preaching and enters nirvāṇa—very rare events occurring once a kalpa, or only six times ever.<sup>4</sup> *Lokāntarikā* is mentioned in many Sanskrit, Pali, Chinese, and Tibetan canonical scriptures and later Buddhist literature.<sup>5</sup>



Figur 1: *Lokāntarikā*, by Guanxiong Qi

<sup>1</sup> I am very grateful to Ajarn Namphueng Padamalangu, who introduced *lokāntarikā* to me during her lecture on Thai cosmology. The Thai-to-English and Chinese-to-English translations are done by myself. The sources of translations from other languages are noted in the footnotes. In addition, I deeply appreciate the efforts of JIBS's copyeditor. All errors remain my own.

<sup>2</sup> Most early Buddhist scriptures do not clearly identify *lokāntarikā* as a hell. *Lokāntarikā* is merely described as the darkest cosmic interspace where some sentient beings dwell. The later Thai literature unambiguously identity *lokāntarikā* as a hell (*narok* นรก).

<sup>3</sup> Technically speaking, the inhabitants of *lokāntarikā* are not blind. Those beings have the faculty of visual perception but cannot perceive anything due to the lack of light.

<sup>4</sup> The number of occasions vary between different sources, as this paper tries to demonstrate. The six occasions theory is supported by the *Māndhātāvadānam* from *Divyāvadānam* and later Thai sources. See later sections for more detailed discussions.

<sup>5</sup> The concept of *lokāntarikā* is discussed by many Tibetan Buddhist authors and exists in the Tibetan Buddhist canon. For example, see Bodhisattva Nagarjuna, *Maha Prajnaparamita Sastra*, trans. Etienne Lamotte, vol. 4, 2001, [https://archive.org/details/mahaprajnaparamitasastravol4bybodhisattvanagarjunatripitakadharmacarya\\_893\\_s/mode/2up,1633-1635](https://archive.org/details/mahaprajnaparamitasastravol4bybodhisattvanagarjunatripitakadharmacarya_893_s/mode/2up,1633-1635). However, I am not able to read and translate classical Tibetan. The discussion of *lokāntarikā* in the Tibetan tradition will be minimal.

Scholars of Buddhism sometimes mention *lokāntarikā* when discussing Buddhist cosmology. However, little existing scholarship examines this hell in detail. For example, in Ian Mabbet's article, *lokāntarikā* is only briefly introduced as a unique interval place in Buddhist cosmology without providing a detailed explanation.<sup>6</sup> In a paper concentrating on the concept of *lokāntarikā*, Bando Shoku compares the concept between the Chinese Āgama and Pali Nikāya but does not include extra-canonical sources.<sup>7</sup> Compared to early scriptures, a few important Sanskrit manuscripts and later Theravada literature offer contending descriptions of *lokāntarikā*. Some other general works on Buddhist cosmology, such as Akira Sadakata's *Buddhist Cosmology*, ignore *lokāntarika* entirely.<sup>8</sup> For students of Buddhism, a systematic review of the concept of *lokāntarikā* one of the most peculiar spaces prescribed in the Buddhist Canons is overdue and beneficial.

This article aims to systematically review the concept of *lokāntarikā* in various Buddhist scriptures. The goal is not to answer why such a place exists in Buddhist cosmology. Instead, this article attempts to analyze the functions of *lokāntarikā* in different narrative tropes and literary contexts. Further, *lokāntarikā* is not considered as a major or subordinate hell in canonical literature. It is less fruitful to compare *lokāntarikā* (a hell-like place outside any world system) with other Buddhist hells (hells within the world system). Therefore, this paper is a comparative study of Buddhist literature focusing exclusively on the idea of *lokāntarikā*. Some canonical and post-canonical appearances of *lokāntarika* will be provided with comparative analyses primarily made based on scriptural contexts and doctrinal significance.

From a general perspective, *lokāntarikā*, as a narrative device, primarily serves three functions. First, it gives prominence to the Buddha by highlighting his unique ability to lighten the *lokāntarikā*. Second, the utter darkness is a metaphor for the ignorance (*avidyā*) of the sentient beings. Third, particularly in Thai contexts, people recognize it as the most fearsome hell and use it for oath-taking. By interpolation and interpretation, *lokāntarikā* further completes the chiliocosm worldview, that this peculiar type of dark space exists between every three world systems.

From the *lokāntarikā* in early scriptures to the *lokanta* in classical Thai literature, the functions of this place shifted from a narrative trope highlighting the miraculous quality of the Buddha to the presentation of this realm as one of the most terrifying hells that is presented in oath-taking as the punishment of violating the oath. *Lokāntarikā* is extensively discussed in the Thai classical literature,<sup>9</sup> the Traiphum Phra Ruang (hereafter, the Traiphum) a text that provides the most detailed description of *lokāntarikā*. The novelties of the Traiphum, as it diverges from canonical sources, reflect the unique Thai perception

<sup>6</sup> For his full paper, see Ian Mabbett, "Cosmography, Architecture and Ritual in Hindu-Buddhist Culture," *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 6, (June 1, 1983): 44–53.

<sup>7</sup> Bando Shoku, "Reasoning on the Formation Process of Lokantarika-Niraya," *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies* 29, (1980): 126–27, <https://doi.org/10.4259/ibk.29.126>.

<sup>8</sup> Akira Sadakata, *Buddhist Cosmology: Philosophy and Origins*, 1st English ed (Tokyo: Kosei Publishing Company, 1997).

<sup>9</sup> In this article, I use the terms "Thai" and "Siamese" interchangeably. In a modern context, the Kingdom of Thailand is the official name of the historical political entity of Siam (particularly referring to the Ayutthaya and the Rattanakosin Kingdoms) after 1939. This article does not involve any discussion regarding Thai modern history. I therefore do not specify my terminologies about Siamese kingdoms.

and adaption of Buddhist cosmology. This trend is exemplified by classical Thai literature, such as Khun Chang Khun Phaen, where *lokanta* appears as a gruesome hell and the worst rebirth destination.

Currently, little academic effort exists to understand and present *lokanta* in the Thai tradition from a Buddhist studies perspective.<sup>10</sup> This article aims to provide some insights into the transformations and adaptations of *lokāntarikā* from early Buddhist scriptures to classic Thai literature. In addition, it highlights the concept of *lokāntarikā* discussed in early Chinese sources. Some scholars of Theravada Buddhism sometimes neglect the richness and relevancy of the Chinese Āgama literature. For the studies of early Buddhism, many scholars argue that the Chinese Āgama collections are seminal sources on par with the Pali Nikāya.<sup>11</sup> Āgama and Nikāya are mostly homogeneous discourses ascribed to the Buddha, and both advocate the Listener's Vehicle (Śrāvakayāna). Since the mid-20th century, scholars greatly benefited from these comparative studies between these major sources. For this article, the abundant Theravada literature about *lokāntarikā* may create a misperception about its distinctive doctrinal role in Theravada Buddhism. As a textual review, this article identifies a few translations of *lokāntarikā* in the Chinese Āgama. However, from the 7th century onward, the concept of *lokāntarikā* gradually faded away in the Chinese Buddhist tradition. Nevertheless, the traces of *lokāntarikā* in the Āgama literature are identical to the *lokāntarikā* described in the Pali Canon. Chinese Buddhist dictionaries, as many as I checked, all translated the term *lokāntarikā* erroneously. In the appendix, a few corrections about the Chinese terminologies related to *lokāntarikā* are provided.

## BUDDHIST COSMOLOGY

There is ample existing scholarship on Buddhist cosmology, and arguably, *lokāntarikā* is an inseparable part of sustaining the chiliocosm cosmology. With an Indic origin, the Buddhist spatial cosmology divides the world (*loka*)<sup>12</sup> into three realms—the realms of desire (*kamadhātu*), form (*rūpadhātu*), and formlessness (*ārūpyadhātu*). Most of our sentient beings live in the material realms of desire and form. This world, according to Buddhist cosmology, has a cylinder shape. Mount Meru is the absolute geophysical center and heavenly beings typically reside on the top. The outmost boundary is named “Iron Encircling Mountains” (*cakravāḍa parvata*) which is a range of mountains made of iron that constitute the circular periphery of the world. Seven circular mountain ranges, surrounded by ocean, exist between Mount Meru and the iron periphery. Four continents float on the ocean, including the southern continent

<sup>10</sup> For example, Ajarn Namphueng Padamalangula wrote a thorough article focusing on “lokanta” from a literary studies perspective. She mostly consoles post-modern, deconstructive literature theory to analyze the function of lokanta in the Buddhist cosmology described in the Traiphum Phra Ruang. By far, there is no reliable philological work about the canonical appearance of lokāntarikā. See Namphueng Padamalangula, “Framing the Universe: Cosmography and the ‘Discourse on the Frame’ in Traiphum Phra Ruang,” *Rien Thai* 1, (2008): 71–85.

<sup>11</sup> For some works that emphasize the correlations between Āgama and Nikāya, see Marcus Bingenheimer, “The Suttas on Sakka in Āgama and Nikāya Literature—with Some Remarks on the Attribution of the Shorter Chinese Saṃyukta Āgama,” *Buddhist Studies Review* 25, no. 2 (2008): 149–73; Bhikkhu Anālayo, “Selected MadhyamaĀgama Discourse Passages and Their Pāli Parallels,” *Dharma Drum Journal of Buddhist Studies*, (2016): 1–61.

<sup>12</sup> In different contexts, I use Pali, Sanskrit, or Chinese accordingly. For example, if the topic is the Pali Nikāya, I will use the Pali transcription and Chinese Āgama in Sanskrit. In general, if the circumstance is unspecified, I would transcribe key terms in Sanskrit.

where humans live, known as *Jambudvīpa*. Bad reincarnation destinations, such as the realms of hungry ghosts and hells, exist beneath the continents or at some other harsh and formidable locations.<sup>13</sup> A world system of this type is known as a *cakravāla*. Most renowned in the Mahāyāna schools, the universe is thought to be filled with an infinite number of *cakravāla*, with the resulting cosmology called a chiliocosm.<sup>14</sup>

*Lokāntarikā* is the near-triangular shape cosmic interspace surrounded by three world systems. It is filled with absolute darkness since the Iron Encircling Mountains from the three neighboring worlds block all the lights. *Lokāntarikā* does not have any source of light, and sentient beings in the place can never see each other. The most important narrative function of *lokāntarikā* is used to indicate the miraculous power of the Buddha. The narrative goes, that when the Gautama Buddha (and past Buddhas) was miraculously born, a magnificent ray of light appeared and lightened up a great chiliocosm. The exact details vary, but only on a few auspicious occasions (e.g. a Buddha's conception and birth), a Buddha illuminates *lokāntarikā* for only one instant moment.

## LOKĀNTARIKĀ IN CANONICAL SOURCES

*Lokāntarikā* is discussed in a few Pali suttas, such as the *Mahāpadāna Sutta*,<sup>15</sup> *Andhakāra Sutta*,<sup>16</sup> *Acchariyaabbhuta Sutta*, and *Paṭhamatathāgata Acchariyasutta Sutta*.<sup>17</sup> These suttas have clear correspondences to the Chinese Āgama and excavated Sanskrit manuscripts. In these early scriptures, *lokāntarikā* mostly appears in a stock phrase and serves as a narrative device to demonstrate the sacred and unparalleled characteristics of the Buddha. These scriptures delineate certain episodes of a Buddha's life. In especially auspicious moments, a Buddha would emit a magnificent light beam to illustrate a thousandfold world (Pali, *dasasahassī lokadhātu*),<sup>18</sup> including *lokāntarikā*, the darkest cosmic interspace. During these auspicious occasions, the Pali stock phrase states:

Even in the boundless desolation of interstellar space (*lokantarikā*) so utterly dark that even the light of the moon and the sun, so mighty and powerful, makes no impression an immeasurable, magnificent light appears, surpassing the glory of the gods.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>13</sup> For instance, a hungry ghost might be born in deserts, wastelands, and the top of a desolate mountain

<sup>14</sup> A *cakravāla* is a basic Buddhist world system. A thousand *cakravāla* is a small cosmic system (small chiliocosm; *culanika lokadhātu*). A thousand small chiliocosm constitute a medium chiliocosm (*dvisahassī majjhima lokadhātu*). A thousand medium chiliocosm make up a great chiliocosm (*trisahassī mahāsahassī lokadhātu*). Conventionally, this idea of chiliocosm is understood as a Mahāyāna concept. However, such view is likely arbitrary and doubtful. The basic framework of chiliocosm exists in the early Pali sources, such as the *Cūḷanikā Sutta*, AN 3.8.

<sup>15</sup> DN 14. This Pali sutta has a Chinese parallel, Dabbenjing 大本經, DA 1.

<sup>16</sup> SN 56.46. The Chinese parallels are SA 423 and SA 425. It is the only sutta from the Pali Nikāya that uses *lokāntarikā* to make a metaphor to the ignorance of sentient beings.

<sup>17</sup> MN 123 and AN 4.127 are two synoptic suttas which praise the unique qualities of the Buddha. Their Chinese parallel is *Weicengyoufa* 未曾有法 MA 32.

<sup>18</sup> It is noteworthy that chiliocosm, during the completion of these suttas, was already an adopted concept. The *Cūḷanikā Sutta*, AN 3.8, clearly pose the concepts of small, medium, and great chiliocosm (Pali, *sahassī cūḷanikā lokadhātu*, *dvisahassī majjhimikā lokadhātu*, and *trisahassī mahāsahassī lokadhātu*).

<sup>19</sup> The exact Pali paragraph appears multiple times in the Sutta Piṭaka. For example, see AN 4.127:1.4; MN 123:7.4; DN 14:1.17.5. In this article, all Pali translations are adopted from Bhikkhu Sugato. For the precise quotations, see the reference and the list of abbreviations at the last.



Yāpi tā lokantarikā aghā asaṁvutā andhakārā andhakāratimisā yatthapimesaṁ candimasūriyānaṁ evaṁmahiddhikānaṁ evaṁmahānubhāvānaṁ ābhā nānubhonti, tatthapi appamāṇo ulāro obhāso pātubhavati atikkammeva devānaṁ devānubhāvaṁ.

The notion of *lokāntarikā*, in similar texts, is not further expounded. It is merely portrayed as the darkest space that has absolutely no source of light. In the narrative, the significance of *lokāntarikā* relies on the rare occasions when a split second of light miraculously issued forth from a Buddha, which is presented as one of his extraordinary qualities.

The ability to emit a magnificent light in the entire chiliocosm is one of the incredible characteristics of the Buddha. The key term is *āścarya* (Pali, *acchariya*), which translates as “marvelous” or “wonderful.” In various scriptures, the Buddha possesses miraculous qualities and anomalies, for example making earthquakes, magnificent light rays, and rain of flowers. These miracles occur at various critical moments in the Buddha’s life. Therefore, *lokāntarikā* is not the focal point but rather the act of making miraculous light clearly demonstrates the sanctity of the Buddha. Usually, no information or analysis regarding the sentient beings and other conditions in *lokāntarikā* are provided in the texts. The clearest example is the *Paṭhamatathāgata Acchariya Sutta* in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*. This sutta is numbered in group four as it states that, on four special occasions in the Buddha’s life, the magnificent light appears. The four occasions are the Bodhisattva’s descent into his mother’s womb (when the Bodhisattva was conceived), his birth, the enlightenment, and the Buddha’s initial turning of the Dhamma Wheel.<sup>20</sup>

Regarding the number of occasions of emission of magnificent light and further details, major deviations between sources are apparent. The Mahāpadāna Sutta, its Sanskrit reconstructed counterpart Mahāvadāna Sūtra,<sup>21</sup> and the Chinese translation, Daben jing 大本經, mention two occasions of the miraculous lightening. These scriptures narrate the story of the past seven Buddhas, from the Vipāśyin Buddha (Pali, Vipassī Buddha) to Gautama Buddha. It is noteworthy that, every Buddha (i.e., not only the Gautama Buddha) possesses a similar set of miraculous qualities, including the magnificent lightning. The Chinese Daben jing is closely linked to the Sanskrit manuscripts.<sup>22</sup> All three Pali, Chinese, and Sanskrit sources mention that on two occasions (Bodhisattva Vipāśyin descent from the Tuṣita Heaven into his mother’s womb and his birth) did the splendid light appear.<sup>23</sup> Lokāntarikā is mentioned explicitly in the Sanskrit counterpart stock phrase, with the meaning nearly identical to the Pali passages cited above.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> AN 4.127.

<sup>21</sup> The Sanskrit reconstruction is based on manuscripts found in the Central Asia. For more information and a provisional English translation (from both the Chinese and Sanskrit editions), see Charles Patton, “The Long Discourses | 1. The Great Legend,” May 13, 2023, [https://canon.dharmapearls.net/01\\_agama/dirgha/DA\\_1.html#n2](https://canon.dharmapearls.net/01_agama/dirgha/DA_1.html#n2). However, it seems Patton was unfamiliar with the concept of *lokāntarikā* and translated the Chinese term anming 闇冥 as “complete darkness.” For the Sanskrit source, see Fukita Takamichi, ed., *The Mahāvadānasūtra: A New Edition Based on Manuscripts Discovered in Northern Turkestan* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003).

<sup>22</sup> Another related scripture mentions *lokāntarikā* is the Mahāvastu, which is a collection of Buddhist legends attributed to the early Mahāsāṃghika Lokottaravāda school. It appears that, in the early Buddhist legends of past Buddha, *lokāntarikā* also appears as a narrative device to demonstrate the sanctity of the Buddha. For an English translation, see John James Jones, *The Mahavastu*, vol. 1 (London: Luzac, 1949), 38.

<sup>23</sup> See Chang ahanjing 長阿含經, T01, no. 1, p. 4b6-9. Fukita, *The Mahāvadānasūtra*, 8-18

<sup>24</sup> The sole difference is that the Sanskrit edition has an additional sentence describing that the sentient beings in *lokāntarikā* have the instant moment to see each other. For the exact Sanskrit paragraphs, see Fukita, *The Mahāvadānasūtra*, 8-14, especially verse 52.

Notably, the exact term *lokāntarikā* is missing in the parallel Chinese text. In the Chinese *Dīrgha Āgama* version, the Buddha teaches the monks: As a regularity of every Buddha, when the Vipāśyin Bodhisattva was born, he came out from [his mother's] right rib. The earth was trembling, and a ray of light illuminated the entire [great chiliocosm], [as] when the Bodhisattva was entering his mother's womb, reaching to the darkest netherworld and illuminating all sentient beings. It is a regular quality [of every Buddha]. 諸佛常法，毗婆尸菩薩當其生時，從右脇出，地為震動，光明普照，始入胎時，閻冥之處，無不蒙明，此是常法。<sup>25</sup>

If we acknowledge the Dharmaguptaka origin of the Chinese *Dīrgha Āgama*, a translative deviation perhaps occurred when the text was translated into Chinese. Many scholars, such as Fukita Takamichi and Richard Salomon, consider the Central Asian fragments<sup>26</sup> of the *Mahāvādāna Sūtra* to constitute the foundation of the *Dīrgha Āgama*.<sup>27</sup> The Sanskrit fragments contain the term *lokāntarikā* unambiguously, but the exact term is missing in the Chinese *Dīrgha Āgama*. From a philological perspective, the Sanskrit fragments must antecede the Chinese text. As the appendix will show, in the history of sutra translation and doctrinal development, *lokāntarikā* was gradually forgotten and disappeared in the Chinese tradition.

As discussed above, the *Paṭhamatathāgata Acchariya Sutta* from the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* distinctly states four occasions the conception, birth, enlightenment, and first sermon of the Buddha. The *Traiphum Phra Ruang*, a post-canonical Thai literature, and other Thai sources support the theory of five occasions. It states: When a Bodhisatta descends to be born [in his final life] to attain the Enlightenment when he descends and is conceived in his mother's womb, when he is born from mother's womb, when the Lord Buddha attains the Enlightenment, when the Lord Buddha turns the Dhamma Wheel, when the Lord Buddha enters the Nibbana. In these total five times, what is in the *lokanta* hell can be seen.<sup>28</sup>

เมื่อใดพระโพธิสัตว์ผู้จะลงมาตรัสแก่สัพพัญญุตญาณและเมื่อท่านเสด็จลงเอาปฏิสนธิในครรภ์พระมารดานั้นก็ดีและเมื่อท่านสมภพจากมาตุคัพโภทรก็ดี และเมื่อพระพุทธรเจ้าตรัสแก่สัพพัญญุตญาณนั้นก็ดี และเมื่อพระพุทธรเจ้าตรัสเทศนาพระธรรมจักรนั้นก็ดี แลเมื่อพระพุทธรเจ้าเสด็จเข้าสู่นิพพานนั้นก็ดี ในกาลทั้ง ๕ ครั้งนี้ ในโลกนรกนั้นจึงได้เห็นหนพนักหนา

Some other sources claim that the miraculous light occurs six times. A philological problem lies between the parallel passages from the *Dīrgha Āgama* and the *Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya* (MSV). The Chinese MSV contains the *lokāntarikā* lines in the Sanskrit and Pali sources which are missed in the *Dīrgha Āgama*. It states that, during the entire life of the Buddha, miraculous events will occur eight times. Among these eight, the magnificent light appears six times. The Chinese miraculous lightening passage from the MSV

<sup>25</sup> Chang ahanjing, p.4b6-8.

<sup>26</sup> Here, I refer to the Central Asian manuscripts prepared and edited by Ernst Waldschmidt and his fellows. These manuscripts were evacuated in the late 19th and early 20th century. The edited and reconstructed texts were subsequently punished by Ernst Waldschmidt in the early- and mid-20th century. For related information, see Fukita The *Mahāvādānasūtra*; Grigory Maksimovich Bongard-Levin, “New Buddhist Sanskrit Texts from Central Asia: An Unknown Fragment of the *Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, 1981, 7–16.

<sup>27</sup> For example, see Fukita, The *Mahāvādānasūtra*, xvii-xix.

<sup>28</sup> For the original Thai, see King Lithai, *Traiphum Katha* (Bangkok: Department of Fine Arts, Thailand, 1983), 19. For the English translation, see Frank E Reynolds and Mani B Reynolds, *Three Worlds According to King Ruang: A Thai Buddhist Cosmology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 81-82.

states: At that moment, the earth shakes in six ways. The emitted magnificent light illuminates the entire world, exceeding the lights from the heavens. In the darkest cosmic interspace (i.e., *lokāntarikā*), where neither sun nor moon shines, everything is clear. All sentient beings can see each other.<sup>29</sup>

于時大地六種震動，放大光明遍滿世界，勝天光明。世界中間黑闇之處，日月不照，悉皆明了，所有眾生皆得相見。

The next few chapters further expound on this subject and clarify the exact occasions when the auspicious signs appear. The earthquakes occur from eight causes, but the magnificent light is only emitted on six occasions. The two special causes for earthquakes are (1) when there is a great turbulence of the Wind Element (which further causes the turbulence of the Water and Earth Elements) and (2) when a *bhikṣu*, *bhikṣuṇī*, or *deva* manifests certain supranormal abilities.<sup>30</sup> The six occasions of miraculous light are when a Bodhisattva (1) descends into his mother's womb, (2) is born, (3) achieves enlightenment, and when a Buddha (4) turns the Dharma Wheel, (5) declares his death, (6) and enters nirvana.<sup>31</sup> Further, the MSV, like Pali and Sanskrit counterparts, contains the description that due to the miraculous light, sentient beings in *lokāntarikā* can finally see and acknowledge the existence of others.<sup>32</sup>

Another source that relates to the MSV is the *Divyāvadānam* (hereafter, *Divy*) a series of Buddhist legends collected by the Sarvāstivāda tradition. It is generally accepted that the two texts have intriguing correspondences, and some argue that the *Divy* is composed on the basis of the MSV.<sup>33</sup> The Sanskrit version of *Māndhātāvadānam* from the *Divy* contains a parallel passage to the Chinese MSV.<sup>34</sup> A miraculous earthquake has eight causes, and the magnificent lighting occurs six times. The six occasions are exactly the same as the Chinese MSV: (1) when a Bodhisattva is conceived in his mother's womb, (2) when a Bodhisattva is born, (3) when a Bodhisattva achieves enlightenment, (4) when a Buddha rolls the Dharma Wheel, (5) when a Buddha declares his death, and (6) when a Buddha enter the *parinirvāṇa*.<sup>35</sup>

In summary, we find different early accounts of the exact moments light briefly occurs in *lokāntarikā*. The sources vary and include two, four, five, or six occurrences when a Buddha manifests a transcending, magnificent light in his lifetime. Undoubtedly, all sources mention a light when a Bodhisattva

<sup>29</sup> *Genben shuoyiqieyoubu pinaiye zashi* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶雜事, T24, no. 1451, p. 297c10-12

<sup>30</sup> T24, no. 1451, p. 388a20-b1.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 388b1-20.

<sup>32</sup> *Genben shuoyiqieyoubu pinaiye zashi*, p. 388b1-7.

<sup>33</sup> Hiraoka Satoshi, "The Relation Between the 'Divyāvadāna' and The Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 26, no. 5 (1998): 419–20.

<sup>34</sup> My readings and assertions are based on Hiraoka Satoshi's research on the *Divyāvadāna*. For the quotes from the *Māndhātāvadānam*, see E. B. Cowell and R. A. Neil edited, *The Divyavadana, A Collection of Early Buddhist Legends* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1886), 204-207. The Chinese parallel is *Genbenshuoyiqieyoubu pinaye zashi* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶雜事, T24, no. 1451, p. 388b1-21. Another related Chinese source is *Genbenshuoyiqieyoubu pinaye* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶, T23, no. 1442, p. 719a2-7. For Hiraoka's studies, see Hiraoka Satoshi, "Text Critical Remarks on the *Divyāvadāna* (1)," *Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University* 12 (2008): 60; Hiraoka, "The Relation," 419–34.

<sup>35</sup> Paraśurāma Lakshmaṇa Vaidya, *The Divyavadana (Darbhanga: Mithila Institute of Post-graduate Studies and Research in Sanskrit Learning, 1959), 127-128.*



is conceived and born from the mother's womb. The recognition of miracles testifies to the significance of these two events. *Lokāntarikā* is discussed because it is theoretically the cosmic place dominated by absolute darkness, yet even a *lokāntarikā* will experience light from a Bodhisattva or a Buddha. It makes *lokāntarikā* primarily a narrative device to depict the sublimity and sanctity of the Buddha.

The second usage of *lokāntarikā* is doctrinal. A handful of other early scriptures use *lokāntarikā* as a metaphor for the ignorance (*avidyā*) of the sentient beings. In the sermon, the Buddha teaches that ignorance of Buddhism is more terrifying than *lokāntarikā*. For example, in the *Andhakāra Sutta*, the Buddha gives the sermon:

"Mendicants, the boundless desolation of interstellar space is so utterly dark that even the light of the moon and the sun, so mighty and powerful, makes no impression."

When he said this, one of the mendicants asked the Buddha,

"Sir, that darkness really is mighty, so very mighty. Is there any other darkness more mighty and terrifying than this one?"

"There is, mendicant."

"But sir, what is it?"

"There are ascetics and brahmins who don't truly understand about suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path."<sup>36</sup>

The point is, though the absolute darkness in *lokāntarikā* is pitiless and terrifying, the darkness in our mind, the ignorance of the Buddha's teaching is even more merciless and dreadful. While one would eventually reincarnate out of a *lokāntarikā*, without Buddhism one is trapped in *samsāra* forever.

A very close parallel can be found in the *Saṃyukta Āgama* of the Chinese Canon.<sup>37</sup> These sources are also related to the discussions of Buddhist cosmology. In the adjunct sutra/sutta in the Āgama and Nikāya, the Buddha expounds the chiliocosm cosmology and *lokāntarikā* is thus presented as the cosmic interspace.

Overall, it is considerably rare that *lokāntarikā* is compared to ignorance. In most cases, *lokāntarikā* serves to be a narrative device to be lightened by the sacred power of the Buddha. Notably, this list of canonical and post-canonical appearances of *lokāntarikā* is not exhaustive. In Sanskrit fragment manuscripts as well as the Chinese, Pali, and Tibetan Canons, *lokāntarikā* appears more than what is cited and discussed above. Nonetheless, the narrative functions and significance of *lokāntarikā* seldom go beyond the points provided.

<sup>36</sup> SN 56.46:1.1-3.2. I follow the English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato. See Bhikkhu Sujato, *Saṃyutta Nikāya: Linked Discourses* (Sydney: SuttaCentral, 2018), 755.

<sup>37</sup> Za ahanjing 雜阿含經, T02, no. 99, p. 111b25-c7.

## LOKĀNTARIKĀ IN THAI LITERATURE

The concept of *lokāntarikā* appears in many works of classical Thai literature including the *Traiphum Phra Ruang* ไตรภูมิพระร่วง (The Three Realms according to Phra Ruang).<sup>38</sup> As arguably the oldest full-length work of Thai literature (attributed to the King Lithai of the Sukhothai Kingdom in 1345 C.E.). The *Traiphum* is a treatise and sermon on Buddhist cosmology. The Thai term *lokanta narok* โลกนันทนรก or simply *lokan* โลกนันท is a transliteration of the Pali/Sanskrit *lokāntarikā* and constitutes a distinct section in the hell chapter. The concept of *lokanta* in the *Traiphum* bears a major divergence from those early Buddhist canonical sources. Not only the number of light emissions differs from other Buddhist texts (five times in the *Traiphum*) but this particular text also provides a detailed account of *lokāntarikā* not found in any other source.

The idea of *lokanta* perhaps is an innovative Thai adaption of *lokāntarikā*. Because the *Traiphum* is a Buddhist treatise on morality, one of the biggest concerns is kamma and reincarnation one's reincarnation destination depends on one's own actions, and past merits and demerits. The author of the *Traiphum* intends to illustrate these principles by linking specific behaviors to rebirth in a specific realm or place, especially different hells. The thoroughness and the subtleness of *lokanta* described in the *Traiphum* exceed all early canonical literature. It is likely that the *Traiphum* is not only a work of Buddhist literature but represents unique and original aspects of the 14th-century Sukhothai. In the words of Tambiah, "...because the account describes in minute detail the evil acts committed by the victims undergoing horrible torture, we are also thereby given some idea of the ethical norms of conduct valued during the Sukhothai epoch."<sup>39</sup> In this regard, it is not a surprise to see the original Siamese development of the concept of *lokāntarikā*.

The concept of *lokāntarikā* as the darkest cosmic interspace is perfectly preserved as the *lokanta* hell. The *Traiphum* contains the narrative from the MSV and Pali Canon that states that during the split second of the light, sentient beings in *lokāntarikā* are able to see and recognize each other's existence. The Thai innovation comes from the added detail that, among the five instant moments of lighting, the light lasts longer when the Buddha initially turns the Dhamma Wheel. The *Traiphum* states:

When the Buddha gives the [first] sermon [to turn] the Wheel of Dhamma, the matter (i.e., the lighting) lasts a bit longer. It lingers on and disappears slower than on other occasions.<sup>40</sup>

เมื่อพระพุทธเจ้าตรัสเทศนาพระธรรมจักรนั้นยังค่อยเรืองอยู่แฉ่นานกว่าทุกคาบสน้อยแสนสายจึงวายเรือง

The claim that the light from the preaching moment lasts longer is interestingly unique to the *Traiphum*. It makes sense from a theoretical perspective. The issuance of light is a metaphor for the Buddha's preaching which eventually leads to "Enlightenment." Such an enlightening moment, which also signifies the establishment and presence of Buddhism, reasonably lasts longer than on other occasions.

<sup>38</sup> The text has many names. Another well-known name of the text is *Traiphum katha* ไตรภูมิคำ, which means the "Sermon on the Three Worlds." For another version of English translation, see The Thai National Team trans., *Traibhumikatha*, the Story of the Three Planes of Existence (Bangkok: The Asean Committee on Culture and Information, 1985).

<sup>39</sup> Stanley J. Tambiah, "The Buddhist Cosmos: Paradise Lost, Gained, and Transcended," ed. Frank Reynolds and Mani B. Reynolds, *History of Religions* 24, 1 (1984): 75.

<sup>40</sup> For the Thai text, see *Traiphum katha*, 19.

Following the five moments of miraculous light, the *Traiphum* uniquely asserts that those who have been convicted of three particular sins will be punished by being reborn in *lokāntarikā*. These sins are (1) those who harmed their parents, (2) those who harmed precept-abiding monks and *brahmin* teachers, and (3) who have caused a schism among the Saṅgha.<sup>41</sup> The linkage between these three misdeeds to the rebirth in *lokāntarikā* is also unfound in early canonical sources. Intriguingly, two of the three misdeeds above are considered as *ānantarika kamma*. *Ān antarika kamma* refers to the five most heinous actions (1) killing one's mother, (2) killing one's father, (3) killing an arahant, (4) wounding a Buddha, and (5) causing a schism in the Saṅgh. These actions lead to rebirths in the most fearsome and gruesome hells. The correlation between reflects the canonical sources. As an innovation found in the *Traiphum*, these stations of rebirth certainly reflect the Thai perception of *lokāntarikā* as one of the least desirable reincarnation destinations.

Those who are destined in *lokanta* will be born as bat-shape monsters. These beings have a giant physique and webbed fingers and toes. Their sharp nails allow them to grasp on the *cakkavāla* walls, preventing them from free fall. These beings hang on the vertical walls in the posture of bats until exhaustion. When they felt hungry, they would grab and eat each other. As the beings no longer cling tightly to the wall, they will fall into the water foundation of the cosmos. The freezing water would kill the fallen ones and their bodies would reintegrate. The bat-like beings will climb up the *cakkavāla* walls because of their survival instinct. This cycle of suffering would last an entire kappa until the circling three world systems crumble apart.<sup>42</sup> Extensive research indicates that all these minutiae regarding *lokanta* beings are entirely absent in early sources.

Regarding the origins of these detailed descriptions of the *lokanta* hell in the *Traiphum*, there could be two hypotheses. First, it is likely that, in the first millennium, there were some exegeses or oral traditions on *lokāntarikā* in South and Southeast Asia. The *Visuddhimagga* briefly mentions *lokāntarikā* once and clearly claims the infinity of world systems but does not provide any further details.<sup>43</sup> Other authoritative Theravada sources, such as the *Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha* of *Anuruddha*, lack any serious discussion of *lokāntarikā*. If we presume the *Traiphum* inherited the *lokāntarikā* concept from an earlier tradition, some as yet unknown exegetical sources or vernacular culture shall exist between early canonical texts and the later Thai Buddhist literature. Second, it is also probable that the extensive *lokanta* section is predominately a Thai invention. The *Traiphum* is a political treatise that uses Buddhist principles and doctrines to sustain a moral universe which one's destiny is predicated on one's actions and morality. The *Traiphum* thus needs to link certain wrongdoings to a *lokanta* rebirth. In a sense, it is a moral lesson for the public. The nuances about various hells provide relevancy and create terrors in the listener's mind. Therefore, the added details serve the purpose of disciplining the subjects of the Sukhothai kingdom.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. Reynolds and Reynolds, *Three World*, 82.

<sup>43</sup> See Bhaddantacariya Buddhaghosa, *The Path of Purification: Visuddhimagga*, trans. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 2010), 201.

If we see early Buddhist scriptures primarily using *lokāntarikā* to illustrate the Buddha's power, the Thai literature additionally portrays *lokanta* as one of the most terrifying hells. *Lokanta* appears in the Thai legends and epic tales. One example is the *Mahānārada-kassapa Jātaka*. The Bodhisattva, who was born as a powerful deva to perfect the virtue of equanimity, preached to a king. He advised the king to stay away from the evil-doing to avoid being reborn in *lokāntarikā*:

...the Bodhisattva said, "If thou dost not dwell there, thou wilt dwell in a hell in the space between three spheres," and he uttered a stanza to describe it:

Blind darkness is there, and no moon or sun,  
a hell evermore tumultuous and dreadful;  
it is not known as either night or day:  
who would wander seeking money in such a place?<sup>44</sup>

This story is well-known in contemporary Theravada nations since it is considered one of the Ten Great Jātaka (Pali, *Mahānipāta Jātaka*, the last ten lives of the Bodhisattva before becoming the Gautama Buddha).

Another example of *lokanta* in Thai literature is the Thai epic tale *Khun Chang Khun Phaen*.<sup>45</sup> The exact term *lokanta* appears a few times when characters undertake oaths. For example, when Phra Wai swears his exclusive love to Srimala, he says:

I will give you my oath, may the gods come and listen;  
if I abandon, divorce, or do not provide for Srimala after now;  
I wish something serious [happens] falling into the hell down to the *lokanta*.<sup>46</sup>  
ที่จะให้ความสัตย์ปฏิญาณ ขอบันดาลเทพดาจงมาฟัง  
ถ้าพินิจทิ้งขว้างร้างหย่า ไม่เลี้ยงเจ้าศรีมาลาไปวันหลัง  
ขอให้หมั่นเป็นเห็นจริงจง ลงนรกตกกระทั่งถึงโลกันต์

This pattern of oath swearing appears repeatedly in classical Thai literature.<sup>47</sup> Here, *lokanta* is particularly chosen as the punishing place of punishment for breaking the oath. It reflects the cultural perception that a *lokanta* rebirth is deemed as one of the most dreadful reincarnations.

<sup>44</sup> The term *lokāntarikā* does not appear in the Pali text. The text only describes the hell as it situates between three world systems and is "andhamtamam," which can be translated as "utter darkness" or "great darkness." It is the signature term used to describe *lokāntarikā*. For the English translation see E.B. Cowell and W.H.D. Rouse, trans. *The Jataka*, Vol. VI. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907, 123-124.

<sup>45</sup> For more information about the *Khun Chang Khun Phaen*, see Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit, *The Tale of Khun Chang Khun Phaen Abridged Version* (Silkworm Books, 2015).

<sup>46</sup> The translation is my own. For the original Thai, see *Khun Chang Khun Phaen* the National Library Edition ขุนช้าง-ขุนแผน ฉบับหอสมุดแห่งชาติ (Bangkok: Rungkrangrat Printing House, 1965), 649.

<sup>47</sup> Due to my limited language ability, I am unable to confirm whether *lokāntarikā* is discussed in other Theravada countries (like Cambodia and Myanmar) or not. It would be a worthy endeavor to go through.

In summary, the idea of lokāntarikā is well-preserved in the post-canonical Thai Buddhist literature. Rendered as the *lokanta* hell, it is described in the *Traiphum* with considerable details, ranging from its geography and the life cycle of its inhabitants. The *lokanta* hell also appears in various works of Thai classical literature and is depicted as the least desirable place to be born. The conceptualization of *lokāntarikā* in other Theravada countries, such as Cambodia and Myanmar, is open for future exploration. At the very least, it is safe to assert that *lokāntarikā* is fully absorbed in Thai culture.

## CONCLUSION

The existence of *lokāntarikā* in Buddhist cosmology is strange yet reasonable. The strangeness comes from its spatial location outside any world system. In the Āgama and the Nikāya, *lokāntarikā* remains as a space undefined—it is neither classified as a hell nor a habitat of hungry ghosts. Certain sentient beings live in *lokāntarikā* but their exact classification and characteristics are not expounded. Based on the extant records, it was not until the Sukhothai Dynasty that *lokāntarikā* became well-defined as the *lokanta* hell—a specifically dark and freezing hell into which the most hideous criminals are condemned. Nonetheless, its spatiality as the cosmic interval space defies the normative Buddhist conception of hell, which must exist within a world system.

From another perspective, *lokāntarikā* enables the chiliocosm cosmology. Not only in Buddhism but the ancient Hindu culture also embraced the idea of multiple universes.<sup>48</sup> As each world system horizontally has a round shape and different world systems do not overlap, there must be gaps between the world systems. *Lokāntarikā* is the interval space and fills up this cosmological gap.

The notion of *lokāntarikā* in Thai literature brings us another theological implication that Thai Buddhism, a self-identified form of Theravada Buddhism, supports chiliocosm cosmology. Mainstream Theravada Buddhism denies the existence and worship of Buddhas from other world systems, such as Akshobhya Buddha from Abhirati and Amitābha Buddha from Sukhavati. The theory of Buddha-fields and the Pure Land has typically been confined to Mahāyāna Buddhism exclusively. Nevertheless, it is worth emphasizing that many Theravada texts de facto admit the existence of multiple world systems. The power of each Buddha is limited to one's own great chiliocosm. Thus, the theory of Buddha-fields is palpable in a Thai Theravada traditional worldview. The difference is that Mahāyāna scriptures claim the Buddha from other great chiliocosm can assist the residents of our world system, but the Theravada worldview insists that each Buddha has a territorial limit. For example, only Gautama Buddha has the power to save sentient beings of our Saha World.

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<sup>48</sup> For example, see Ravi Gupta and Kenneth Valpey, *The Bhagavata Purana: Sacred Text and Living Tradition* (Columbia University Press, 2013), 60.



## APPENDIX: NOTES ON THE CHINESE TRANSLATION OF *LOKĀNTARIKĀ*

To translate *lokāntarikā*, one technical problem is deciding whether to translate it as a proper noun or a common noun. The Pali and Sanskrit term *lokāntarikā* can be understood as both. The term is constituted by *lokā* (world) and *antarikā* (between, interval). *Lokāntarikā* thus is a common noun as “intervals of the worlds.” At the same time, it is “the *lokāntarikā*” meaning a place lightened by the Buddha when serving a proper noun. The Thai term *lokanta* is a transliteration and certainly a proper noun.

However, ancient Chinese translators did not transliterate the term and render it as a proper noun. Speculatively, because the translators must explicate its meaning without disrupting the narration, the translators had to translate the term in plain language and with common nouns. Thus, since the gradual ceasing of the sutra translation movements, the Chinese translations of *lokāntarikā* became ambiguous and undistinguishable from other common nouns. As a result, since the early medieval period (around the seventh century CE), the *lokāntarikā* stopped appearing in newly translated Buddhist scriptures. And *Lokāntarikā* is arguably non-existent in Chinese indigenous Buddhist literature.

Even in early Chinese scriptures, *lokāntarikā* is often ill-translated or simply omitted. In different scriptures, *lokāntarikā* had been translated differently. Some most frequent terms are *zhongjian anming* 中間闇冥 (the darkness in-between),<sup>49</sup> *da'an* 大闇 (the great darkness),<sup>50</sup> and *heian diyu* 黑闇地獄 (the hell of darkness).<sup>51</sup> Ancient Chinese translators perhaps struggled to find an appropriate and standard translation but can only describe this hell by its characteristics.

Most Chinese Buddhist dictionaries misinterpreted this idea as other types of hells. For example, William Edward Soothill mistakenly identified *lokāntarikā* as *bianyu* 邊獄 (the borderline hell), *gudiyu* 孤地獄 (the lonely hell), and *dudiyu* 獨地獄 (the solitary hell).<sup>52</sup> However, these hells are clearly defined in many Chinese Buddhist scriptures as the hells located in a *cakravāla* (but not between three *cakravāla*). Based on my readings, *bianyu*, *gudiyu*, and *dudiyu* have an identical meaning and are translated from *pratyeka-naraka*. The exact Chinese word varies because of different translators and translation styles. It refers to the special or individual hells one is destined to according to one's previous karma and these are different than the conventional hot and cold hells. Another misidentified term is *shizhong* 世中.<sup>53</sup> Shi is correctly translated from *loka* as “world” but *zhong* is misrecognized as “inner” or “intermediate.” In all the contexts that I have examined, *zhong* should be interpreted as “within,” and thus *shizhong* should be “within the world” instead of “in-between the worlds.” Similar errors exist in almost all Chinese Buddhist dictionaries.

<sup>49</sup> SA 424; Za ahanjing 雜阿含經, T02, no. 99, p. 111c14.

<sup>50</sup> SA 423; Ibid., p. 111b25-c7.

<sup>51</sup> Dazhidulun 大智度論, T25, no. 1509, p. 279c20.

<sup>52</sup> Soothill, W. E., & Hodous, L. A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms: With Sanskrit and English Equivalents and a Sanskrit-Pali Index. (Motilal Banarsidass Publication, 1977):208.

<sup>53</sup> For example, see *ibid.*, p. 65b25.

## GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Sanskrit	Pali	English	Thai	Chinese
<i>preta</i>	<i>peta</i>	hungry ghost	เปรต	餓鬼
<i>lokāntarikā</i>	<i>lokantarika</i>	the stellar interval space	โลกันตนรก	中間閻冥
<i>cakravāla</i>	<i>cakkavāla</i>	world system	จักรวาล	鐵圍山
<i>naraka</i>	<i>niraya</i>	hell	นรก	地獄
<i>avidyā</i>	<i>avijjā</i>	ignorance	อวิชชา	無明
<i>kalpa</i>	<i>kappa</i>	aeon	กัป	劫
<i>nirvāṇa</i>	<i>nibbāna</i>	liberation; cessation	นิพพาน	涅槃
<i>āścarya</i>	<i>acchariya</i>	marvelous; wonderful	อัศจรรย์	不可思議
<i>loka</i>	<i>loka</i>	world	โลก	世
<i>sahasrī lokadhātu</i>	<i>sahassī lokadhātu</i>	thousand worlds system	พันโลกธาตุ	餓鬼
<i>tuṣṭita</i>	<i>tusita</i>	the fourth heaven in the realm of desire	ดุสิต	中間閻冥
<i>karma</i>	<i>kamma</i>	action	กรรม	鐵圍山
<i>saṃsāra</i>	<i>saṃsāra</i>	wandering; cyclical existence	สังสารวัฏ	地獄

## CITATIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

For all citations from the Pāli Tipiṭaka, I conveniently follow the translation, abbreviation, and numeration of the Sutta Central. For example, Kd 15.2:6 means the Vinaya Piṭaka, Khandhaka, Khuddakavagga, discourse 15, section 2, segment 6. The referred texts in the Pali Canon are based on the romanized Tipiṭaka, *Mahāsaṅgīti Tipiṭaka Buddhavasā 2500*, published by Dhamma Society Fund, Bangkok, in 2005. For more information, see Bhikkhu Sujato, “A Reader’s Guide to the Pali Suttas,” <https://suttacentral.net/general-guide-sujato>.

For all citations from the Chinese Tripiṭaka, I conveniently follow the citation system of the CBETA Chinese Electronic Tripitaka. For example, T25, no. 1509, p. 279c20 stands for Taishō Tripiṭaka, volume 25, number 1509, page 279, section 3, line 20. For more information, see the CBETA Academic Reference Guide, [https://www.cbeta.org/format/copy\\_and\\_cite.php](https://www.cbeta.org/format/copy_and_cite.php).

Sutra from the Āgama collections will be referred to each individual sermon. For example, DA 2 refers to the *Youxing jing* 遊行經, T01, no. 1, pp. 11a7-16b10. See the abbreviation list below for the exact sutra cited.

- AN 3.8: Cūḷanikā Sutta, Aṅguttara Nikāya  
 AN 4.127: Paṭhamatathāgataacchariya Sutta, Aṅguttara Nikāya  
 DA 1: Dabbenjing 大本經, Dīrgha Āgama  
 DN 14: Mahāpadāna Sutta, Dīrgha Nikāya  
 SA 423-425: Saṃyukt Āgama, pp. 111b25-112a2  
 MN 32: Mahāgosiṅga Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya

- MN 123: Acchariyaabbhuta Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya  
SN 56.46: Andhakāra Sutta, Aṅguttara Nikāya  
Divy.: Divyāvadānam  
MSV: *Genbenshuoyiqieyoubu pinaiye* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶, T23, no. 1442; *Genbenshuoyiqieyoubu pinaiye zashi*, 根本說一切有部毘奈耶雜事, T24, no. 1451

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