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Cover Image:

Standing buddha (often identified as Dīpaṃkara in late Buddhism) excavated from Jerai constituency, Kedah, by Dorothy Quaritch Wales in 1941. Bronze, 20.6 cm, 5th–9th century. Collection of the Asian Civilisations Museum, Singapore, Accession No. A-1354. Photograph: Iain Sinclair, 2019.

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Dharmakīrti of Kedah: His Life, Work and Troubled Times

Iain Sinclair

ABSTRACT

One of the most influential figures of precolonial Southeast Asia was the monk known as Dharmakīrti of the Golden Isles. In the early 11th century CE, the famous Atiśa, “Dīpaṃkara” (986–1054), sailed across the Bay of Bengal to study with him. Today this Dharmakīrti is remembered as the forefather of a religious tradition that was brought to Tibet by his illustrious student. However, few attempts have been made to locate his life and work in his nominal homeland. Little is known about what he taught, his exact whereabouts, or why Atiśa searched for him across the seas. This paper looks into and beyond Tibetan hagiography to examine potential traces of the Golden Isles Dharmakīrti in the Malay Peninsula, South India and China, as well as in the vast literature of late Buddhism. Accordingly, the authorship of 10th- and 11th-century works attributed to figures called Dharmakīrti will be investigated here, including the Āryācalasādhana, Vajrasūcī and Rūpāvatāra. Secondary studies routinely state that the Golden Isles Dharmakīrti lived in Sumatra, but the only part of the region that is definitely linked to him is Lembah Bujang in Kedah. It has already been established that a king of Kedah, Cūḍāmaṇivarman (fl. 1003–05), sponsored the major work of the Golden Isles Dharmakīrti, the Durbodhālokā. Here it will be shown that Kedah’s location is also consistent with the itinerary of Atiśa’s hazardous ocean voyage, and with information in an illuminated manuscript created in 1015 with unusual knowledge of the region. Tradition states that South Asian students were drawn to the Dharmakīrti of the Golden Isles by his reputation; however, they clearly also sought to travel to the Golden Isles at a time when Buddhism on the subcontinent was starting to be engulfed in chaos.

*A troubled time is a spiritual guide,
evil spirits are buddhas multiplied,
illness is a broom for bad karma,
suffering is the play of things-as-they-are.*

Suvarṇadvīpīya Dharmakīrti to Atiśa,
Mtha’ ’khob ’dul ba’i chos bzhi 3

INTRODUCTION

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SECOND MILLENNIUM CE, the Malay Archipelago was part of a broad transnational network linked by trade and religion. The region was increasingly known within this network as the ‘Golden Isles’, Suvarṇadvīpa. Since the mid-7th century the port cities across this region had been organised into the loose maritime confederation of Śrīvijaya. Although the ancestral home of the Śrīvijayans lay in Palembang, on the island of Sumatra, by the 10th century it was Kedah, on the Malay Peninsula, that

was Śrīvijaya's foremost settlement. The preeminence of Kedah at this time is apparent from its dealings with the Cōlas of South India and the Song dynasty court, for whom Kedah and Śrīvijaya were becoming synonymous. Buddhists played a major role in these exchanges. It would be natural for the famed Buddhist guru of the Golden Isles to have been based primarily in Kedah. He was called Dharmakīrti, but as he was not the first Buddhist thinker to use this name, he will be identified here as 'Dharmakīrti II'. If we can ascertain Dharmakīrti II's place in the region more precisely, we are better equipped to interpret a critical phase in the fortunes of his homeland, and to better explain why the region emerged at this time as a magnet for the Buddhist elite of northeastern India.

The aim of this paper is to appraise the textual evidence for Dharmakīrti II's life so that it can be brought into conversation with other forms of knowledge about the Maritime Southeast Asian region. Such bridges between the findings of different disciplines can only be founded on solid understandings of the primary sources in their original languages. At the same time, texts that are remote in time and place from their subject matter and from us, as is the case with the sources for Dharmakīrti II, abound in uncertainty and nonfinality. It must also be emphasised that we are dealing with a badly fragmented milieu, in which the literate self-understandings of past eras are barely perceptible in the remains found on the ground today. The findings of the present paper are offered with these caveats. While attention is drawn to potentially interesting archaeological discoveries, this paper is not concerned with archaeology as such, but rather with supplying the classical contexts that need to inform such discoveries.

1. THE LIFE OF THE GOLDEN ISLES DHARMAKĪRTI

Most of what has been written about the life of Dharmakīrti II goes back to two Tibetan sources. Both provide detailed accounts of religious life in Southeast Asia at the beginning of the second millennium, yet they have hardly been noticed by historians of the region. Conversely, the Tibetologists who are familiar with their contents have refrained, with few exceptions, from following up what they say about Southeast Asia. There is, firstly, the *Rnam thar rgyas pa*, in which the expression *rnam thar*, 'liberation', designates a spiritual journey. The title has been freely translated as *The Extensive Life-Story*. This is a biography of Dharmakīrti II's student Atiśa, who is also called Dīpaṃkara, Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna and Jo bo rje in Tibet. *The Extensive Life-Story* provides a detailed narrative of Atiśa's life. It dates to the 13th century, but there are indications that it was pieced together from older sources going back to the late 11th century. It has been edited and summarised in German (Eimer 1977) and is known mainly to specialists in Tibetan Buddhism.

Secondly, there is a record of Atiśa's reminiscences from his sojourn in the region, as written down by his Tibetan student 'Brom ston pa (c. 1005–1064). Its title is *The Life-Story of His Eminence Meeting the Peerless Golden Isles Dharmakīrti* (*Jo bo rjes mnyam med Gser gling pa Chos kyi grags pa dang mjal ba'i rnam thar*). The first half of the narrative relates Atiśa's troubled ocean passage to the Golden Isles, and the second concerns his arrival and meeting with Dharmakīrti II. It purports to be an eyewitness account, and it must be, to some extent, as it gives information on places, people and maritime technology that its redactor 'Brom ston pa—who was confined to the Tibetan plateau—could not have either invented or sourced elsewhere. On the other hand, as there is internal evidence that the narrative was embroidered for local tastes (see Section 4.1), as well as the presence of flagrantly supernatural elements, it can only be treated with cau-

tion as a historical source. It has been published several times (e.g., Jo bo 2010: 27–41), fully translated into English twice (Thubten Kalsang 1974: 34–43; Thupten Jinpa 2006: 57–70) and quoted at length (Inandiak *et al.* 2018). A separate English translation of the first part has also been published (Decler 1995: 535–40). These two texts—*The Extensive Life-Story* and *The Life-Story of His Eminence Meeting the Peerless Golden Isles Dharmakīrti*—are the main Tibetan accounts of the encounter between Dharmakīrti II and Atiśa (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1: ‘The Incomparable Golden Isles Dharmakīrti’ with palm trees (left); Atiśa in the Himalayas (right). From the frontispiece of a late blockprint (*Jo bo rje lha gcig dpal ldan A ti śas rgya gar du bstan pa ji ltar spel ba dang gser gling la phebs pa sogs kyi rnam thar*), MS shelfmark I.KERN 2740/H568a, Kern Institute, Leiden. <<http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:319806>>



The early years of Dharmakīrti II are narrated in an excursus in *The Extensive Life-story*. Very little of this narrative can be tied to a particular place in Southeast Asia. Only a summary is given here, as a full translation based on a related textual tradition is freely available (Dās 1893: 8–9 n. ‡). A king of the Golden Isles, it is said, once had a young son who discovered a gilt statue of Śākyamuni in a cave. Inspired by this discovery, he travelled to Bodhgaya to seek a teacher and met the great master *Mahāśrīratna. This master left a week later, and the prince looked for him in the great places of pilgrimage: Lumbini, the Nairanjana river, and Benares. As the prince wondered whether to return to the Golden Isles, he heard two girls singing that land and property are nothing but a cause of suffering. He stayed in India, studied with various teachers for seven years and again had thoughts of giving up religion. During a ritual at Bodhgaya, an old woman spoke a verse on impermanence to him. Then, while dreaming, he saw the great master again, and promised to devote himself to the Dharma. When he awoke, *Mahāśrīratna stood before him. The master instructed him on the rousing of the thought of enlightenment, *bodhicitta*, and on the altruistic writings of Śāntideva, the *Śikṣāsamuccaya* and *Bodhicaryāvatāra*. He gave the prince the name ‘Dharmakīrti of the Golden Isles’ (Gser gling pa chos kyi grags pa, ‘Serlingpa’). The prince returned to the Golden Isles, and ‘the tenets of the non-Buddhists waned everywhere.’ So says the traditional account of Dharmakīrti II’s life up to the point where he became a guru of renown.

1.1. The Golden Isles Dharmakīrti's Name and Teacher

Dharmakīrti's teacher *Mahāsrīratna has not yet been located in the wider Buddhist world. *The Extensive Life-story* calls him a 'great master' (*slob dpon chen po*) and leaves the impression that he was well known, but he is only ever mentioned in connection with Dharmakīrti of the Golden Isles. No independent information on him has come to light. The first problem is *Mahāsrīratna's name; it is doubtful that it conforms to a valid monastic naming convention, although little is known about such conventions. Monastic names prefixed with the word *mahat* are, in any case, rare. In *The Extensive Life-story's* etymological analysis of the name *Mahāsrīratna, the *mahat* element is instead identified with the title *mahāpaṇḍita* or *mahāsattva* (Eimer 1977 II: 21). This points to an understanding that the *mahat* element was an abbreviation of another word.¹ Elsewhere in the text, the master's name is given in Tibetan simply as Rin chen dpal (Eimer 1977 II: 22), that is, as *Ratnaśrī. As such, the name *Mahāsrīratna appears to be a distorted back-Sanskritization of an expression such as Mahāpaṇḍita-Ratnaśrī.

An accomplished Sinhalese pundit called Ratnaśrījñāna (fl. 920s–70s) was well placed to have known Dharmakīrti of the Golden Isles. This Ratnaśrī was a prolific writer of literary works in Sanskrit, and—as Dragomir Dimitrov has argued—in Pāli and Sinhala as well. Ratnaśrījñāna was active at Bodhgaya, where he composed an epigraph engraved in the year 944. His major work on Sanskrit poetics was completed in 952. He appears to have started writing in Sinhala, presumably back in Lanka, a few years later (Dimitrov 2016: 741). It has been ventured that Ratnaśrījñāna knew the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*; he used an expression that also occurs only in Prajñākaramati's commentary on the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (Dimitrov 2016: 592 n. 66). He lived earlier than the persons called Ratnaśrī who are named in connection with late tantric texts translated into Tibetan (e.g. Derge 1239, 1715) in the 11th century. If the Golden Isles Dharmakīrti's teacher was the 10th-century Sinhalese monk, that would explain an otherwise baffling statement in his *Life-Story*. Their meeting at Bodhgaya is related as follows:

At the time he arrived there the Rākṣasas (probably the Sinhalese) had also come to reverence the Mahābodhi. There also simultaneously congregated all the learned and talented men of the Buddhist world. The great *ācārya* Mahā Śrī Ratna, who had acquired the power of attaining to extraordinary longevity, was also present on the occasion. (Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya 1967: 86)

As the translators of this passage realised—here Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya follow the wording of Dās—the word **rākṣasa*, 'cannibal, ghoul' (*srin po*), refers to inhabitants of Sri Lanka. The context, Bodhgaya, indicates that these *rākṣasas* must be monks, that is, hard-line Sinhalese monks. The narrator thereby sets the scene for a meeting between an unusually friendly Sinhalese pundit and a princeling from Southeast Asia. If the young prince had encountered the Sinhalese Ratnaśrī during his sojourn at Bodhgaya, during the mid-940s to the mid-950s, his approximate age can be determined; Dharmakīrti would then have been born no later than about 930–40.

The hagiographic literature does not say why the prince from the Golden Isles received the name Dharmakīrti. This is a question of some interest, as Dharmakīrti the

1 For another attempt to get sense out of the Tibetan here see Seton (2015: 50–1).

logician was certainly well known in this milieu. The Sinhalese Ratnaśrī quoted the logician Dharmakīrti by name (Thakur 1957: 58). Furthermore, Dharmakīrti the logician is quoted by Dharmakīrti II himself; some references are given below in connection with the *Durbodhālokā* (Section 3.1). Yet the Golden Isles guru simply called himself ‘Dharmakīrti’ without qualification. This is now clearly seen from a manuscript of his *Durbodhālokā* preserved in the original Sanskrit (Sferra 2008: 51, 3.2.14), which will be discussed further in Section 3.1. However, the secondary literature—going back to Obermiller (1933: 11) and continuing up to the present (Skilling 1992: 191; Seton 2015)—has used the artificial name *Dharmakīrtiśrī. This name was reconstructed from Tibetan sources and is not known to be attested in Sanskrit. The manuscript tradition of the *Durbodhālokā* shows that *Dharmakīrtiśrī is a misnomer.

The original wording of the appellation ‘of the Golden Isles’, Tibetan Gser gling pa—also written Serlingpa—can now be recovered with the help of a recently discovered document. A codex containing a Sanskrit work by one ‘Suvarṇadvīpiya Sugataśrīmitra’ has come to light in the Tibet Autonomous Region of China (Matsuda 2019: 25). Nothing is known about this Sugataśrīmitra at present, but his affiliation to the Golden Isles differentiates him from the late 11th-century Kashmirian called Sugataśrīmitra, who collaborated on the Tibetan translation of a *Nāmasaṃgīti* commentary (Derge 1396). The Sanskrit name of Atiśa’s famous teacher can then be rightly restored—if it had ever been written in Sanskrit—as Suvarṇadvīpiya Dharmakīrti.

1.2. The Students of Dharmakīrti II

The top students of the Golden Isles Dharmakīrti are named in *The Extensive Life-Story* (Eimer 1977 II: 40; Seton 2015: 40). He is said to have had four students from the subcontinent who became great pundits: Śāntipā, that is, Ratnākaraśānti (fl. c. 970–1045); Atiśa himself; and Jñānaśrīmitra and Ratnakīrti (both fl. late 10–early 11th c.). Whereas the former two of his students wrote on a range of topics in Buddhism, the latter two are known primarily as logicians. The association between these four figures—who are all said to have resided at Vikramaśīla monastery—can be independently confirmed insofar as their works form a coherent ‘intellectual sequence’ (Katsumi 1992). Ratnākaraśānti, however, is believed to have remained in Eastern India during Atiśa’s sojourn in the Golden Isles (Seton 2015: 42). It is therefore supposed that Dharmakīrti II taught at Vikramaśīla, Ratnākaraśānti’s monastery, and that Atiśa first met Dharmakīrti II on the Subcontinent (Eimer 1981: 74).

The four students disagreed on certain doctrinal questions (Seton 2015: 39–42). Ratnākaraśānti and Atiśa, especially, seem to have sparred intellectually over a long period. A verse penned by Ratnakīrti can be read as alluding to this fraternal rivalry. At the start of his *Īśvarasādhanaśāstra*, Ratnakīrti states: ‘I write to remember, having taken out something from the word-sea of the guru’ (*guror vāgambudheḥ smartuṃ kiñcid ākṛṣya likhyate*), which, ‘resting on pearls of wisdom’ (*sūktaratnāśrayatvena*), ‘produced the defeat of the ocean and more’ (*jītaratnākaraśānti*).² Here the ‘ocean’, literally the ‘jewel-yielder’ (*ratnākara*)—that is, a site of pearling and coral harvesting—means the ocean of *saṃsāra*, the cycle of rebirth. At the same time, Ratnakīrti may well have in mind the one whose ‘word-sea ... defeated Ratnākara(śānti)’, namely, Atiśa. The expression *ji-*

2 For the Sanskrit text of this verse, see Patil (2001: 307).

taratnākara may further allude to Atiśa's triumphant voyage to the Golden Isles. Ratnakīrti would then have provided a rare non-Tibetan reference to this defining moment of Atiśa's career.

1.3. Late Dharmakīrtis in Non-Tibetan Sources

References to persons called Dharmakīrti or equivalent names, who can be clearly differentiated from Dharmakīrti the logician, appear in various Asian writings from the 10th century onwards. The first one to emerge in Southeast Asia, known as Kīrtipaṇḍita, lived too early to be identified with the guru of the Golden Isles.³

One Dharmakīrti visited the court of the Northern Song dynasty. In 1001, two 'South Indian monks' called *Dharmakīrti (Facheng 法称) and *Buddhacandra (Foyue 佛月) came to the court bearing gifts. *Dharmakīrti presented eight Sanskrit manuscripts and a bodhi-tree seed rosary (*puti zi* 菩提子), while *Buddhacandra presented one Sanskrit manuscript and minor religious items, according to the *Da zhong xian fu Fa bao lu* 《大中祥符法宝录》 (Takeuchi 1976: 30). Was this the Dharmakīrti of the Golden Isles? The assignment of the two monks to 'South India', according to the convention of Chinese record-keeping, would normally indicate place of origin, but it could have the narrower sense of port of departure. The Kedah court had frequent dealings with the South Indian Cōla dynasty at the time of King Rājarāja I (r. c. 985–1014), which culminated in the founding of the royal Cūḍāmaṇivihāra in the port of Nagapattinam in 1006. Dharmakīrti II must have known about this monastery, and could well have participated in inaugurating it, as it was dedicated to his patron, King Cūḍāmaṇivarman.

The Dharmakīrti who reached Song China was then travelling at a time of intensive high-level religious contact between the Kedahan, Cōlar and Northern Song dynastic establishments. If it was the Dharmakīrti of the Golden Isles who had been in China in 1001, he would have been in a position to lay the groundwork for another grand act of transnational religiosity two years later. In 1003, at Cūḍāmaṇivarman's request, Emperor Zhenzong named and donated a bell for a monastery in Śrīvijaya. He gave it the name Chengtianwanshou 承天万寿 (equivalent to *Prāptadivyaśahasrāyūṣa in Sanskrit or Pendeh Swarga Dirgahayu in Malay). Alternatively, if the 'South Indian' origin of this Dharmakīrti is taken wholly at face value, he is then a candidate for identification with Dharmakīrti the grammarian, whose works and possible connection with Dharmakīrti II are discussed in Section 3.5.

Another Dharmakīrti is referred to as a yogic master whose students who become adepts (*siddha*), as narrated in the *Kings' Prophecy* (*Rājavyākaraṇa*) chapter 53 of the *Mahākālatantra*. This chapter tells of events and personalities that emerge across the Buddhist world in a prophetic future, but which were already well in the past when the *Mahākālatantra* became known to Tibetans in the late 11th century. What exactly the *Kings' Prophecy* says about Dharmakīrti is not yet clear, as the passage in question has been transmitted in unedited Sanskrit manuscripts that are riddled with textual problems (the *Mahākālatantra* manuscripts kept at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, the University of Tokyo, and the Asha Archives in Kathmandu were consulted for this paper).

³ Kīrtipaṇḍita, a foreign Buddhist master at the Khmer court, whose life is briefly recounted in the Wat Sithor inscription of Jayavarman V (968–1001), has been speculatively linked to Dharmakīrti II (Seton 2015: 43). He predates Dharmakīrti II by at least a generation and cannot be connected with the Malay world.

The Tibetan translation, as quoted by the Tibetan historian Bu ston (Obermiller 1932: 120), represents just one snapshot of a problematic textual tradition, and cannot yet be taken to represent a definitive understanding of the *Kings' Prophecy* chapter. More work on this is needed.

2. THE GOLDEN ISLES, KEDAH AND DHARMAKĪRTI'S PLACE OF RESIDENCE

The part of the Golden Isles where Dharmakīrti II completed his major work, the *Durbodhālokā*, is identified with clarity in the Tibetan translation of this work. It is Kedah. The colophon of the translation names Dharmakīrti's patron as *Śrī-Cūḍāmaṇivarmanadeva (Lha dpal gtsug gi nor bu'i go cha') of *Suvarṇadvīpa (Gser gling) and its place of composition as *Śrīvijayapura (Dpal rnam par rgyal ba'i grong). This Cūḍāmaṇivarman is well known from the Chinese *Song shi* 《宋史》 as the ruler of Śrīvijaya, and from Tamil charters, specifically, as ruler of Kaḍāram, i.e. Kedah. These are all 'contemporary and reliable documents', as was observed in the first published analysis of the *Durbodhālokā*'s Tibetan colophon (Skilling 1992: 191). However, it is not quite the case that 'it cannot be said' whether Kedah is 'in modern Malaysia or Siam' (*ibid.*). Classical Kedah is generally agreed to have been located in the Lembah Bujang–Sungai Merbok area (Fig. 2), which today lies at the heart of the Malaysian state of Kedah. Lembah Bujang, once the site of a major Hindu-Buddhist civilization, is an archaeological site of unique importance in the Malay Peninsula. Excavations carried out since the late 1930s, most recently by local teams, have uncovered more than fifty sites dated from between the 3rd and 14th centuries (Rosli *et al.* 2020: 1311 fig. 1). The cultural and religious dimensions of the civilization uncovered in Kedah have not, however, been at all fully explored or understood (Murphy 2017).

Fig. 2: Aerial view of Lembah Bujang, Kedah, Malaysia, showing Gunung Jerai (right), Sungai Merbok estuary (centre), and Penang (upper left). Photograph: Marufish, 'Birdview of Gunung Jerai', <<https://www.flickr.com/photos/marufish/30101425702/in/photostream/>> detail with applied colour correction, CC BY-SA 2.0



2.1. Śrīvijayapura and Kedah in the Illuminated *Prajñāpāramitā* Dated 1015

Seventy-six miniatures depicting Buddhist sites, including a site in Kedah and a site in Śrīvijaya, feature in an illuminated manuscript of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* completed in Nepal in 1015. This manuscript, now kept at Cambridge University under shelfmark Add.1643, has long interested specialists in Buddhist art (Foucher 1900: 15ff.). The long-standing assumption that the sites are all represented generically has turned out to be unwarranted. It is now known that some of the illuminations convey substantive conceptual information about particular sites (Kim 2014: 43–5), while others incorporate recognisable visual information and aspire to a degree of realism (Sinclair 2016: 256–57). I will argue here that the two miniatures representing sites in Kedah and Śrīvijaya were informed by contemporaneous accounts of these places.

The first miniature relating to Kedah depicts a white, four-armed Avalokiteśvara. Its caption reads: ‘The Lokanātha in Suvarṇapura, Śrīvijayapura’ (*suvarṇapure śrīvijayapure lokanātha*; folio 99, verso, centre). Only one other reference to a place called Śrīvijayapura has been found. The colophon to the Tibetan translation of the *Durbodhālokā*, cited above (Section 2), states that it was composed in *Śrīvijayapura of the Golden Isles. This is an extraordinary coincidence. The two texts, written within two or three decades of each other, provide the only references to a city that is unheard of in other sources. Moreover, the two texts appear to have been informed about this city independently. The Nepalese scribe, Sujātabhadra, knows the name of a religious complex in Śrīvijayapura, i.e. Suvarṇapura, whereas the Tibetan *Durbodhālokā* does not. It is important to note here that Sujātabhadra is not drawing on any known itinerary or stock list of places. The seventy-six sites he depicts, as far as is known, are a set of his own devising. They appear to draw on information made available to him piecemeal in Nepal (Kim 2014: 43–5; Sinclair 2016: 256–57). We are told of one Nepalese cohort that had been to the Śrīvijaya and Kedah region shortly before Sujātabhadra’s manuscript was completed. They were the *bal po* traders who accompanied Atiśa en route to the Golden Isles (cf. Decler 1995: 537–38).

The second of the two miniatures provides another depiction of Avalokiteśvara and is captioned: ‘The Lokanātha on Mount Balavatī, Kedah Peninsula’ (*kāhtādvīpe balavatīparvate lokanāthah*; MS, folio 109, verso, right). This mountain has not been identified.⁴ No place called Balavatī has been noticed in Sanskrit or local sources for the region. There are mountains on the Malay Peninsula with similar-sounding names, such as Gunung Beluat in the Cameron Highlands and Gunung Belumut in Johor. However, these mountains lie too far away from ancient Kedah. Furthermore, the Sanskrit word *balavat*, ‘powerful’, which seemingly underlies the names Beluat and Belumut, is masculine in gender, whereas Balavatī is feminine.

A strong candidate for identification with Mount Balavatī is Kedah’s iconic mountain, Gunung Jerai (Fig. 3). The peak towers over the Lembah Bujang–Sungai Merbok area, the ‘natural port of call as the nearest landfall from India’, and the mountain itself forms a ‘spectacular landmark that can be seen from miles out at sea’ (Devi 2019). It also offers superb views of the ocean. The mountaintop offers an ideal spot in which to enshrine Avalokiteśvara in his capacity as a saviour of mariners. A folk etymology connects the name of Gunung Jerai to the Malay word *serai*, ‘lemongrass’, but it would be simpler to derive

4 My earlier remark that *kāhtādvīpe* ‘presumably is Penang’ (Sinclair 2016: 165 n. 142) was made on the basis that *dvīpa* can mean either ‘island’ or ‘peninsula’.

it from Sanskrit *śrī*, Malay *seri*, ‘a Kedah title of distinction’ (Wilkinson 1901: 7) which is applied to female rulers and divinities. According to the folkloric tradition, the mountain received its name from a princess who was turned to stone there (Skeat 1901: 72). So it is conceivable that the mountain once had a feminine Sanskritic name with a *śrī*- prefix, such as *Śrī-Balavatī.

Fig. 3: Gunung Jerai viewed from the Malacca Strait. Photograph: Allen Warren. Public domain.
<<https://www.flickr.com/photos/j316/48960528448/in/photostream/>>



More solid evidence for Gunung Jerai as an old sacred site is provided by remains previously found and documented on the summit. Ancient building foundations, comprising extensive paving and brickwork,



ANCIENT REMAINS ON KEDAH PEAK.

Fig. 4: Some remains of Gunung Jerai’s mountaintop shrine, provisionally reconstructed two decades after the initial discovery. Reproduced from Evans 1922, fig. XXI, No. 3.

were discovered on the mountaintop in 1894 (Fig. 4). Although the site was found in a fragmented, ‘plundered’ state, it was still recognisable as a centre of Buddhist worship. The first excavation report concluded that ‘the reason for these structures must be sought in religion... both Hinduism and Buddhism’, and that one of them, a ‘cone’, ‘may have been a *dagoba*’, a stupa (Evans 1922: 254–56). However, not even these fragmentary structures remain today. In any case, the summit of Gunung Jerai is the only mountaintop site in Kedah, or for that matter in the region, that has preserved anything resembling

an Avalokiteśvara shrine. It can be tentatively identified, on that basis, with the Mount Balavatī of Kedah illuminated by Sujātabhadra in his *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript completed in 1015.

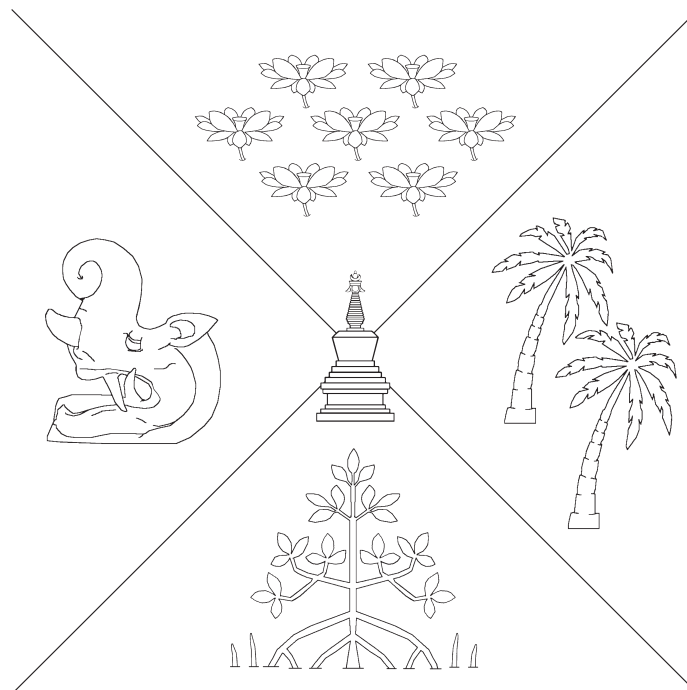
2.2. Atiśa's Landfall, the Chrysoberyl *Makara* and the 'Tibetan' Stupa

Atiśa gives directions to the spot where he made landfall just before meeting Dharmakīrti. He describes the central feature of the spot, a stupa, and the landmarks in the four directions around it:

I went to the site of the golden reliquary [...] built by a Tibetan king [...] located to the west of the forests of [...Suvāṇḍvīpa], to the south of the joyful lotuses, to the north of the dangerous mires, and to the east of the sea monster Kekeru. (Thupten Jinpa 2006: 63)⁵

What is being described here, in terms that would be familiar to ocean navigators, is a maritime habitat. The 'joyful lotuses' (*bde ldan padma*) are presumably wetlands. The 'dangerous mires' (*rngams shing dum po'i tshal*), if Thupten Jinpa's interpretation is followed, mean mangroves with pneumatophores protruding out of the mud. And the feature to the east of Atiśa's point of arrival, a *makara* (*chu srin*)—a large marine animal—represents a body of water (Fig. 5). Is it a riverine or a coastal environment? The *makara* here is described with the word *ke ke ru*, which Thupten Jinpa takes to be a kind of proper name. Others take it to mean a crocodile, one of the common identifications of a *makara* (Thubten Kalsang 1974: 45; Inandiak 2013: 120). Crocodiles are found throughout the river systems of Maritime Southeast Asia; if the *makara* is a crocodile, any stupa site located near water would then be indicated.

Fig. 5: Visual representation of the directions to Atiśa's landfall in the Golden Isles. Centre: 'Golden' stupa, *gser gyi mchod rten*; East: jungle, *ljon shing gi nub phyogs*; South: 'dangerous mires', i.e. mangroves, *rngams shing dum po'i tshal gyi byang phyogs*; West: chrysoberyl *makara* (ocean-facing estuary), *chu srin ke ke ru'i shar phyogs*; North: lotus pools, *bde ldan padma'i lho phyogs*.



⁵ Thupten Jinpa's translation is accepted here (with modifications in brackets) as more faithful to the Tibetan text, which gives the landmark in the genitive followed by the direction from the centre. The translation of Thubten Kalsang (1974: 35) exactly reverses these directions.

The key to understanding what lies to the west of Atiśa's landfall is the referent of the word *ke ke ru*. This Tibetan word is a loan from Sanskrit *karketana*, by way of Prakrit, which means chrysoberyl (Laufer 1916: 446). The chrysoberyl gemstone is translucent and occurs in pale grey, yellow and green hues. It is usually cut *en cabochon* into a smooth ellipsoid. It was known as cat's eye (*mao jing* 貓睛, etc.) in the Indian Ocean trading literature. The chrysoberyl simile implies that the sea creature reveals an ovoid shape when it surfaces. This description fits the curved surfacing profile of some cetacean species observed in the Malacca Strait.⁶ But it is most apt for the Irawaddy dolphin, Malay *pesut*, which is a common sight along the coasts of the Malay Archipelago and is named for its ovoid head shape in Thai and Latin (Stacey and Arnold 1999: 6; Fig. 6). The type of *makara* referred to by Atiśa must then be associated primarily with ocean estuaries. And this indicates that he made landfall at one of the western coasts of the Golden Isles.

Fig. 6: Cabochon cut cat's-eye chrysoberyl from Sri Lanka (left), by opacity <<https://www.flickr.com/photos/60258967@N00/4127311432>> (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0). Irawaddy Dolphin (right) by Mike Prince <<https://www.flickr.com/photos/70804987@N00/20027507121>> (CC BY 2.0).



Which of the west-facing ports of Śrīvijaya correspond to Atiśa's sailing directions? Let us start with Sumatra, where the Golden Isles guru is routinely assumed to have resided. The secondary literature on Tibetan Buddhism, with only a couple of recent exceptions, has not explained the entrenched assumption that Atiśa's landfall lay in Sumatra. Insofar as this assumption rests on the common understanding that Sumatra is part of Suvarṇadvīpa, it must be said that the Malay Archipelago is part of Suvarṇadvīpa as well. There is no scope here for a fresh study of the classical toponymy of the region, but let it be added that the island of Sumatra, with a coastline of over 4800 kilometres in length, is hardly a more specific destination for seafarers than 'the Golden Isles'.

In north Sumatra, the old Śrīvijayan region of Lamuri can be excluded from consideration, as Lamuri is identified with the north-facing coastline of present-day Aceh (Daly *et al.* 2019). Barus, which adjoins the west-facing Sibolga Bay area of Sumatra (Perret *et al.* 2020: 27–8), is another major Śrīvijayan site. Buddha and bodhisattva statuettes dating from the late first millennium have been unearthed from this area.⁷ However, little

⁶ Several kinds of whale species frequent the Straits region; I thank Serina Rahman for pointing this out. One of the Nicobar Islands, located due west of Kedah, was known for whales (personal communication, Tai Yew Seng, 2019). See also the online International Whaling Commission handbook <<https://wwhandbook.iwc.int/>>.

⁷ Edmund Edwards McKinnon, personal communication, 2020.

has been found at Barus that would corroborate Atiśa's description of a major monastic establishment supporting hundreds of *bhikṣus*.

To date, only Elizabeth Inandiak has made a concerted effort to locate the Golden Isles guru in Sumatra. The results were reported in the 2013 proceedings of an international conference on Atiśa. Here Jambi was proposed as his port of arrival. Features described by Atiśa, such as the 'crocodile' *makara* and mangroves, have been located at 'the mouth of the Batanghari river, Muara Sabak' (Inandiak 2013: 120). This is the river that winds down to Muara Jambi's famous archaeological sites. While Jambi was also a major Buddhist region in the precolonial period, it nonetheless lacks a desired part of the picture, namely, a coastline facing the western direction. We also lack definite information about the dating of key Buddhist sites in Jambi and whether they were easily accessed by pilgrims from the subcontinent.

The directions to Atiśa's landfall can, in any case, be mapped onto the Lembah Bujang region of Kedah. The main estuary of Lembah Bujang, Sungai Merbok, opens out to the west. It directly faces the Malacca Strait and, beyond that, the southern tip of the Indian subcontinent. Much of the area on the south side of the river is still mangrove forest, and this is consistent with Atiśa's description. Likewise, the inland jungle can be identified with what Atiśa calls the forest in the east. The golden stupa purportedly sponsored by a 'Tibetan king' (the Zhenzong emperor?)—the most incredible of the landmarks described in the Tibetan record of Atiśa's journey—remains unidentified. It is known, in any case, that stupas of great antiquity once stood in the Lembah Bujang area. For instance, the ruins at Sungai Batu, site SB1B, have been scientifically dated to the 6th century CE (Murphy 2017: 26, fig. 12). Again, a systematic investigation of candidate sites is needed. As such, this is a merely tentative identification of the landfall site, which refrains from committing to a particular scale or central point, and carries no more weight than the Tibetan sources on which it is based. On the other hand, if those sources can be relied upon, Kedah meets all their criteria.

3. THE WORKS OF SUVARṆADVĪPĪYA AND OTHER LATE DHARMAKĪRTIS

The assessment of Dharmakīrti II's intellectual contribution begins with his own writings. His *Durbodhālokā* has thankfully been preserved in the original Sanskrit as well as in Tibetan translation, but the modern study of the text is still in its infancy. There are many other works ascribed to non-logicians called Dharmakīrti; not much is known about authors of these works, and no attempt has been made to determine how many, if any, were written by the guru of the Golden Isles. A recent encyclopaedia entry on Dharmakīrti deals exclusively with the 7th-century logician (Eltschinger 2019). The sidelining of the later Dharmakīrtis in an encyclopaedic project nominally focused on South and Southeast Asia needs justification, given that Tibetan hagiographic works on Dharmakīrti the logician were already contaminated, it seems, by the hagiography of the Dharmakīrti of the Golden Isles (Deleanu 2019: 33; cf. Obermiller 1932: 152, Eltschinger 2019: 157). We then begin by examining at least ten texts of undetermined authorship.

If Dharmakīrti II was truly an 'incomparable' figure in his day, it is reasonable to suppose that the *Durbodhālokā* was not his only work. Some of the texts in Tibetan translation that carry the name 'Golden Isles Guru' have been briefly discussed by Eimer (1981) and Schoterman (2016 [1986]). Their findings are now reexamined in the light of other information emerging on Dharmakīrti II and his circle, and with the aid of new-

ly digitised Buddhist text corpora in Sanskrit and Tibetan. Nonetheless, the question of what Dharmakīrti II wrote can be addressed with confidence only after the Sanskrit text of his *Durbodhālokā* has been published. The remarks that follow should then be taken as invitations to—and not substitutes for—a more thorough study of Dharmakīrti II's *œuvre*. They are summarised in Table 1 at the end of this section.

3.1. The *Durbodhālokā* Subcommentary on the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*

The *Durbodhālokā*—a title provisionally translated as *Light on the Hard-to-Illuminate*—belongs to a long tradition of inquiry into the nature of Buddhahood. It analyses the *Prajñāpāramitā* (*Perfection of Insight*), the cornerstone scripture of Mahāyāna Buddhism, following the model of an influential commentary called the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*. Several authors contributed to the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* commentarial project between the 4th and the 12th centuries. The *Durbodhālokā* is a subcommentary to the *Abhisamayālaṃkāraśāstravṛtti* of Haribhadra (Brunnhölzl 2010: 66), which had been completed by the 9th century. It is generally accepted that the *Durbodhālokā* was written by the Dharmakīrti of the Golden Isles, although an uncorroborated opinion that its author was *Kuladatta circulated in Tibet at a late stage (Obermiller 1933: 11 n. 3; Brunnhölzl 2010: 208, 704 n. 197).

The *Durbodhālokā*, according to information recorded in its Tibetan translation, was completed in Cūḍāmaṇivarman's 10th regnal year. The corresponding calendar year could not be earlier than 992, as a different ruler with the Malay title Haji 暹至 was in power in Śrīvijaya in 982 and 984, according to the *Song shi*. Nor could it have been completed any later than 1006, when Cūḍāmaṇivarman had been succeeded on the throne by Māravijayottuṅgavarman. Taking the midpoint of this interval as a guide, it can be determined that the *Durbodhālokā* reached the hands of the Kedahan king in about the year 999.

The sole known Sanskrit manuscript of the *Durbodhālokā* was sighted at Sa skya monastery in Tibet in the early 20th century. It was separately photographed by two prominent orientalist, Rāhula Sāṅkṛtyāyana (1893–1963) and Giuseppe Tucci (1894–1984). Prints of Tucci's photographs are preserved in the collection of the former Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente (Sferra 2008: 26, fig. 5). Professor Francesco Sferra kindly allowed me to examine copies of the two prints in his possession. As much of the manuscript was photographed out of focus, I transcribe just the end of the third section, which is legible and has previously been reported in part (Sferra 2008: 51 n. 83):

*abhisamayālaṃkāre prajñāpāramitopadeśaśāstre bhadrapādanītau dharmmakīrti-
kṛtāyāṃ durbodhālokāyāṃ tippītau ṛtīyādhikāravivṛttivyākhyā ||*⁸

Explication of the third topical commentary in the *Durbodhālokā*, the work of Dharmakīrti [following] the teaching of the great [Hari]bhadra in the *Prajñāpāramitā* exegetical literature on the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*.

8 This corresponds well to the Tibetan translation (Derge 3794 fol. 190b), with the exception of the superfluous word *tippītau*: *shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag gi bstan bcos mngon par rtogs pa'i rgyan las seng ge bzang po'i zhal snga nas kyi gzhung rtogs dka' ba'i snang ba'i dka' 'grel dharma kīrtis byas pa las skabs gsum pa'i bshad pa'o*.

The manuscript is copied in a hand that is typical of Maithili scribes who worked in Nepal between the 12th and 14th centuries. It has marginalia in proto-Bengali script (here formatted as superscript). This manuscript could then be a copy of an exemplar that aroused the interest of East Indian exiles who arrived in Nepal in the 13th century. Whether the manuscript preserves the invaluable information on Śrīvijaya in its final colophon is not yet known. The Sanskrit text is reported to be in the process of being edited by Hōdō Nakamura 中村 法道 and Guan Di 关迪 (Seton 2015: 6).

What led Dharmakīrti to plunge into the recondite discourse surrounding the *Prajñāpāramitā*—in the Golden Isles, of all places? The intra-Buddhist debates that Dharmakīrti II participated in have not yet been articulated succinctly. Just one observation on his place in this discourse will be offered here. Dharmakīrti II advanced Haribhadra's position that the body of a Buddha is fourfold rather than threefold. Haribhadra's direct disciple, Buddhaśrījñāna, disagreed with his teacher on this point (Dalton 2019: 31). In a quite similar way, Dharmakīrti II's own student, Ratnākaraśānti, took a different position from his teacher on the number of bodies of a Buddha and on other 'foundational assumptions' (Seton 2015: 55, 110). These differences of opinion were all well known to Atiśa. In his **Prajñāpāramitāpiṇḍārthapradīpa* (Derge 3804), his main work of *Prajñāpāramitā* exegesis, Atiśa begins by summarising the positions of the abovementioned four scholars. He identifies them by name: Haribhadra (Seng bzang), Buddhaśrījñāna (Buddha shri dznyā na), the Golden Isles Dharmakīrti and Ratnākaraśānti (Gser gling Shā nti rnam). As the authorship of this work has been questioned on the ground that the 'styles and methods are inferior to what we might reasonably expect' (Sakuma 1994: 260), it can be pointed out that Atiśa was writing here for Tibetan students who were new to the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*. In a short study of this **Prajñāpāramitāpiṇḍārthapradīpa* it was observed that 'We can see Haribhadra's name much more than that of his [Atiśa's] teacher, Ratnākaraśānti' (Mochizuki 2001: 51). Atiśa's skepticism towards Ratnākaraśānti's philosophical standpoints, which has been noticed in other contexts (Seton 2015: 41ff.), supplied one more motive for Atiśa to study with Ratnākaraśānti's senior, Dharmakīrti II, in the Golden Isles.

Dharmakīrti II quotes a variety of other works in the *Durbodhālokā*. He prefers 'philosophical' texts, especially the *Pramāṇavārtika* of Dharmakīrti the logician, which he quotes most often. He also cites the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*, Śāntarakṣita's *Madhyamakālaṃkāra*, Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa*, and some of Nāgārjuna's treatises. On occasion he quotes from scripture as well: the *Tathāgataguhyaka*, the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa*, the *Samādhirāja* and the *Nāmasaṃgīti*. Most of the quotations have been identified with their sources in a rarely cited 1988 article on the Tibetan translation by Hirofumi Isoda. Identifications of a few more quotations can be added here: the *Tattvasaṃgrahapañjikā* of Śāntarakṣita, the *Prasannapadā* of Candrakīrti and the *Abhisamayālaṃkārasāstravṛtti* of Vimuktisena are quoted in the *Durbodhālokā* without their sources being named (refer to Isoda 1988: 102–03 Nos. 5-3, 5-11, 5-12, respectively). All of these works must then have been known in the Golden Isles, if only through their quotations in the *Durbodhālokā*.

The *Durbodhālokā* also includes a passage quoted from the *Daśadharmasūtra* (unidentified in Isoda 1988: 102, No. 4-6) without mentioning the source. The same passage is quoted, with the *Daśadharmasūtra* named as the source, in the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*. Here Dharmakīrti II must be drawing on Śāntideva's *Śikṣāsamuccaya* rather than the *Daśadharmasūtra* itself. Since it has been well established that the author of the *Durbodhālokā* knew Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (Isoda 1988: 104 No. 8-8), it can now be said that he knew Śāntideva's

tideva's other major work as well. The Tibetan tradition that the Golden Isles Dharmakīrti was familiar with Śāntideva's *œuvre* is consistent with what we see in the *Durbodhālokā* itself.

Dharmakīrti II's authorship of the *Durbodhālokā* is not in question here, but the traditional claim that the author was exceptionally far-famed remains challengeable. Later Buddhist writings know little of the *Durbodhālokā*. Rather, Dharmakīrti II's *Durbodhālokā* influenced his direct students, who became influential in their own right. Atiśa, as mentioned above, refers by name to the 'Golden Isles guru' in his **Prajñāpāramitā-piṇḍārthapradīpa*, and further states that he heard the guru's lectures on the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* shortly after arriving in the Golden Isles (Thubten Kalsang 1974: 41; Thupten Jinpa 2006: 69). Ratnākaraśānti's *Sāratamā* has been read as a critical response to the *Durbodhālokā* (Seton 2015: 53). The *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* treatises composed by other persons close to Dharmakīrti II, such as Ratnakīrti and Dharmamitra—the latter is said to have accompanied Atiśa to the Golden Isles—are yet to be studied in depth.

3.2. The **Āryācalasādhana* of the Golden Isles Guru

A tantric invocation manual that can be attributed with confidence to the Golden Isles Dharmakīrti, the **Āryācalasādhana* (Derge 3059), is concerned with the ferocious deity Acala. Acala is visualised here holding a sword and a noose, standing with one bent leg upon the elephant-headed Gaṇapati. He is surrounded by ten furious, weapon-wielding figures emerging from his blazing halo—**Vajravega*, **Vajrakāma*, **Vajratikṣṇa* and so on. These ten furies are quite different from the common sets of ten furies in tantric Buddhism; this may be a sign that the text originated in an out-of-the-way milieu. The **Āryācalasādhana* is not known to be extant in Sanskrit, although the Tibetan translation contains several Sanskrit mantras of Acala that help to locate its sources. One mantra beginning *NAMAḤ SAMANTAVAJRĀṆĀM TRĀṬA...* is found elsewhere in the same form only in Śāntideva's *Śikṣāsamuccaya* (Bendall 1902: 141). There is then a slight but definite connection between the *sādhana* and the teaching of Śāntideva, which Dharmakīrti II, again, is traditionally said to have mastered.

The Tibetan translation of the **Āryācalasādhana* is credited to Atiśa and his co-translator dGon pa ba dBang phyug rgyal mtshan (1016–83). Atiśa wrote three works on Acala (Derge 3060, 3061, Peking 4892), which are concerned with the same form of the deity and elaborate on different aspects of Dharmakīrti II's invocation procedure. Atiśa certainly knows the **Āryācalasādhana* of the 'Golden Isles guru', since he draws a verse from it (Derge 3060, 116a, verse 5). This bolsters the traditional claim that Dharmakīrti II transmitted his *sādhana* to Atiśa. The Golden Isles form of Acala was also accepted by 'Brom ston as one of the four deities of Atiśa's teaching tradition, the bKa' gdams pa.

Some depictions of this form of Acala belong to contexts that are consistent with the traditional ascription to Dharmakīrti II. Only a few are mentioned here, as I have separately studied this *sādhana*'s authorship and associated artistic corpus in detail (Sinclair forthcoming). It should first be clarified that the trampled Gaṇapati and the halo with the ten furies are characteristic of this visualization tradition. Depictions of Acala displaying these features are readily affiliated to the Dharmakīrti II–Atiśa school of praxis (*Jo lugs*). A sumptuous painting of Acala and the furies, which apparently portrays and was sponsored by 'Brom ston, is a noteworthy early depiction. It has been carbon-dated to the

second half of the 11th century (Pal 2013). Many artworks depicting the Golden Isles/Atiśa form of Acala were produced wherever bKa' gdams pa teaching spread (e.g., Fig. 7). The Tangut Empire Acala tapestries, such as the example at Cleveland Museum of Art (1992.72 <<https://www.clevelandart.org/art/1992.72>>), deserve mention for their outstanding workmanship. After bKa' gdams pa monasteries declined in the early Mongol era, this form of Acala was portrayed in art much less often.

Fig. 7: Acala and the ten furies according to the vision of the Golden Isles guru. Wooden MS cover (detail), Tibet, c. 13th century, The Walters Museum accession no. W.896. <<https://art.thewalters.org/detail/7630/cover-of-a-buddhist-manuscript/>>



The depictions of figures resembling the Golden Isles Acala produced in South and South-east Asia are of particular interest. Stone sculptures of standing, sword-bearing figures have been discovered in Kedah itself. One defaced sculpture, usually identified just as a gate-guardian (*arca dwarapala*), features striations that apparently represent the flames of Buddhist *krodha* iconography. This sculpture is usually displayed in the Lembah Bujang museum. Several gate-guardian figures of precolonial Java, Bali and Sumatra could be regarded as depictions of Acala, as well, although they have not yet been identified as such (e.g., Perret 2020: 40, fig. 11). A rare depiction of the standing Acala from South Asia is a 10th-century statuette recovered from Anuradhapura in Sri Lanka. The statuette was sponsored, according to its Tamil-script dedication, by the Nānādeśīya merchant guild (Fig. 8) (see von Schroeder 1990: 298–99, plate 84E). This statue may be linked through its seafaring Tamil merchant sponsors to nearby Nagapattinam, a site that was well within the Golden Isles Dharmakīrti's sphere of influence. Insofar as any of these images can be identified as Acalas, they show that the deity worshipped by the Golden Isles Dharmakīrti may well have had a presence in the Golden Isles themselves.

Fig. 8: Acala figurine with Tamil inscription recovered from Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka, c. 10th century. Photograph courtesy of Ulrich von Schroeder.



3.3. Two Tantric Gaṇapati Texts

A manual for invoking Gaṇapati in the form of a golden monkey, the **Gaṇapatikrodhasādhana*, is credited to the Golden Isles Guru. It now survives only in a Tibetan translation (Peking 4944), which has been briefly discussed by Schoterman (2016 [1986]). This *sādhana* aims at the ‘attainment of jewels’ (*ratnasiddhi*), that is, the acquisition of wealth. The monkey form of Gaṇapati it describes is decked in shiny ornaments and holds a jewel in his two cupped hands. He is surrounded by eight forest spirits (*yakṣa*). This form is not prominent in the Indo-Himalayan pantheon, but a few depictions are extant. There are paintings of the jewel-bearing monkey Gaṇapati—for instance, a mural in the Rgyal tse sku ’bum, painted in the late 14th century⁹—and statues.¹⁰ These artworks demonstrate that the performance tradition associated with the *sādhana* was current in Tibet. Beyond this, there is little, if any, support for the ascription of this invocation procedure to the Golden Isles guru.

Atiśa brought a form of Gaṇapati worship to Tibet, but it centred on a quite different, elephant-headed, ‘erotic’ deity (Bühnemann 2006: 17–8). The monkey form of Gaṇapati in the **Gaṇapatikrodhasādhana*, as well as some of the associated mantric repertoire, is not related to Atiśa. They are independently taught in a *stotra* and *sādhana* by

9 See, e.g., Himalayan Art Resources 42910 <<https://www.himalayanart.org/items/42910>>.

10 See, e.g., Himalayan Art Resources 1115 <<https://www.himalayanart.org/items/1115>>.

the Yamāriyogin Amoghavajra. These texts are likewise preserved only in Tibetan translation, as far as is known (Peking 4991; Derge 3738, Peking 4560); Amoghavajra's *stotra* has been translated into English (Wilkinson 1991: 266–68). There is no known connection between this Amoghavajra and Dharmakīrti II.

The **Gaṇapatimahācakrasādhana* (Peking 4972), a separate work not mentioned by Schoterman, is attributed to the Dharmakīrti of the Golden Isles in a prefatory note. The Tibetan translation is credited to Atiśa and his associate Nag tsho, and the colophon states that it was taught by the *ācārya* Avadhūtapāda. The interlinear notes state that this is a yogic name of the Golden Isles Dharmakīrti. The title Avadhūta is associated with authors who were primarily tantric specialists, such as Advayavajra (see, e.g., Derge 1243). The present *sādhana* opens with a suspicious statement insisting that it is 'indeed' (*lags so*) the work of the Golden Isles Dharmakīrti. It may be that Dharmakīrti's name was attached to this text because other tantric Gaṇapati works were translated by Tibetans who used the name Dharmakīrti (Peking 4992, 4995), or perhaps just because the aforementioned **Gaṇapatikrodhasādhana* was attributed to the Golden Isles guru. In any case, the ritual and iconography set out in the **Gaṇapatikrodhasādhana* has little in common with the **Gaṇapatimahācakrasādhana*. The Gaṇeśa at the centre of the latter *sādhana* is blue-black and four-armed. He has the sow-faced goddess **Vajrakolāsyā* as his partner and a retinue of eight figures. The visual content is much the same as that of a *maṇḍala* described in a *Mahāgaṇapatitantra* (Derge 666) which has, incidentally, been translated into English (see Wilkinson 1991: 247). While the possibility that Dharmakīrti II wrote one or both of these texts is not definitely ruled out, there is likewise no information that would confirm it.

3.4. The **Sarvadurgatipariśodhanarasahomamaṇḍalopāyikā* and the **Netravibhaṅgā*

A handbook of tantric Buddhist cremation ritual, the **Sarvadurgatipariśodhanarasahomamaṇḍalopāyikā* (Derge 2637), is attributed in its Tibetan translation to one Dharmakīrti. It was co-translated by Dge ba'i blo gros (fl. 11th cent.), a frequent collaborator of Atiśa. The author of this ritual handbook states that he is following the 8th-century master **Buddhaguhya* (*Sangs rgyas gsang ba'i rim pa la brten te*). One Tibetan lineage putatively going back to Jñānagarbha links this **Buddhaguhya* to the Dharmakīrti of the Golden Isles, but it is uncorroborated and occurs in a context in which spurious attributions of *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana* exegetical works were rampant (Lindsay 2018: 51–4).

A person who was better placed to have been the author of this *maṇḍalopāyikā* is a different, earlier **Dharmakīrti* or **Dharmayaśas* (Facheng 法称). He is said to have known the **yogatantra* of the five clans, the conceptual underpinning of the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana*'s tantric system. In the late 8th century this person gave tantric initiation to **Prajña* (Bore 般若) before Prajña left for China, according to the *Da Tang zhen yuan xu Kaiyuan Shijiao lu* 《大唐贞元续开元释教录》 (Taishō 2156 756a). This tantric master called **Dharmakīrti* was active at the right time to have been **Buddhaguhya*'s direct disciple. He flourished in the same period (i.e., during the lifetime of Śāntarakṣita) as a person with the same name who performed **Vajradhātuyoga* consecration ritual (*yo ga rdo rje dbyings*) in Tibet (cf. Obermiller 1932: 191). A short work by a Dharmakīrti on the laying out of *maṇḍala* threadwork, a **Sūtrāṇavidhi* (Derge 2508; see also Lindsay 2018: 51 n. 176), is probably also the work of this person.

The so-called **Netravibhaṅgā* (Derge 1191), a commentary on the *Hevajratāntra*, is ascribed to ‘the great master, wise Dharmakīrti’ (*slob dpon chen po mkhas pa Dharmmā kī rti*) in the Tibetan canon, but it is traditionally understood to have been written by a Tibetan. The Dharmakīrti of the Golden Isles is not associated with the Hevajra tantric system in any known hagiographic tradition. Nor have his works revealed any such association so far. Rather, the author of the **Netravibhaṅgā* is believed by Tibetan scholars to have been the 11th-century Zangs dkar translator ’Phags pa shes rab (Sobisch 2008: 76). This translator worked on several tantric texts (e.g., Derge 2689, 3106, 3731, 3734). At present, the relation of the author of the *Netravibhaṅgā* to the large body of work produced by Tibetans who called themselves *Dharmakīrti remains undetermined. The process of discerning individual authors in this body of work is just beginning (Yonezawa 2019: 25–7).

3.5. The Grammarian Dharmakīrti and the *Rūpāvatāra*

A grammarian called Dharmakīrti composed the *Rūpāvatāra*, an abridgement and rearrangement of Pāṇini’s famous *Aṣṭādhyāyī*. The *Rūpāvatāra* is an elementary Sanskrit instruction manual written ‘for the sake of enlightening children’ (*bālaprabodhanārtham*). Although ‘we unfortunately know very little about the author’ (D’Avella 2018: 43 n. 148), it is generally accepted that he is not Dharmakīrti the logician. The consensus is that the author of the *Rūpāvatāra* is a ‘tenth-century South Indian or Sri Lankan Buddhist monk’ (Monius 2013: 124). This profile overlaps with that of the Golden Isles Dharmakīrti. His apparent association with a Sinhalese teacher called Ratnaśrī has already been discussed. There is also the possibility that the Golden Isles Dharmakīrti had a personal presence in the Tamil South. With his close links to Cūḍāmaṇivarman, he would have been a natural choice to have presided over the establishment of the Cūḍāmaṇivihāra in Nagapattinam, or at least to have influenced the curriculum there. The author of the *Rūpāvatāra* was esteemed enough for King Rājendra Cōla himself (r. c. 1014–44) to have endorsed the *Rūpāvatāra* as a set text for Tamil students of Sanskrit (D’Avella 2018: 43 n. 148). The existence of this Cōlar teaching tradition also casts light on a variant textual tradition in which a Śaiva verse is prepended to the original Buddhist benediction.

Another indication of the esteem in which the *Rūpāvatāra* was held in the South is its recently uncovered influence on Tamil grammatical scholarship, in particular on the *Vīracōliyam* of Puttamittiraṇ (Monius 2013: 125–27). The *Rūpāvatāra* was also studied in the north of the subcontinent, in Kashmir and Nepal, where another work by a grammarian called Dharmakīrti was propagated; it is known by the title *Prayogamukhavyākaraṇa* (Hahn 2004). The text of the *Rūpāvatāra* was published in Sanskrit almost a century ago, but its commentary by Subhūticandra is currently unpublished, and ‘a critical edition is needed’ (D’Avella 2018: 43 n. 149). The question of whether the text has any features suggestive of Dharmakīrti II’s authorship should, likewise, be pursued after the Sanskrit text of the *Durbodhālokā* has been published.

3.6. The *Vajrasūcī* of Pseudo-Aśvaghōṣa or a Dharmakīrti

The *Vajrasūcī* questions the Brahmanical claim that ‘the Brahmin caste is superior to all other castes’. Brahmanical claims to superiority had been rejected in Buddhism since its beginnings; the *Vajrasūcī* enters the debate in an unusual way. Whereas reasoning, *yukti*,

was the mode of argumentation preferred by Buddhists in interreligious debates, the *Vajrasūcī* advances its anti-caste argument with scriptural statements, *āgama*. This is a risky strategy; the disputant has to accept the opponent's scripture for the sake of argument, and he then inflames the opponent by picking his sacred texts apart. The *arguendo* acceptance of Brahmanical scripture—the Vedas, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Harivaṃśa*, Manu's *Dharmaśāstra*, and so on—stands out in the Buddhist canon of disputation and places a question mark over the authorship of the *Vajrasūcī*.

Most Sanskrit manuscripts attribute the *Vajrasūcī* to the great poet Aśvaghoṣa. Nonetheless, the contents of the *Vajrasūcī* are unoriginal, monotonous and unrelatable to the epic poems accepted as Aśvaghoṣa's work. Even if 'we do not find any definite evidence against Aśvaghoṣa being the author' (Mukhopadhyaya 1960: xii), apart from this utter disjunction of style and content, the attribution of the *Vajrasūcī* to Aśvaghoṣa is regarded as apocryphal by learned specialists (Bhattacharya 1976: 131–32). The ascription to the 'adept master' (*siddhācārya*) Aśvaghoṣa would certainly not have been supplied by the poet Aśvaghoṣa or his contemporaries. This is an honorific title of late tantric Buddhism, as applied to great *siddhācāryas* such as Virūpāda and Lūyīpāda. At least one manuscript of the *Vajrasūcī*, Bibliothèque nationale de France MS Sanscrit 109 (Filliozat 1941: 76), has a different attribution. It is ascribed to Vaiśampāyana, who is not the author of the *Vajrasūcī* but a speaker quoted by name at the end of the text. This alternative attribution, though mistaken and most likely scribal in origin, indicates that the *Vajrasūcī* may have once been transmitted without Aśvaghoṣa's name attached. Likewise, the opening homage to Mañjuhoṣa—which Aśvaghoṣa supposedly penned—is not transmitted in all textual traditions. This doubtful homage contains the only Buddhist content in the text. It has been observed that the *Vajrasūcī* could be the product of almost any Sanskrit intellectual tradition, even of reformist Brahmanism (Bhattacharya 1976: 131–32).

The Chinese translation of the *Vajrasūcī*, the *Jingang zhen lun* 《金剛針論》 (Taishō 1642), unusually names Dharmakīrti as the author. There is no basis for supposing that the *Vajrasūcī* is the work of Dharmakīrti the logician, who is well known for arguing with reasoning (*yukti*) rather than scriptural citations (*āgama*). The possibility that the Golden Isles Dharmakīrti wrote the *Vajrasūcī* should now be given due consideration. The Chinese translation represents an early textual tradition lacking Aśvaghoṣa's name and the opening verse dedicated to Mañjuhoṣa. This translation was completed in the year 986 (Takeuchi 1976: 42). If the Golden Isles Dharmakīrti was born in the 930s or 940s (Section 1.1), he would have been middle-aged when the Chinese translation of the *Vajrasūcī* was completed. These developments are chronologically compatible, insofar as the sophomoric contents of the *Vajrasūcī* can be regarded as the work of an immature author. There is then a window of possibility, a narrow one, for a manuscript of the *Vajrasūcī* to have travelled from young Dharmakīrti II's hands to China. Potential pathways for such a transmission exist. In 982, for instance, the South Asian monk *Nirmalaśrī 弥摩罗失黎 (or *Niṣpārajīva, Buduoming 不多命) travelled via Śrīvijaya to the Song court. He 'translated scripture' in China, according to the *Song shi*. The Chinese translation of the *Vajrasūcī* is officially attributed to Fatian 法天, but the quality of the translation has been criticised as 'obscure and defective' (Mukhopadhyaya 1960: xi) even though Fatian had been a translator for over twelve years by the time the *Vajrasūcī* was translated into Chinese.

A case can then be made that the *Vajrasūcī* was the very work that caused the young prince to earn the name 'Dharmakīrti of the Golden Isles' at the outset of his religious career. The attribution of the earliest textual tradition of the *Vajrasūcī* to a Dhar-

makīrti is a striking anomaly, as the text would not have been confused with the work of Dharmakīrti the logician (or even the tantric master identified in Section 3.4) in South Asia. Later versions of the *Vajrasūcī* did not or could not bear this attribution to Dharmakīrti, and came to be stamped with the unimpeachable authority of Āśvaghoṣa—who is said to have been a *dvija*, a Brahmin (Bhattacharya 1976: 9)—as though an attempt were made to fireproof its inflammatory contents for wider distribution. Although no stylistic or thematic connection between the authors of the *Vajrasūcī* and the *Durbodhālokā* is apparent at this stage, we might not expect to find one if the *Vajrasūcī* turned out to be shunned juvenilia produced by the young Dharmakīrti II.

3.7. The *Jātakamālāṭīkā* Ascribed to a Dharmakīrti

A commentary on Āryasūra's epic poem, the *Jātakamālā*, now preserved only in Tibetan translation (Derge 4151), is attributed to Dharmakīrti in its colophon. All that is known about its authorship at present is that 'it is not yet clear whether this Dharmakīrti is identical to the famous Buddhist philosopher of the same name' (Basu 1986: 23). There are no known grounds for associating this commentary with Dharmakīrti the logician. But equally, nothing that might indicate authorship by the Dharmakīrti of the Golden Isles has been found.

A different *Jātakamālāṭīkā* of unknown authorship, preserved in Sanskrit and transmitted in Nepal, does, however, reveal unusual and specific knowledge of the Malay Peninsula. Its commentary on the sea journey narrated by Āryasūra in the *Supāragajātaka* of his *Jātakamālā* (Basu 1989: 412) identifies a 'pair of Golden Isles ports' as Kedah and Lankasuka/Patani. These ancient sites are located on opposite sides of the Malay Peninsula, across from each other, on the western and eastern coasts, respectively. They are positioned such that goods flowing eastward to Kedah can be transported overland to Patani and from there to China, and vice versa. The description of the two ports as a 'pair' (*dvitaya*) has been rightly interpreted as an authorial understanding of this 'trans-shipment route' across the Peninsula (Skilling 2019: 198 n. 10). This *Jātakamālāṭīkā* must have been written with some knowledge of the Golden Isles, but it cannot, again, be linked to the Golden Isles Dharmakīrti yet.

3.8. Three Works Attributed to Golden Isles King Dharmapāla

There are three short works attributed to a Dharmapāla of the Golden Isles in the Tibetan canon, which are currently available only in Tibetan translation:

1. the **Bodhicaryāvatārapīṇḍārtha* (Derge 3879),
2. the **Bodhicaryāvatāraṣaṭṭrimśatpīṇḍārtha* (Derge 3878) and
3. the **Śikṣāsamuccayābhisamaya* (Derge 3942, 4550).

All are related to the writings of Śāntideva. The former two works nominally belong to the genre of 'condensed meaning', *pīṇḍārtha*, but they consist entirely of verbatim extracts from the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*. The extracts comprise 'about 30 verses and... about 80 verses', respectively (Eimer 1981: 75). The two *pīṇḍārthas* are not known to exist as independent works in Sanskrit, but as they contain no original writing, they are easily

restored from their source, the *Bodhicaryāvātāra*. A reconstructed text of Dharmapāla's **Bodhicaryāvātārapinḍārtha* is presented separately in connection with this paper (Sinclair 2021a).

Dharmapāla's **Śikṣāsamuccayābhisamaya* is an original composition in eleven and a half verses. It praises Mañjuḥṣa, the bodhisattva of eloquence, whom Śāntideva worships. The opening verse of the **Śikṣāsamuccayābhisamaya* was used by Ratnākaraśānti in his *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa*, which has survived in the original Sanskrit (Luo 2013). This connection has not been noticed before. The **Śikṣāsamuccayābhisamaya*'s opening verse may have appealed to Ratnākaraśānti because—to adapt a suggestion by Seton (2015: 206 n. 41)—it refers to a 'light-maker' (*bhātikṛtin*), a possible allusion to Haribhadra or even Dharmakīrti II, whose commentaries contain the word 'light' (*ālokā*) in their titles.

The named author of these three works, Dharmapāla, has been identified with the Golden Isles Dharmakīrti, albeit with reservations: 'the difference in the second parts of [their] names cannot be explained' (Eimer 1981: 74). Yet Dharmapāla has not only a different name but also a different status. He is described as a king of Suvarṇadvīpa. The **Śikṣāsamuccayābhisamaya* was transmitted by Golden Isles 'King Dharmapāla' to 'Dīpaṃkara'—Atiśa—and his fellow sojourner Kamalarakṣita, according to its colophon (Schoterman 2016 [1986]: 117). The two *pinḍārthas* were composed, likewise, by 'guru Dharmapāla' at their request. It is further said that Atiśa and Kamalarakṣita asked for these extracts in order to clarify an unspecified 'eleven main points' (Eimer 1981: 78), which have been tentatively identified elsewhere (Saito 2003: 6). Atiśa, in turn, composed a short Mādhyamika treatise, the **Satyadvayāvātāra* (Derge 4467), for the edification of the 'Golden Isles king guru (Dharma-)pāla', as its colophon states. The colophon was taken by Schoterman to mean that Dharmapāla was a royal chaplain, a *rājaguru*, but this reading does not take into account all of the abovementioned Tibetan material relating to Dharmapāla. The possibility that Dharmakīrti II himself became king is remote in view of his presumed advanced age, his monastic status, and the lack of any indication that he assumed the throne.

King Dharmapāla then appears to have shared his knowledge of the Śāntideva tradition with Atiśa in the Golden Isles, while Atiśa put his knowledge of Mādhyamika philosophy at the service of the king. In this way, the king became Atiśa's 'guru', perhaps after Dharmakīrti II passed away. The title 'king of the Golden Isles' attributed to Dharmapāla in the three works also differentiates him from contemporaries of the same name: King Dharmapāla, a ruler of Daṇḍabhukti on the western fringe of Bengal, and the Kashmirian monk Dharmapāla (Fahu 法护, 963–1058), who worked on translations of Buddhist texts in China from 1006 onwards (Willemsen 1983: 27). A translator of the same name and place of origin was also active in Western Tibet in the second quarter of the 11th century.

It has been pointed out that no ruler called Dharmapāla is known to have existed in Southeast Asia (Schoterman 2016 [1986]: 118). The existing regnal histories of the region are, however, far from complete. As kings were often known by more than one title, Dharmapāla could be an alias of one of the kings of Śrīvijaya who reigned during Atiśa's visit. In the case of the Kedahan king Māravijayottuṅavarman (r. 1006–c. 1010s), whose regnal name unusually features a definite Buddhist element—'victor over Māra'—such an assumption would be justified. A certain parallelism between the two gurus of Suvarṇadvīpa then emerges. Just as the emperor Dharmapāla patronised Haribhadra (Dalton 2019: 28), the Dharmapāla of the Golden Isles patronised Haribhadra's intellectual successor, Dharmakīrti II. Atiśa was well positioned to bestow such an honorary recognition on his

host, as he was closely involved with the Pāla empire and later served as its chief negotiator (Chattopadhyaya and Lama 1967: 97).

3.9. The Extracanonial Lojong Teaching

Some of the informal teaching of the Golden Isles Dharmakīrti is transmitted as instruction on ‘mind training’, lojong (*blo sbyong*, **mānaśodhana*), within the bKa’ gdams tradition. The foundational texts of lojong, which are all attributed to Atiśa and two or three of his contemporaries, have been transmitted only in Tibetan translation, without Sanskrit titles and the customary colophons appended to translations from Sanskrit. As there is as yet no evidence that lojong texts circulated in writing in South or Southeast Asia, they will be referred here to by their Tibetan titles. The longest work in this vein attributed to Dharmakīrti II is the *Sems dpa’i rim pa* (**Cittakrama*) in 102 verses, translated into English as *Stages of the Heroic Mind* (Thupten Jinpa 2006: 177–94). There is also the *Mtha’ ’khob ’dul ba’i chos bzhi* (**Pratyantavaineyadharmacatuṣṭaya*) in ten verses, which is styled as a dialogue between Atiśa and the Golden Isles Dharmakīrti. This work has been translated as *Leveling out all Conceptions* (Thupten Jinpa 2006: 195–96); the title is more literally rendered *Fourfold factors pertaining to the Untamed of the Borderlands*. Both works encourage the student to overcome adversity by controlling the mind and abandoning self-attachment. They are infused with the self-abnegating spirit of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*’s eighth chapter.

The attribution of two lojong works to the Golden Isles guru was widely but not unanimously accepted among Tibetans (Thupten Jinpa 2006: 293, 316). The lojong writings of another author, Dharmarakṣita, have features that have been seen as suggestive of ‘Tibetan rather than Indian provenance’ (Sopa, Sweet and Zwilling 2001: 10–2), although they do not necessarily indicate wholesale Tibetan authorship. However, in the case of the Golden Isles guru, there is at least one definite connection between his known work and expertise and the lojong teaching attributed to him. The mental exercise of ‘exchange of self and others’ (*parātmaparivartana*), which is regarded as one of his distinctive lojong practices (Thupten Jinpa 2019: 155), is referred to—with the same wording in each case—in *Bodhicaryāvatāra* 7.18 and 8.120 (which were cribbed by Dharmapāla into his *Bodhicaryāvatārapīṇḍārtha*), in Haribhadra’s *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* works, and apparently also in the *Durbodhālokā* (Derge 3794, 206a). These unusual connections fall short of confirming beyond doubt that Dharmakīrti II was a lojong teacher, but they are fully consistent with the Tibetan understanding of his credentials.

Table 1: Works ascribed to non-logicians called Dharmakīrti

WORK	ATTRIBUTION	AUTHOR
<i>Durbodhālokā</i> (Abhisamayālaṃkāraprajñāpāramito- padeśaśāstravṛtti-Durbodhālokā nāma ṭīkā) Skt. MS.: cf. Sferra (2008: 51 No.3.2.14) Tib.: <i>Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag gi bstan bcos mngon par rtogs pa'i rgyan zhes bya ba'i 'grel pa rtogs par dka' ba'i snang ba zhes bya ba'i 'grel bshad</i> (Derge 3794, Peking 5192)	<i>dharmmakīrti</i>	Dharmakīrti II
* <i>Āryācalasādhana</i> Tib.: <i>'Phags pa mi g.yo ba'i sgrub thabs</i> (Derge 3059, Peking 3883)	<i>bla ma gser gling pa</i>	Dharmakīrti II
* <i>Cittakrama</i> Tib.: <i>Sems dpa'i rim pa</i> (Blo sbyong Sems dpa'i rim pa las bzlog phyogs gnyen po' chos), ed. Jo bo (2010: 123–31)	<i>bla ma gser gling pa</i>	Dharmakīrti II
* <i>Pratyantavaineyadharmacatuṣṭaya</i> Tib.: <i>Mtha' 'khob 'dul ba'i chos bzhi</i> (<i>Bla ma Gser gling pas Jo bo la mtha' 'khob 'dul ba'i chos su gnang ba</i>), ed. Jo bo (2010: 131–32)	<i>bla ma gser gling pa</i>	Dharmakīrti II
Undetermined authorship		
<i>Rūpāvatāra</i> Skt. ed.: Rangacharya (1925–27)	<i>dharmakīrti</i>	Dharmakīrti II (?)
<i>Prayogamukhavyākaraṇa</i> Skt.: cf. Hahn 2004	<i>dharmmakīrtti</i>	Dharmakīrti II (?)
<i>Vajrasūcī</i> Skt. ed.: Mukhopadhyaya (1960) <i>et al.</i> Ch.: <i>Jingang zhen lun</i> 《金剛針論》 (Taishō 1642)	<i>siddhācāryāśvaghō- ṣapāda;</i> <i>vaiśampāyaṇa</i> (Skt. MSS); <i>facheng pusa</i> 法稱菩薩 (Ch.)	Dharmakīrti II (?)
* <i>Krodhagaṇapatisādhana</i> Tib.: <i>Tshogs kyi bdug po khro bo'i sgrub thabs</i> (Peking 4944)	<i>bla ma gser gling pa</i>	Dharmakīrti II (?)
* <i>Sarvadurgatipariśodhanarasahomamaṇḍalopāyikā</i> Tib.: <i>Ngan song thams cad yongs su sbyong ba'i ro'i sbyin sreg dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga</i> (Derge 2637, Peking 3462)	<i>slob dpon dharma kī rti</i>	a tantric Dharmakīrti
* <i>Sūtrāṇavidhi</i> Tib.: <i>Thig gi cho ga</i> (Derge 2508, Peking 3331)	<i>slob dpon dharma kī rti</i>	a tantric Dharmakīrti

WORK	ATTRIBUTION	AUTHOR
* <i>Jātakamālāṭīkā</i> Tib.: <i>Skyes pa'i rabs kyi rgya cher bshad pa</i> (Derge 4151)	<i>slob dpon dharma</i> <i>kī rti</i>	a Dharmakīrti
Authors other than Dharmakīrti II		
* <i>Bodhicaryāvatāraṇḍārtha</i> Tib.: <i>Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i don bsdu pa</i> (Derge 3879, Peking 5281) Skt. (reconstruction): Sinclair 2021a	<i>gser gling gi bla ma</i> <i>chos skyong ba</i>	Śrīdharmapāla
* <i>Bodhicaryāvatāraṣaṭṭrimṣatpīṇḍārtha</i> Tib.: <i>Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i don sum cu rtsa drug bsdu pa</i> (Derge 3878, Peking 5280)	<i>gser gling rgyal</i> <i>po dpal ldan chos skyong</i>	Śrīdharmapāla
* <i>Śikṣāsamuccayābhisamaya</i> Tib.: <i>Bslab pa kun las btus pa'i mngon par rtogs pa</i> (Derge 3942, Peking 5338; Derge 4550, Peking 5464)	<i>gser gling rgyal</i> <i>po dpal ldan chos skyong</i>	Śrīdharmapāla
* <i>Netravibhaṅgā Śrīhevajramahātantrarājasya pañjikā</i> Tib.: <i>Rgyud kyi rgyal po chen po dpal dgyes pa'i rdo rje'i dka' 'grel spyan 'byed</i> (Derge 1191, Peking 2320)	<i>slob dpon chen</i> <i>po mkhas pa</i> <i>dharmmā kī rti</i>	Zangs dkar 'Phags pa shes rab
* <i>Gaṇapatimahācakraśādhana</i> Tib.: <i>Tshogs kyi bdag po'i sgrub thabs 'khor lo chen po</i> (Peking 4972)	<i>slob dpon a ba dhū</i> <i>ti pa</i> <i>gser gling pa'i rnal</i> <i>'byor gyi mtshan yin</i>	*Avadhūtapāda

4. MILLENIAL BUDDHIST ASIA'S TROUBLED TIMES

Why were Indian students drawn to study with Dharmakīrti II in the Golden Isles? The received view, as transmitted by his students' Tibetan successors, is that the Golden Isles guru was 'unencompassable by thought, absolutely matchless, without rival' during his heyday (Decleer 1995: 534). The evidence for this unrivalled reputation outside the hagiographic tradition is, as we have seen, not only not clear-cut, but altogether undetected in the scattered Buddhist remains of the Malay world.

The extra-canonical writings attributed to Dharmakīrti II, if they can be taken as genuine, offer a glimpse of what was troubling his chief student, Atiśa. In the *Mtha' 'khob 'dul ba'i chos bzhi*, the Golden Isles guru repeatedly counsels his student on what is 'vital if you are to tame barbarian borderlands... in the age of degeneration.' This question seems to have bothered Atiśa deeply. The answer—that troubles in the world mirror troubles in the mind—takes us to the heart of the late Buddhist worldview. Later, in Tibet, Atiśa's dialogue with Dharmakīrti II was understood to anticipate, in an almost supernaturally prescient way, his ultimate mission to the Himalayan 'borderlands' (Thupten Jinpa 2006: 601 n. 316). But at the time of the dialogue, in the second decade of the second millennium, the 'barbarian borderlands' that would have been most concerning for an East Indian monk lay in a different direction. At that time the invasion of the northwestern fringe of the Buddhist heartland, led by Mahmud of Ghazni (r. 998–1130), was in full swing. Its

key dates and massively disruptive effects are well known (e.g., Salehi and Shekari 2013). The Ghaznavid conquests spread from the Hindu Kush to the Punjab in 1010–11—just before Atiśa’s departure for the Golden Isles—and flared on in the northwest until the 1020s. Atiśa and his Pāla dynasty patrons must have known at least something about these events.

4.1. Fear and Loathing on and Around the Journey to the Golden Isles

A sense of fear and loathing—the word ‘terror’ is preferred by one translator—pervades the Tibetan account of Atiśa’s journey to the Golden Isles. Here ’Brom ston relates how Atiśa and his companions were attacked by hostile forces as they sailed to the Golden Isles. During a violent storm, the ship’s path was blocked by a whale (a ‘giant *makara*’) that was believed to have been sent by the god Maheśvara. In order to defend themselves, Atiśa and his companion Kṣitigarbha summon their respective tantric deities. Dharmakīrti II, taking the form of Acala, also seems to have been called in from afar to help save the ship. The sea churns, the whale vanishes, and an emaciated youth—a stowaway?—appears on board and begs the tantric practitioners to stop (Thubten Kalsang 1974: 30; Decleer 1995: 539; Thupten Jinpa 2006: 61).

As ’Brom ston tells it, Atiśa’s and Kṣitigarbha’s patron deities proceeded to launch magical strikes on the distant enemies who blocked their journey. A temple *liṅga* is ruptured, shooting a ray of light and razing the ‘Turk palace in the borderlands’ (*mtha’ Tu ru ka pho brang*), such that ‘for thirteen years the [...] hordes were stopped from reaching [and raiding] the Vajra Throne [Bodhgayā]’ (Decleer 1995: 539). With this remark, the ‘borderlands’ that concerned Atiśa are identified as the area of the Ghaznavid campaign. The next remark about the *liṅga*’s light striking a Tibetan Bön fortress seems to be little more than ’Brom ston’s attempt to retcon the narrative for local tastes. The final casualty of the strike is the ‘cannibal’ (*srin po, *rākṣasa*) community of Sri Lanka. This term, as discussed earlier (Section 1.1), may refer to the conservative Buddhist community that ‘eats their own’. The existential threats to Buddhism at the beginning of the second millennium are thereby identified as Śaiva-Śākta Hinduism, the Turkic conquest of the northwest, and the Sinhalese *rākṣasasaṃgha*, in that order.

Although the violent climax of Atiśa’s voyage has been regarded as a mytheme (Acri 2019: 67), it captures the paranoid zeitgeist in an evocative way. The ocean passage to the Golden Isles features many elements that would become common in the Tibetan *rnam thar* genre, including a tantric battle with a religious other. It is often depicted in Tibetan paintings of Atiśa’s life story. One such painting at the Rubin Museum of Art (Himalayan Art 65591 <<https://www.himalayanart.org/items/65591>>) provides an explicit representation of black magical practice targeting the ‘borderlands’, complete with wrecked buildings and maimed victims.

Atiśa was at the head of an exodus of the Pāla Buddhist elite. He claims to have arrived in the Golden Isles in a party of a hundred and twenty-five monks and pundits in a ship with four masts (Thubten Kalsang 1974: 36; Thupten Jinpa 2006: 65–6). There are signs that the journey was arranged in haste, starting with the fact that it took far longer than expected—thirteen months in total, with the final leg taking two months and twenty-six days. Atiśa’s cohort then seems to have arrived unannounced or with inadequate credentials. He was interrogated on arrival by the Golden Isles monastics, who refused to

believe that the journey had taken so long, and made to wait for over a fortnight to see Dharmakīrti II. Finally, as Atiśa walked with his companions to his long-awaited meeting with the guru of the Golden Isles, he was snubbed by an elder monk, who later tried to excuse himself by claiming that there was a misunderstanding. These awkward episodes do not belong in a hagiography scrubbed of unsaintly moments; they sound like memories of a painful period that were recorded much as they were reported.

At the time of Atiśa's journey to the Golden Isles, a consciousness of a 'dark age' was becoming evident among his colleagues as well. A religious vision of the endtimes, an eschatology, began to solidify in the form of the Kālacakra system of tantric Buddhism. Atiśa personally knew and studied with the two main architects of this system: the Javanese Brahmin Painḍapātika 'Piṇḍo', a.k.a. *Kālacakrapāda the Elder, and Nāropā, *Kālacakrapāda the Younger (Newman 1985: 75). These connections to the Kālacakra system, and the fact that the system anchors itself to the year 1026/1027, when Atiśa and his cohort returned from their long retreat in the Golden Isles, ought to receive much more attention than they currently have.

Dharmarakṣita, one of Atiśa's aforementioned lojong teachers (Section 3.9), called on monks to forsake their vows and to exterminate the enemies of Buddhism with war magic (Sopa, Sweet and Zwilling 2001: 282–83). Meanwhile, Atiśa's colleague Ratnākaraśānti called himself 'all-knower of the dark age' (*kalikālasarvajña*) in his *Chandoratnākara* and *Prajñāpāramitābhāvanākrama* (Luo 2014: 18; Matsuda 2019: 24, 32). This title presumably reflects some awareness of the Ghaznavid conquests. Much later, as institutional Buddhism in India slid into its final downfall, the title 'all-knower of the dark age' (*rtsod pa'i dus kyi thams cad mkhyen pa*, Derge 3880, 285a) came back into use, this time as a title of the great pundit Śākyaśrībhadrā (d. 1226), who found refuge in Tibet.

4.2. After the Fall of Śrīvijaya

In the end, the maritime Buddhist civilisation that supported Dharmakīrti II and Atiśa's cohort was not overrun by the distant and foreign Hindu Kush invaders. It was destroyed by a dynasty that was all too close to the elites of Kedah. The 1025 naval campaign of King Rājendra Cōla, launched from South India with Kedah as its primary target, defeated, devastated and disbanded the whole of Śrīvijaya. The very name of Śrīvijaya ceased to be heard in local writings, although its cognates persisted for centuries in Chinese and Arabic wayfinding literature. The Malay Archipelago remained under the indirect control of the imperial Cōlar until their own empire disintegrated in the mid-13th century. The Buddhist presence in Kedah declined into invisibility during this interval.

While the causes of the Cōlar conquest are regarded as unclear, it should be pointed out that Dharmakīrti II and Atiśa were not altogether uninvolved. They were both spiritual advisors of the Kedahan kings in the years leading up to the conquest. Dharmakīrti II's probable personal connection with the Cūḍāmaṇivihāra in South India—funded with eye-catching shipments of jewels and sycees (*chīnakkanakam*) sent from Kedah with the approval of the Cōla kings (Karashima and Subbarayalu 2009: 277–78)—has already been discussed. The possibility that the Golden Isles Dharmakīrti is the same person as Dharmakīrti the grammarian, who was active in South India and whose work Rājendra Cōla personally endorsed (Section 3.5), needs further investigation. The Pāla King Mahīpāla I, who can be presumed to have backed the extraordinary journey of Atiśa and company to

the Golden Isles, clashed with Rājendra Cōla ‘on a hot battlefield’ and fled in disarray—leaving his ‘earrings and slippers’ behind, according to Tamil copperplate charters. These charters recount the skirmish with Mahīpāla I just before the defeat of Kedah and Śrīvijaya (Hultzsich 1929: 469). Mahīpāla I, for his part, retreated back into the Pāla heartland; he was later roped into the founding mythology of the Kālacakra (Newman 1985: 72–3).

Atiśa’s sojourn in the Golden Isles is traditionally assumed to have ended at the end of the ideal twelve-year period of study begun in 1013. The fact that its end coincides with the fall of Śrīvijaya in 1025 has hardly been noticed. Not a word is said in Atiśa’s biographies about the Cōlar invasion—an epoch-making event, by all accounts. Atiśa may have wanted to avoid talking about the disastrous fate of his guru’s kingdom while on tour in Tibet, especially as he still represented Pāla diplomatic interests. Dharmakīrti II appears to have passed away during Atiśa’s stay in the Golden Isles, most likely before the coronation of Saṃgrāmaṅgavarman, the last king of Śrīvijayan Kedah. The guru’s bodily remains were brought by Atiśa to Tibet in a small stupa topped by a silver umbrella. This was regarded as Atiśa’s ‘most precious spiritual object’, and it was enshrined in the Rwa sgrenṅ monastery, constructed in Tibet after Atiśa’s passing (Eimer 1981: 74; Luchi 2016: 32). A recent sighting of this stupa is reported in the works of Blo bzang Bshad sgrub Rgya mtsho (1922–2001).

Another trace of Dharmakīrti—of a non-logician bearing this name—turned up in Song China after the fall of Śrīvijaya. The Chinese translation of the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, the *Dacheng ji pusa xue lun* 《大乘集菩薩学论》 (Taishō 1636), is ascribed not to Śāntideva but to ‘bodhisattva’ Dharmakīrti (Facheng *pusa* 法称菩萨). This is peculiar. The translators of the *Śikṣāsamuccaya* may have confused an authorial attribution with a scribal statement here. For instance, the manuscript may have had a postcolophon statement such as **dharmakīrteḥ kṛtiḥ*, as would have been written by a scribe called Dharmakīrti. The Chinese translation was completed a few decades after the last eyewitness contact with Dharmakīrti II. It was begun by the aforementioned Kashmirian Dharmapāla, most likely after 1041 (cf. Willemen 1983: 27). The translation was later completed by *Sūryayaśas (Richeng 日称), who arrived in China in 1047 and died in 1078. It is then conceivable that the Chinese *Śikṣāsamuccaya* translation was based on a manuscript personally copied by Dharmakīrti II and shipped to China in the aftermath of Śrīvijaya’s defeat. This hypothesis can be tested, to an extent, by comparing the recension of the Chinese *Śikṣāsamuccaya* with the recension circulating in Atiśa’s circle. If it were found that the libraries of the Golden Isles had been plundered during the Cōlar campaign, light would be shed on the utter ruin of Kedah’s Buddhist civilisation.

4.3. The Contemporary Legacy

Today the Dharmakīrti of the Golden Isles is remembered mainly as a progenitor of the mind training practices of Tibetan Buddhism. His teaching has now enjoyed a modest rebirth in its land of origin as a result of the Tibetan diaspora. The venerable Dagpo Rinpoche (b. 1932), who is recognised within the tradition as Dharmakīrti II’s reincarnation, has a base in Petaling Jaya, Malaysia, and teaches throughout the region and the world. The Padmasana Foundation, active in Jambi and Yogyakarta, promotes the mind training teaching of the Dharmakīrti of the Golden Isles, as does the Yayasan Serlingpa in Jakarta.

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Dharmakīrti of the Golden Isles, here called Dharmakīrti II, was a thinker of international standing, who lived in Kedah at the height of his career, as can be seen in particular from the Tibetan translation of his major work, and more generally from the fact that Buddhism in Kedah had achieved an unprecedented international profile at the time. Although the Suvarṇadvīpīya Dharmakīrti may well have spent time in other parts of the Golden Isles, such as Sumatra, all the evidence placing him in a particular part of the region is consistent with his base having been in the Lembah Bujang region of Kedah. His year of birth can be narrowed to a circa 930–940 interval, if it can be accepted that he met the Sinhalese teacher Ratnaśrī as a young man on pilgrimage to Bodhgaya in the mid-10th century.

After decades of study and teaching on the Subcontinent, Dharmakīrti II completed the *Durbodhālokā* back in Kedah in the late 990s. His familiarity with the works of Śāntideva, which is emphasised in Tibetan hagiographies, is also detectable in his writings. The ‘South Indian’ Dharmakīrti who visited China in 1001, at the height of Kedah’s influence in South and East Asia, may be the same person, if the possibility of his travelling with a monk from Nagapattinam is admitted. A handbook for invoking the tantric deity Acala is almost certainly another work of the Golden Isles Dharmakīrti, judging from the circumstances surrounding its Tibetan transmission, some internal evidence and the low-key presence of an Acala cult in and around the Golden Isles. Whether Dharmakīrti II wrote tracts such as the *Vajrasūcī* and the *Rūpāvatāra*, which also emerged in the 10th century bearing the name Dharmakīrti, is a question that merits further investigation. The two *Bodhicaryāvatāra* excerpt texts and the **Śikṣāsamuccayābhisamaya*, a hymn to the tantric Mañjuśrī, are attributable to a different ‘Golden Isles guru’, a king called Dharmapāla, who was probably the Kedahan–Śrīvijayan ruler Māravijayottuṅavarman. The South Asian cohort in the Golden Isles, including the famous Atiśa, arrived in the region in the wake of the Ghaznavid conflagration on the subcontinent and in an atmosphere of palpable fear. Their activities during their long stay await further study, primarily through the identification, recovery and analysis of their writings.

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ABBREVIATIONS

*	indicates a reconstructed term
Ch.	Chinese
Derge	Ui, Hakuju; Suzuki, Munetada; Kanakura, Enshō. 1934. <i>A complete catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canons (Bkaḥ-ḥgyur and Bstan-ḥgyur)</i> . Sendai: Tōhoku Imperial University.
ed.	edition
ISEAS	Institute of Southeast Asian Studies–Yusof Ishak Institute
MS	manuscript
Peking	Suzuki, Daisetz T (ed). 1962. <i>The Tibetan Tripitaka: Peking Edition kept in the library of the Otani University, Kyoto. Catalogue & Index</i> . Tokyo: Suzuki Research Foundation
Skt.	Sanskrit
Taishō	<i>SAT Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō Text Database ver. 2015</i> . Tokyo: University of Tokyo. < https://21dzk.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/SAT/satdb2015.php?lang=en >
THRC	Temasek History Research Centre
Tib.	Tibetan

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