1. Introduction

The following is a passage from the Pūrvayoga of the Lotus Sutra:

KN VII: 188,1-2 tatas tān puruṣān evaṃ vadet / mā bhavanto bhaiṣṭa. mā nivartadhvam. ayam asau mahājanapado 'tra viśrāmyata / (= WT 166,16–17)

Then [the guide] says to the men: “Gentlemen, do not be afraid. Don’t turn back. Here, there is a big place. You should rest there.”

Although some of the Gilgit-Nepalese manuscripts show different readings, the meaning of the text itself is consistent.1 There are two more examples of mā bhaiṣṭa in KN XXIV: 441,2 mā bhaiṣṭa kulaputrā mā bhaiṣṭa “Do not be afraid, gentlemen, do not be afraid (= WT 363,17–18).” These readings would seem to be certain.

On the other hand, the metric portion corresponding to the above-mentioned reads mā bhāyathā: Saddhp VII 99b mā bhāyathā harṣa karotha caiva / “Do not be afraid, but make yourself rejoice (KN 197,1 = WT 173,21).”2 Another attestation of bhāyatha is: Saddhp I 82c mā bhāyatha [WT “thā] bhikṣava nirvṛte mayi “Do not be afraid, oh bhikkhus, when I attain nirvāṇa (KN 26,4 = WT 24,12).” If these readings are genuine, they can be interpreted as examples of differences in the linguistic strata – and perhaps in the time of compilation – between the metric and prose portions. In the following, I will examine the issues surrounding bhay / bhī by briefly tracing this word’s history.

1.1. Summary

There are two present stems of bhay / bhī: bhaya-ī and bibhe-ī, the latter being more commonly used. The root aorist forms remain in some older texts, but s-aorist forms are fairly common (→ 2.). The present bhāya-ī appears in Pāli literature, and the aorist forms are formed from this present stem (→ 3.). The bhāya-ī presents are common in the Mahāvastu (→ 4.), and it is certain that the metric portion of the Lotus Sutra was at a similar linguistic stage (→ 5.). This raises the question of the authenticity of the reading mā bhaiṣṭa found in the prose portions of the Gilgit-Nepalese recensions of the Lotus
Sutra. The s-aorist injunctive is the formal wording since the AV or ŚB (→ 2.), but conclusively the mā bhāiṣṭa - supported by almost all manuscripts - is a secondary alteration, and the original Lotus Sutra would read mā bhāyatha in both verse and prose consistently (→ 5.). This reading is maintained in the Khādaliq and Kashgar manuscripts.

2. Vedic literature There are two present stems in the RV. One is bhaya-ie: RV I 85,8c bhāyate viśvā bhūvanā marūdbhyas “all beings fear the Maruts.” The other is bibhe-ii: RV VIII 66,15b kālayo mā bibhītana “oh Kalis, you should stop being afraid.” In later texts, the latter form is used exclusively, ex. Kaṭhop I 12ab svarge loke na bhayaṃ kiṃcanaṃ / “There is no fear in the heavens. There’s no you (i.e., death) there. As for old age, one does not fear.” The aorist seems to have been made of the root aorist in older times; the form remains in the injunctive,3) ex. RV I 11,2ab sahyē ta indra vājīno mā bhma śavasas pate / “Oh Indra, in companionship with you who win the prize of victory, we fear not, oh lord of strength.” The root aorist further remains in TS, VS (ex. VS VI 35 mā bher mā sāmvikthāḥ “Do not be afraid. Don’t tremble” ~ TS I 1,4,1k mā * bher. mā sāṃ vikthāḥ), while MS, KS convey the s-aorist form of mā bhaiḥ (MS I 3,3: 31,4 má bhai. mā sāṃ vikthāḥ ~ KS III 10: 38,10 mā bhai mā saṃvitthāḥ, → supplementary note). On the other hand, a form expanded by -īs/-īt appears, ex. AV X 9,7c máibhyo bhaiṣṭāḥ “Do not be afraid of these people.” In ŚB, this s-aorist form is used exclusively. For example, ŚB III 9,4,18 quotes VS VI 35 and then rephrases it as mā tvām bhaiṣṭāḥ mā sāṃvikaṭhāḥ. Then the above-mentioned bhaiṣṭa, attested in the Gilgit-Nepalese recensions, can be evaluated as an orthodox form of bhay / bhī (→ 1.0). So was this “classical” conjugation put to practical use during the BHS period?

3. Pāli literature In Pāli literature, bhāya-ii is found overwhelmingly, ex. SN I: 130,21m na socāmi na rodāmi na taṃ bhāyiṃ āvuso “I do not mourn. I don’t weep. I don’t fear you, my friend.” The aorist forms are made from the present stem, 2 sg. bhāyi, 2 pl. bhāyitha, which are frequent, but exclusively in prohibitive sentences. For example, in the Jātaka, the Bodhisattva who has become a virtuous white elephant appeases a man who has wandered into the forest where the Bodhisattva lives and says: Jā I: 320,21–22 bho purisa, mā bhāyi, ahaṃ taṃ manus. sapathaṃ nessāmīti “You, oh man, don’t be afraid. I’ll lead you to the path taken by humans.”

The most suggestive example is found in “The Tale of the Carpenter Boar (no. 283).” The Bodhisattva was born as a wild boar and was raised by a carpenter, which earned him
the name. When he was released into the forest, he met a group of his own kind. They were afraid of the tiger’s attack, so the carpenter boar had them set up a lotus formation and encouraged them. “And when he had taken possession of about sixty or seventy warriors of the wild boar, and was walking about here and there, devising manoeuvres, saying, ‘Do not be afraid [of tiger],’ then dawn arose (Jā II: 406,11–13 Tassa satṭhi-sattati-matte yodhasūkare adāya tasmīm tasmīm ṭhāne [12] “mā bhāyitthā” ’ti kamman vicārentass’ eva vicarato aruṇaṃ [13] uṭṭhahi).” The tiger’s intentions were thwarted before his command, and he withdrew in vain. Wicked ascetic said: “Do not be afraid. Go! And when you howl and then leap, they will be afraid, broken, and then they will flee (Jā II: 407,21–23 kūṭajaṭilo “mā bhāyi, gaccha [22] tayi nadītvā pakkhandante sabbe bhītā bhijjivā palāyissen-[23]tī” āha).” Seeing the tiger attacking again, the wild boars talk to each other: ‘The wild boars said, ‘Lord, the great thief has returned.’ The carpenter boar said, “You should stop being afraid. We’ll catch him this time (Jā II: 407,25–26 Sūkarā ”sāmi mahācoro punāgato” ti āhamsu, [26] “Mā bhāyatha, idāni naṃ ganhissāmiiti”’).” The difference in meaning between the aorist stem’s prohibitive sense (mā bhāyītha) and the present stem’s inhibitive function (mā bhāyatha) may still persist.

4. Mahāvastu As in Pāli, bhāya-“ presents are consistent⁵: Mv II: 236,9p naiṣā bhāyati, nāpi palāyati // “She neither fears nor flees (= Ed. Marciniak II 294,12)” ; Mv II: 358,19p śīlavāṃ [Ed. Marciniak ‘ni] ca asantrasto na so bhāyati kadā ca na [Ed. Marciniak kadāci] // “He who keeps the precepts does not shudder. He never fears. (~ Ed. Marciniak II 433,17).” As to 2 sg. ipv., Mv II: 134,3p mā bhāya bhūmipati saṃjanayāhi harṣan // “Don’t be afraid, oh king. Let joy arise (= Ed. Marciniak II 171,11).”

There are two examples of the expanded form in hi. It is possible that one of them retains the inhibitive function, but it is not clear. To a doe who wants to avoid death because she is pregnant, the deer king says: Mv I: 363,1p tāva mā bhāyāhi, anyaṃ visarjaiṣyaṃ // “Anyway, stop being afraid. I will send you another deer.” But it seems difficult to apply to another example: Mv III 408,11–12p bhagavān āha // ehi kumāra mā bhāyāhi idan tam anupadrutam “‘Come, boy,’ said the Bhagavant, ‘Don’t be afraid of this distressing thought (= Ed. Marciniak III 526,15).’” As to 2 pl.: Mv III: 303,17p mā bhāyatha vāṇijā tti na bhavati vo upadravaṃ // “Don’t be afraid, merchants,” [they said], “there’s no misfortune for you (~ Ed. Marciniak III 387,15 ... na vo ītī na upadravaṃ).” There are no examples of prohibitions based on aorist stem.⁶
5. Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra  As discussed in sections 3 and 4, the conjugation of *bhāya-"* is common from Pāli to the Mahāvastu. It is likely that the same linguistic situation existed in the original Saddhp. At least in the metric portion, both editions and manuscripts consistently have *bhāyatha* (or "thā, m.c.). Then the aorist would be expected to be made from this present stem as in Pāli literature.

However, the readings are different. The Saddhp contains only five examples of the finite verb form of *bhay / bhī*, two of which are in the metrical portion (KN *bhayatha*) and three in the prose portion (KN *bhaiṣṭa*). On the other hand, the corresponding Central Asian manuscripts, Khādaliq and Kashgar, consistently use the present stem, *bhayatha*, which conflicts with Gilgit and many Nepalese traditions that use the s-aorist.

| KN I*: 26,4 mā *bhāyatha* [WT 24,12 *bhāyathā*] | Kashg 33b4–5 *bhāyatha* |
| KN VII*: 197,1 = WT 173,21 mā *bhāyathā* | Kashg 188a6 *bhāyatha* |
| KN VII*: 188,2 = WT 166,16 mā ... *bhaiṣṭa* | Kashg 182a2 mā ... *bhāyatha* |
| KN XXIV*: 441,2 = WT 363,17f. mā *bhaiṣṭa* | (missing) |
| KN XXIV*: 441,2 = WT 363,18 mā *bhaiṣṭa* | Kashg 423b1 mā *bhāyatha* |

What are the implications of this difference? In the following, I will attempt to provide an explanation for the different readings presented by the various manuscripts.

In the archetypal stage of the Lotus Sutra, it is assumed to have been *bhayatha*, both in verse and in prose. The Kashgar recension is generally regarded as the most faithful to the original. Sometimes the Gilgit-Nepalese recension adopts *bhāyathā* m.c. in the verses.

The readings found in the Kawaguchi manuscript in the prose portion are valuable. Kawaguchi’s VII: 73a3 kāyadhvaṃ is clearly intended to be a middle-voice imperative + *bhāyadhvaṃ* derived from the Middle Indic present stem *bhāya-"*. The parallel passage in Cambridge 61b4 ṣadhva(*m*), also shows traces of a middle-voice imperative ending. The same is true of Kawaguchi’s XXIV: 165b5 *bhayadhvaṃ*. These readings can be interpreted as a hyper-Sanskritization of the Middle Indic *bhāyatha*.

In the archetype, the reading “*mā + bhāyatha*” would have been normal usage. The ‘classical’ s-aorist injunctive, *bhaiṣṭa*, found in almost all Gilgit-Nepalese manuscripts, can only be interpreted as the result of revision by scribes who were confident of their Sanskrit grammar. In the end, the difference in *bhāyatha :: bhaiṣṭa* between the metric and prose portions of KN / WT is a secondary one that emerged in much later period, and
cannot be adopted as an indicator of the difference in grammar (and thus stratigraphy). In the present study, I am inclined to the position that both the metric and prose portions consist of almost similar linguistic layers. On the other hand, manuscripts that retain the original (or middle Indic) wordings are of high material value. In addition to the older manuscripts (Lushun, Khâdaliq, and Kashgar; Gilgit manuscripts), the readings conveyed by the Kawaguchi manuscript are worth re-examining.

**Supplementary note: Mahâbhârata** The Saddhp manuscript scribes adopted (or revised) the mā bhaiṣṭa reading because, of course, this s-aorist was used in Sanskrit literature. For example, MBhār III 154,20c mā bhaiṣṭa rākṣasān mūḍhāt “Do not be afraid of the foolish Rākṣasa.” For the second person singular, the wording mā bhaiṣīs is expected: MBhār II 40,19cd pitṛyvasāram mā bhaiṣīr ity uvāca janārdanaḥ // “Janārdana (i.e., Arjuna) said to her aunt, “Do not be afraid.” In this case, I would like to note different reading mā bhaı̄s tvaṃ devi. As far as I can see, there are a lot of examples of mā bhaı̄s, such as: MBhār I 128,8c mā bhaı̄h prāṇa-bhayād rājan “Do not be afraid for [your] life, oh king”; MBhār I 140,7a mā bhaı̄s tvaṃ vipulaśroṇī “Do not be afraid, you, lady with the broad hips.” This wording is also used in the inhibitive context: MBhār I 205,11ab śrutvā caiva mahābāhur mā bhair ity aha taṃ dvijam / “On hearing [the words], the mighty-armed one said the brahmana,'Stop being afraid.’” This mā bhaı̄s conform to Vedic grammar, to the wording found in the Maitrāyaṇīya and Kāṭhaka schools. As a matter of fact, this s-aorist form is the one that is universal in MBhār. The use of the MS-KS-derived wording of mā bhaı̄s, rather than the classical s-aorist form, is suggestive of the origins of the people who were responsible for the transmission of the MBhār.

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**Notes**

1) Gilgit recension reads as followings: Gilgit A: 91,25–26 ... mā yūyaṃ bhaiṣṭa: mā nivartadhvam. [26] ayam asau mahājaṇapado 'tra viśramata /. Gilgit A: 91,26 viśramata is suggestive. The present stem of śram has been (‘)śrāmya-" since Vedic literature, but (‘)śrama-" appears after Post-Vedic literature (ĀgniGS II 7,6:5.6 śramat, cf. Pāli vissamati; Mv III 350,18viśrama). Gilgit A viśramata and Kashg 182a3 viśramatha probably convey the authentic reading of the original stage of the Lotus Sutra, cf. Cambridge 61b4 viśramet. On the other hand, Kawaguchi’s 73a3 visrāmata, T8 49b2 viśrāma(tra), Beijing’s 161,20 viśrāmyam, and Kolkata’s 85b4 viśrāmyat[r]a can be understood as indicating the various stages of successive attempts to proofread the original form. The British Library’s 77b1 viśrāmyata = KN 188,2 = WT 166,17 can be regarded as the final stage.

2) This reading suits Indravajrā form. But if we refer to Gilgit A: 97,10 mā bhâyatha karṣu karotha caiva and Kashg 188a6–7 mā bhâyatha harṣa karotha prāninām, the reading 'thā is lengthened metri
causa. See also Saddhp I 82c bhāyatha. 3) See Narten s-Aor. 180-182. 4) There is a difference in wording between “prohibitive” and “inhibitive” in the Vedic literature, ex. AV V 30,8a mā bibher nā marisyasī “Stop being afraid. You will not die.” For a brief explanation of this issue, see Gotō 2013, Morphology, p. 90. 5) There is an irregular bhā.6 (Mv III: 403,17b mā bhāhi (= Ed. Marciinha III 522,7)), but it is excluded from consideration here. 6) BHSD says that the aorist form of bhāyati, bhāy, is attested in Mv II: 308,16, but this is doubtful: Mv II: 308,16m yathā ca prabhā na bhāyī anya kācid “May no other light shine.” 7) The manuscripts are almost identical in bhāyathā (Gilgit A: 17,28 = Cambridge 9b5 = British Library 14a4-5 = Kolkata 12b5 = T8 8b5 = Kawaguchi 165b5). This reading gives the opening of _ _ U _ _. Furthermore, the British Library 14a4-5 mā bhāya-7thā bhikṣava nirvṛte mayi / suits the Indravāṃśa form (= KN / WT). Otherwise Kashg 33b4-5 bhāyatha. 8) The readings are divided into bhāyathā (British Library 80a4 = Kolkata 88b7 = Beijing 167,23 = Kawaguchi 76a2 ~ T8 51a6 (bhā)yathā ~ Cambridge 64a5 nāyathā (sic.)) and Gilgit A: 97,9 = Kashg 188a 6 bhāyatha. The reading of bhāyathā given by newer manuscripts would suit the Indravāṃśā scheme. 9) Almost all Gilgit-Nepalese manuscripts suggest bhaiṣṭa generally: Gilgit A: 91,25 bhaiṣṭa = British Library 77a6 = Kolkata 85b3 = T8 49b2 ~ Beijing 161,19 bhaiṣṭā. But Kawaguchi 73a3 kāyadhvam ~ Cambridge 61b4 sādhiwa(m) are intended to be the middle-voice imperative of bhāyā-stem, *bhāyadhvam. Central Asian manuscripts read bhāyathā (Kashg 182a2 bhāyatha = Khādaliq Fragment 44, Verso 6). 10) Khādaliq Fragment 44 verso 6 +++[va]den mā bhavaṃtaḥ satvā bhāyatha mā nirvṛttatha mā samāṃśam ā[pa]dvā[thā]. 11) The mss. readings are consistent with bhaiṣṭa (Cambridge 144b2 = British Library 160b5 = Kolkata 197b1 = Beijing 365,18 = T8 110a7). But Kawaguchi 165b5 bhayadhvam. Gilgit and Kashgar are missing. 12) The mss. readings are consistent with bhaiṣṭa (Cambridge 144b2 = British Library 160b5 = Kolkata 197b1 = Beijing 365,18 = T8 110a7) except Kashg 423b1 bhāyatha and Kawaguchi 165b5 bhayadhvam. 13) It is unlikely that the Rg-Vedic bhaya-8e was available at the time of the Kawaguchi manuscript. It would be a form based on an analogy from the noun bhaya- “fear.”

Abbreviations

AV: Atharava-Veda. Beijing: Saddhp. ms. edited by Jiang Zhongxin, see Jiang Zhongxin 1988. BHS: Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit, see Edgerton 1953. British Library: Saddhp. ms. kept in the British Library (Or. 2204), see Mizufune 2011. Cambridge: Saddhp. ms. kept in the Cambridge University Library, see Kotsuki 2010. Gilgit: Gilgit recension of Saddhp, see Watanabe 1975. Jā: Jātaka, see Fausboll 1877-1896. Kashg: Kashgar recension of Saddhp. Kaṭhop: Kaṭha-Upaniṣad. KN: Saddhp. edited by Kern and Nanjio, see Kern and Nanjio 1908-1912. Kolkata: Saddhp. ms. kept in the Asiatic Society, Kolkata (No. 4079), see Kotsuki 2014. KS: Kāṭhaka-Saṁhitā m: metric portion. MBhā: MahāBhārata, see Sukthankar et al. 1933-1966. MS: Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā. ms(s): manuscript(s). Mv: Mahāvastu. p: prose portion. RV: Rg-Veda. Saddhp: Sanskrit text of Saddharmapuṇḍarika-Sūtra. ŚB: Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa. SN: Saṁyutta-Nikāya, see Feer 2006. T8: Saddhp. ms. kept in the University of Tokyo (No. 414), see Kotsuki 2003. TS: Tatātrīṭya-Saṁhitā. VS: Vājasaneyi-Saṁhitā. WT: Saddhp edited by Wogihara and Tsuchida, see Wogihara and Tsuchida 1934.
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