

Future Lives of King Ajātaśatru in Chapter XI of the *Ajātaśatrukaukṛtyavinodana*:

With Special Attention to Its Similarities with the Account
of the Prophecy that King Ajātaśatru will Become a *Pratyekabuddha*
in Other Buddhist Texts¹

Tensho MIYAZAKI

1 Introduction

The *Ajātaśatrukaukṛtyavinodana* (*AjKV*), one of the earliest Mahāyāna sutras, mainly describes how King Ajātaśatru tries to dispel his deep remorse for murdering his father. In Chapter XI, Buddha Śākyamuni makes a prophecy about Ajātaśatru's future lives after the king is relieved from his deep regret by the discourse with Mañjuśrī and the miracles in Chapter X. As my previous paper (Miyazaki 2009) points out, the last part of Chapter XI of the *AjKV* is parallel to the closing part of the *Asheshiwang shoujue jing* 阿闍世王授決經 (T. No. 509), which reveals that King Ajātaśatru will eventually achieve enlightenment and become a Buddha.

This paper deals with the preceding part of Chapter XI of the *AjKV*, which depicts the future lives of King Ajātaśatru before he becomes a Buddha, and also explores comparable descriptions in other Buddhist texts. Specifically, we examine similar accounts of the prophecy that King Ajātaśatru will become a *pratyekabuddha* in two Chinese Āgamas; i.e., the *Asheshiwang wen wuni jing* 阿闍世王問五逆經 (*AWJ*) and Sutra 38.11 of the Chinese *Ekottara Āgama* 增一阿含經 (*CEA* 38.11). Additionally, we survey other descriptions of becoming a *pratyekabuddha* and of the reduction of the consequences of King Ajātaśatru's evil deed and its retribution in other Buddhist literature. Through investigating their relationship and background, I intend to show that the description in Chapter IX of the *AjKV* was likely influenced by those in the two Chinese Āgamas mentioned above.

¹ This paper is generally based on Miyazaki 2012: 108–119. I would like to thank Professor Paul Harrison (Stanford University) for his generosity in reviewing this paper and offering many helpful suggestions.

2 Previous Studies

A review of the literature reveals that there is no previous study closely investigating the above-mentioned descriptions in Chapter XI of the *AjKV*, except for the recent study: Wu 2012. In this section, I present a brief survey of the three previous studies related to the following investigations, and then I roughly summarize Dr. Wu's thesis.

Omaru 1986 explored the "faith without root" (**amūlakā śraddhā*) in Buddhist literature and pointed out that the *AWJ* and the *CEA* 38.11 share similar descriptions of the future lives of King Ajātaśatru, referring to the bibliography of Agon-bu Vol. 8 of the Kokuyaku-Issaikyo series by Dr. Kogen Mizuno.² Mr. Omaru only mentioned the possibility that these two texts have some connection with each other, but does not clarify their relationship in detail. Radich 2011, who comprehensively researched how the stories of King Ajātaśatru have been transmitted and changed in East Asia³, dealt with the aforementioned accounts in the two Chinese Āgamas and in the Pāli commentary, the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* (*ibid*, p. 18, n. 69). He referred only to the possibility that these descriptions are connected with each other, but did not conduct a detailed examination. Hata 2010 reconsidered King Ajātaśatru's repentance, focusing on the *Sāmaññaphala sutta*. In the final section of his paper, he discussed the circumstances of the king after his death and also enumerated their descriptions in Buddhist texts, which overlaps with a part of this paper. Although Dr. Hata pointed out the general similarity among them, he did not investigate their mutual relationship in detail.

The doctoral thesis of Wu 2012 explored extensively the narratives of the salvation of King Ajātaśatru in Indian Buddhist literature and intended to clarify how their shapes and meanings have been transformed. Even though our main focuses differ, Dr. Wu's work, particularly in Chapters 3 and 4, and this study almost overlap in their materials.⁴ In some points, however, our assumptions differ, especially as regards the relationship among the texts under consideration. I will address these points in what

² The bibliography by Dr. Mizuno in the Kokuyaku-Issaikyo series was enlarged and revised into Mizuno 1989.

³ Radich 2011 is extensively reviewed by Wu 2013.

⁴ I realized that Dr. Wu and I had coincidentally investigated a similar problem when I heard her presentation at the 15th Conference of the International Association of Buddhist Studies in Taiwan, June 2011. Her presentation overlapped with a part of my dissertation, submitted to the University of Tokyo in December 2010. While her presentation's focus is quite different from my thesis's main purpose, the materials almost overlap with each other and also our analyses naturally resemble each other.

follows.

3 Description of the Future Lives of King Ajātaśatru in Chapter XI of the *AjKV*

In this section, I examine the description of the future lives of King Ajātaśatru in Chapter XI of the *AjKV*. The following English translation is quoted from Harrison and Hartmann 2000: 204–210, which relies mainly on the Tibetan version, but I modify some parts based on the other versions as noted.

Then the Venerable Śāriputra said to the Lord,

“Lord, of King Ajātaśatru’s remaining karma, how much is left, and how much has been purified to the point that nothing is left behind, and it now has the quality of never arising again?”

The Lord said,

“Śāriputra, of King Ajātaśatru’s karma, an amount the size of a grain of mustard is left, while an amount the size of Mt Meru has been purified to the point that nothing is left behind, and now has the quality of never arising again, by virtue of his understanding of this exposition of the profound dharma.”⁵

He said,

“Lord, will King Ajātaśatru go to hell?”

The Lord said,

“Śāriputra, just as, for example, a divinity residing in a jewelled palace might descend to Jambudvīpa from the divine abode of the Thirty-three, and after descending to Jambudvīpa might rise again to the abode of the Thirty-three, in the same way King Ajātaśatru too, after descending to the private hell called Puṇḍarīka Flower, will similarly rise again, and yet he will experience no painful feelings in his body.” [...]

[The Lord said,]

“Śāriputra, after he has emerged from that private hell Burst Open Like the Puṇḍarīka Flower, unscathed and unharmed, King Ajātaśatru here will traverse

⁵ Regarding this sentence, the Tibetan version generally corresponds with the DhR, but the Lk reads differently as below:

Even if the teaching heard by [King Ajātaśatru] is just the amount of single poppy seed, [he] can banish his sin as large as Mount Sumeru. (所聞法譬若一芥子，能盡須彌山之罪)

4,400 Buddha-fields from this Buddha-field towards the zenith, and will be reborn in the Buddha-field called Adorned, where the Realized, Worthy and Perfectly Awakened One Jewel Heap lives, dwells, resides and teaches the dharma. As soon as he is reborn there he will once more see Prince Mañjuśrī, he will hear this exposition of the profound dharma, and hearing it he will there and then attain acceptance of the fact that dharmas do not arise. When the bodhisattva and mahāsattva Maitreya awakens fully to awakening, he [Ajātaśatru] will be reborn into the Sahā World,⁶ and become the bodhisattva mahāsattva by the name of Unshakable. Then too the Realized One Maitreya will deliver a sermon on the dharma incorporating past events with reference to the bodhisattva Unshakable, and will deliver this dharma discourse also without adding or subtracting anything...⁷

⁶ This part is translated from the underlined part of the Skt.fr., which matches with all of the Chinese versions. The Tibetan version, however, reads differently as follows:

[The king] will again see Prince Mañjuśrī. (*slar 'jam dpal gzhon nur gyur pa mthong bar 'gyur*) I assume the above Tibetan phrase resulted from a kind of mix-up.

⁷ **P 272b3–273b5/S 338b1–340a3** : *de nas bcom ldan 'das la tshé dang ldan pa sh'a ri'i bus 'di skad ces gsol to// bcom ldan 'das rgyal po ma skyes dgra'i las kyi lhag ma ci tsam zhig ni lus/ ci (S: ji) tsam zhig ni lhag ma (S: om. ma) lus par byang zhing slan cad (S: chad) mi skye ba'i chos cen du gyur/ bcom ldan 'das kyi bka' stsal pa/ sh'a ri'i bu rgyal po ma skyes dgra'i las kyi lhag ma yungs kar gyi 'brum bu tsam ni lus so// ri rab ri'i rgyal po tsam ni chos zab mo 'di bstan pa khong du chud pas lhag ma ma lus par byang ste/ phyin chad mi skye ba'i chos can du gyur to// gsol pa/ ci bcom ldan 'das rgyal po ma skyes dgra' dnyal par 'chi (S: mchi) 'am/ bcom ldan 'das kyi bka' stsal pa/ sh'a ri'i bu 'di lta ste/ dper na lha'i bu (P om.) rin po che'i khang pa brtseg (S: rtseg) ma na 'dug pa las sum cu rtsa gsum gyi lha'i gnas nas 'dzam bu'i gling du 'bab cing / 'dzam bu'i gling du babs nas slar yang sum cu (P: bcu) rtsa gsum gyi gnas su 'jig (S: 'dzeg) pa de bzhin du rgyal mo ma skyes dgra yang so so'i sems can dmyal ba me tog pun d'a (S: punḍa) ri ka zhes bya bar babs nas de bzhin du 'dzegs te/ de lus la sdug bsngul ba'i tshor ba reg par yang mi 'gyur ro// [...] sh'a ri'i bu rgyal po ma skyes dgra 'di yang (S: 'ang) so so'i sems can dmyal ba me (P: ma) tog pun d'a (S: punḍa) ri ka ltar gas pa de nas byung nas rma (P: ma) med cing ma smas par steng gi phyogs kyi cha sangs rgyas kyi zhing 'di nas sangs rgyas kyi zhing bzhi stong bzhi brgya das pa na/ 'jig rten gyi kham brgyan pa zhes bya ba de na de bzhin gshegs pa dgra bcom pa yang (S: 'ang) dag par rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas rin po che'i phung po zhes bya ba bzhugs shing (S om.) 'tsho (P: mtsho) gzhes (S: gzhes la) chos kyang ston pa'i sangs rgyas kyi zhing der skye bar 'gyur ro// de der skyes ma thag tu slar yang 'jam dpal gzhon nur gyur pa yang (S: 'ang) mthong par 'gyur ro// chos zab mo bstan pa 'di yang (S: 'ang) thos par 'gyur ro// thos nas kyang de nyid du mi skye ba'i chos la bzod pa thob par 'gyur ro (S om.) // gang gi tshé na byang chub sems dpa' sems dpa' chen po byams pa byang chub mngon par rdzogs par 'tshang rgya bar 'gyur ba de'i tshé yang (S: 'ang) slar 'jam dpal gzhon nur gyur pa mthong bar 'gyur te/ byang chub sems dpa' sems dpa' chen po mi g-yo ba zhes bya bar 'gyur ro// de na yang (S: 'ang) byams pa de bzhin gshegs pas byang chub sems dpa' mi g-yo ba la sogs pa la sngon byung ba dang ldan pa'i chos kyi gtam brjod (S: rjod) par 'gyur te/ chos kyi rnam grangs 'di yang (S: 'ang) ma lhag ma bri bar brjod (S: rjod) par 'gyur ro// (= Lk: T. 15.404a14–b12; Dh: T. 15.425b28–c26; Ft: T. 15.446a22–c2)
Skt.fr.: *deveṣu trayastriṃśeṣu devaputraḥ divye ratnamaye kūtāgāre nil(ayana ...) upapatsyati / utkramati ca / na cāsya kāye duḥkhasya vedanā a(...) ... eṣa śāriputra rājā ajātaśatruḥ tataḥ piṇḍorīye mahānarakād udgāmya ūrdhvadiśābhāge upapatsyate ito buddhakṣetrāc catuṣcatvāriṃśad buddhakṣetraśa(tāni ...) nāma tathāgato 'rhān sammyaksambuddhaḥ etarhi dharmam deṣeti / eṣa tatra**

The above quotation from Chapter XI of the *AjKV* can be summarized under the following two points: First, the evil deed of King Ajātaśatru was purified by his hearing the teaching; second, the king descends into the hell, but soon he ascends to the Buddha-field above the Sahā world and returns to this Sahā world.

4 Accounts of the Prophecy that King Ajātaśatru will Become a *Pratyekabuddha* in Other Buddhist Texts

4.1 Accounts of the Prophecy that King Ajātaśatru will Become a *Pratyekabuddha* in the *AWJ* and *CEA* 38.11

4.1.1 Outlines of the *AWJ* and *CEA* 38.11

Here I provide an overview of the *AWJ* and *CEA* 38.11 before examining their accounts in detail.

First, according to Mizuno 1989: 426–430, the *AWJ* is presumed to be originally included in the lost Chinese *Ekottara Āgama* translated by *Dharmanandi (曇摩難提), although the existing Chinese *Ekottara Āgama* (T. No. 125), translated by *Saṃghadeva (僧伽提婆), does not include its corresponding sutra. There is no need to argue against Dr. Mizuno’s presumption, because we cannot find any obvious element of Mahāyāna Buddhism in the *AWJ*.

The outline of the *AWJ* is as follows: In front of the assembly of monks (*bhikṣus*), Buddha Śākyamuni explains that one who commits one of five grave sins (*ānantaryakarma*) certainly descends to one of the hells. After hearing the above statement of the Buddha, King Ajātaśatru feels deeply worried, but Devadatta denies it. When the monks inform Śākyamuni of the above, he explains that King Ajātaśatru will be a *pratyekabuddha* in his future life. Even after knowing this prophecy of the Buddha, the king still doubts it and repeatedly sends his minister, Jīvaka, in order to confirm whether it is true or not. Finally, the king wishes to see Śākyamuni in person, but the sutra comes to an end before the king can meet with the Buddha.

Next, the *CEA* 38.11 is one of the texts including the “Legend of the Buddha’s Visit to Vaiśālī,” according to Akanuma 1927: 145 and Iwai 2006. There survive three other

kṣetre upapannaḥ punar eva mañjuśriyaṃ kumārabhūtaṃ drakṣyati imāṃ ca gaṃbhīrāṃ dharmadeś(anāṃ śr)roṣyati ... anutpattikeṣu ca dharme)ṣu kṣāntiṃ pratilapsyate / yadā ca maitreyaṇa bodhisatvena bodhiḥ prāptā bhaviṣyati tatra eṣa punar eva tatas saḥāyām lokadhātāu upapadyiṣyati ākhyātāvī (...)ṣo vandiṣyati / pūrvayogasamprayuktaṃ dharmam deśayiṣyati (Harrison and Hartmann 2000: 204–209)

Buddhist texts containing the “Legend of the Buddha’s Visit to Vaiśāli,” in which King Ajātaśatru appears; that is, the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* of the Sarvāstivāda Vinaya (T. No. 1448), the *Pusa benxing jing* 菩薩本行經 (T. No. 155), and the *Chu kongzaihuan jing* 除恐災患經 (T. No. 744).

In the *CEA* 38.11, the prophecy of King Ajātaśatru appears in the following context: When Buddha Śākyamuni is staying in Rājagṛha during the rainy season retreat, accepting King Ajātaśatru’s invitation, a messenger from Vaiśāli, where plagues were spreading, comes and asks Buddha to visit the city. Then Buddha tells the messenger that King Ajātaśatru will become a *pratyekabuddha* in the future, in order to get permission to depart from Rājagṛha. When hearing the prophecy from the messenger, the king allows the Buddha to leave for Vaiśāli.

4.1.2 Accounts of King Ajātaśatru’s Future in the *AWJ* and *CEA* 38.11

Next, I translate similar accounts of the prophecy that King Ajātaśatru will become a *pratyekabuddha* in the *AWJ* and *CEA* 38.11.

- ***AWJ* (T. 14.776b26–c6):** Although the King of Magadha (= King Ajātaśatru), who murdered his father and did evil deeds, will be reborn into the Hell of “Like a Bouncing Ball” after his life ends, he will be born into the Heavens of the Four Deva-kings after his life ends [in that hell]. After his life ends [in that heaven], he will be born into the Heavens of the Thirty-three Gods. After ending his life [in that heaven], he will be born into the Heaven of Yama, into the Heaven of Tuṣita, into the Heaven where one’s desires are magically fulfilled (**nirmāṇarati*), and into the Heaven of where one can partake in the pleasures of others (**parinirmitavaśavartin*). After his life ends [in that heaven], he will be born into the Heaven where one’s desires are magically fulfilled, into the Heaven of Tuṣita, into the Heaven of Yama, into the Heavens of the Thirty-three Gods, and into the palace of the Four Deva-kings, and [finally] he will be born into this [human] realm and turn into a human form. In the above way, the great king will not fall into the three lower realms and will instead keep transmigrating in the human realm for twenty *kalpas*. When gaining a final human-body, he will shave his hair and beard and wearing threefold robe, and with strong faith, will leave the household and become a monk. [He will] become a *pratyekabuddha*, named

“Stainless.”⁸

- *CEA* 38.11 (T. 2.726a7–16): Although your father had no fault, [you] seized and injured him; therefore, you should have been reborn into the Avīci hell and stayed there for one *kalpa*. But, today you have expiated your sin by repenting your past sin, and you have attained the faith by the teaching of the Tathāgata. By means of this merit, you could dispel your sin completely forever. When your life ends, you will be reborn into the “Bouncing Ball” hell. After your life ends [in that hell], you will be born into the Heavens of the Four Deva-kings. After your life ends [in that heaven], you will be born into the Heaven of Yama. After your life ends in the Heaven of Yama, you will be born into the Heaven of Tuṣita, into the Heaven where one’s desires are magically fulfilled (**nirmāṇarati*) and into the Heaven where one can partake in the pleasures of others (**parinirmitavaśavartin*). O Great King, you should know you will not fall into the [three] lower realms and continually be reborn into the human realm for twenty *kalpas*, and having gained the final body, you will become a monk by shaving your head and beard and wearing three kind of robes, and will train yourself with the unshakable faith. [You will become] a *pratyekabuddha*, named “Stainless.”⁹

It is clear that the above two descriptions in the *AWJ* and *CEA* 38.11 are quite similar, as Omaru 1986 has already pointed out. To summarize, both state that after his death King Ajātaśatru will descend into the hell for one lifetime, but then will be reborn into the heavens, and finally will be reborn into the human realm and will become a *pratyekabuddha*. In short, after falling into hell the king will ascend to the heavens and descend to the human realms in his future lives. Therefore, we can assume that these

⁸ 「摩竭國王雖殺父王彼作惡命終已當生地獄如拍毬，從彼命終當生四天王宮。從彼命終，當生三十三天。從彼命終，當生炎天、兜術天、化自在天、他化自在天。從彼命終，復當生化自在天、兜術天、炎天、三十三天、四天王宮。復當生此間受人形。如是大王二十劫中不趣三惡道，流轉人間。最後受人身，當剃除鬚髮，著三法衣，以信堅固，出家學道。成辟支佛，名曰無穢」

In the *AWJ*, the descriptions similar to the above-quoted appear three times in total. The above quote is the second example, which a monk tells to the king’s minister, Jīvaka. The whole of the *AWJ* was translated into English in Wu 2012: 158–160.

⁹ 「父王無咎而取害之，當生阿鼻地獄中經歷一劫。然今日以離此罪，改其過罪，於如來法中信根成就。緣此德本，得滅此罪永無有餘。於今身命終當生拍毬地獄中。於彼命終，當生四天王上。於彼命終，生豔天上。於豔天上命終，生兜術天、化自在天、他化自在天，復還以次來至四天王中。大王！當知。二十劫中不墮惡趣，恒在人中生，最後受身，以信堅固，剃除鬚髮，著三法衣，出家學道，名曰除惡辟支佛」

Wu 2012: 178–179 includes the English translation of the above part.

closely similar descriptions share some compilation background, and here we try to examine it on the basis of the following two points:

- (i) In the *AWJ*, the above description of King Ajātaśatru plays a key role, but in the *CEA* 38.11 the account is quite episodic.
- (ii) The above account of King Ajātaśatru does not appear in the texts including the “Legend of the Buddha’s Visit to Vaiśāli,” other than the *CEA* 38.11.

First, in the *AWJ* the account that King Ajātaśatru will become a *pratyekabuddha* appears three times as one of the main topics, but in the *CEA* 38.11, whose main story is the “Legend of the Buddha’s Visit to Vaiśāli,” the account of King Ajātaśātru’s future plays a subsidiary role. Second, among the texts containing the “Legend of Buddha’s Visit to Vaiśāli,” the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* of the Sarvāstivāda Vinaya (T. No. 1448) and the *Chu kongzaihuan jing* 除恐災患經 (T. No. 744) do not include the account of the prophecy for King Ajātaśatru, and the other one, the *Pusa benxing jing* 菩薩本行經 (T. No. 155), describes a different prophecy for King Ajātaśatru, as shown in the following section. The above examination of the role and importance in each of the texts concludes that there are two possibilities: the first is that the *CEA* 38.11 refers to the *AWJ*, and the second is that there were some sources common to the *AWJ* and *CEA* 38.11.¹⁰

4.2 Accounts of King Ajātaśatru’s Future in the *Sumaṅgalavilāsini*

As MacQueen 1988 and Radich 2011 pointed out, the *Sumaṅgalavilāsini* (*Sv*), the commentary on the *Dīgha Nikāya* by Buddhaghosa, also includes the description of King Ajātaśātru’s future as follows:

- If this man (= King Ajātaśātru) had not murdered his father, the man sitting here would have achieved the stage of *Sotāpatti*. However, this man encountered obstacles by association with the evil friend. Since this man (= King Ajātaśātru) approached the Tathāgata and took refuge in the Three Treasures by [listening to] my great teaching, like someone who murders another person [but who] is able to

¹⁰ Wu 2012: 192–193 also mentions the above two possibilities, but she emphasizes the second possibility more than the first one.

avoid his punishment in the amount of a fistful of flowers [by taking refuge in the Three Treasures]¹¹, **this man (= King Ajātaśātru) will be reborn in the Lohakumbhī hell and will reach the lowest level after descending downwards for three hundred years. And then he will again ascend upwards for three hundred years and will be released after reaching to the highest level. The above story was reportedly told by the Lord, but it is not recorded in the Canon.**¹²

- After hearing this sutra, what rewards did this king (= Ajātaśātru) gain? He gained a great number of rewards. Since his father was killed, this man could not get any sleep in day and night. However, since he approached the Buddha and heard the pleasant and beneficial teaching, he was able to sleep well. He paid a great honor to the Three Treasures. No other person possesses a greater faith of an unenlightened person than this king. In the future, he will become a *pratyekabuddha*, named Viditavisesa, and will finally be liberated.¹³

The sentences in **bold type** in the above quotations resemble the descriptions of King Ajātaśātru's future in the *AWJ* and *CEA* 38.11. Specifically, they similarly describe that King Ajātaśātru will descend and ascend between hells and heavens in his future and finally will become a *pratyekabuddha*.

Although the two above-quoted parts in the *Sv* appear in succession, we can find that the first one is annotated as underlined, but the second one has no comment. The remarks on the first one indicate that these two parts originated from different sources,

¹¹ *yathā nāma koci purisa-vadham katvā puppha-muṭṭhi-mattena daṇḍena mucceyya*. This part is unclear, especially the expression “*puppha-muṭṭhi-mattena daṇḍena*” (his punishment in the amount of a fistful of flowers). This probably means that a murderer who takes refuge in the Three Treasures is able to avoid a limited amount of his punishment.

¹² *sace iminā pitā ghātito nābhavissa idāni idh' eva nisinno sotā-patti-maggaṃ patto abhavissa. pāpamitta-samsaggena pan' assa antarāyo jāto. evam sante pi yasmā ayam tathāgatam upasamkamitvā ratana-ttāyam saranam gato, tasmā mama sāsana-mahantatāya yathā nāma koci purisa-vadham katvā puppha-muṭṭhi-mattena daṇḍena mucceyya, evam evāyam loha-kumbhīyam nibbattetvā tiṇsa vassa-sahassāni adho patanto heṭṭhima-talaṃ patvā tiṇsa vassa-sahassāni uddham ugacchanto puna uparima-talaṃ pāpunivā muccisatīti. idam pi kira bhagavatā vuttam eva, pāliyam pana na ārūham.* (*Sv* Vol. I pp. 237–238)

Wu 2012: 147 also translates this part into English.

¹³ *imam pana suttaṃ sutvā rañño ko ānisaṇso laddho? mahā ānisaṇso laddho. ayam hi pitu-mārīta-kālato paṭṭhāya n' eva rattim na divā niddam labhati. satthāraṃ pana upasamkamitvā imāya madhurāya ojavatīvā dhammadesanāya sutakālato paṭṭhāya niddam labhi. tinnam ratanānam mahāsakkāram akāsi. pothujjanikāya saddhāya samannāgato nāma iminā raññā sadiso nāma nāhosī. anāgate pana Vidita-viseso nāma paccekabuddho hutvā parinibbāyissatīti.* (*Sv* Vol. I pp. 238)

Wu 2012: 148 also translates this part into English.

so we may presume that they were arranged into the above continuous sequence when this commentary was composed or sometime before.

4.3 The Relation between the Two Chinese Āgamas and the *AjKV*, Regarding the Accounts of King Ajātaśatru’s Future Lives

This subsection examines the relationship between Chapter XI of the *AjKV* and the two Chinese Āgamas: the *AWJ* and *CEA* 38.11; these three texts share descriptions of King Ajātaśatru’s future. The following two resemblances indicate the possibility that their compilation backgrounds could have been related.

First, the three texts describe in a broadly similar manner how King Ajātaśatru will be reborn repeatedly before becoming a *pratyekabuddha*. Concretely, the king will fall into hell immediately after his death, but he will be reborn in the heavens or in the buddha-field above this buddha-field, and finally, he will return to the human realm or this *Sahā* world and become a *pratyekabuddha* or a bodhisattva. In short, the king will transmigrate up and down before becoming a *pratyekabuddha* or a bodhisattva in his future lives.

Second, as shown in Table A, the materials of the *AjKV* and the two Chinese Āgamas share similar descriptions about the hell into which the king will be reborn.

Table A: Expressions Related to the Hell where King Ajātaśatru will be Reborn

<i>AjKV</i>	Tibetan ver.	<i>*puṇḍarīka nāma pratyekanaraka</i>
	Skt.fr.	<i>piṇḍorīye mahānarakād</i>
	Lk	泥犁名賓頭
	DhR	地獄名賓陀羅；集欲輕地獄
<i>AWJ</i>	當生地獄如拍毬，從彼命終...	
<i>CEA</i> 38.11	拍毬地獄	

It is not easy to interpret completely the description related to the hell where King Ajātaśatru will fall after his death, especially in the *AjKV*,¹⁴ but we may assume that

¹⁴ The proper names of the hell in the two Chinese versions of the *AjKV* are presumed to be “**piṇḍola*” or “**piṇḍu*,” which resembles the name in its Sanskrit fragments: “*piṇḍorīye*.” However, “*piṇḍorīye*” in the Sanskrit fragments of the *AjKV* is a problematic word for the following two points. First, its case is not clear, although it is possible to interpret its case as ablative, referring to BHS

the *AjKV* and the two Chinese Āgamas are related. The final section will examine the more specific relationship between them, taking the next section's investigations into consideration.

Incidentally, the above-quoted accounts in the *Sv* might have some compilation relationship with similar accounts in the two Chinese Āgamas, as Radich 2011 and Wu 2012 have pointed out. On the other hand, it is less likely that the account in the *AjKV* directly relates to the quotations from the *Sv*, which are assumed to be originally separate and unrelated, as mentioned above.

5 The Accounts Related to the Prophecy that King Ajātaśatru will Become a *Pratyekabuddha* in the Non-Mahāyāna Literature

5.1 The Account of the Prophecy of Becoming a *Pratyekabuddha* in the Sarvāstivāda Literature

Previous studies have pointed out that versions of the “*pratyekabuddha* prophecy” (passages where a protagonist is prophesied to become a *pratyekabuddha*) appear among some of the Sarvāstivāda texts, such as the *Divyāvadāna*, *Karmaśataka*, *Avadānaśataka*, and *Bhaiṣajyavastu* of the Sarvāstivāda Vinaya.¹⁵ The descriptions of the prophecy that King Ajātaśatru will become a *pratyekabuddha* in the *AWJ* and *CEA* 38.11, examined in the previous section, can be considered as derivative examples of the *pratyekabuddha* prophecy, as Taga 1974 pointed out.

The following quotation from the Chinese *Ekottara Āgama* (*CEA*) 49.9, which describes how Devadatta will become a *pratyekabuddha*, remarkably resembles the descriptions of King Ajātaśatru's future in the *AWJ* and in the *CEA* 38.11:

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “Now, when this Devadatta's life ends, he will enter the Avīci hell. Because he committed some of the five grave sins, he suffers

§10.86ff, according to Harrison and Hartmann 2000. Second, “*piṇḍorīye*” is accompanied by “*mahā-narakād*,” but the so-called “Eight Great Hells” do not include such a hell. In other words, it is possible that the term “*piṇḍorīye*” is not a proper noun. In the Tibetan version of the *AjKV*, “**puṇḍarīka nāma pratyekanaraka*” does not correspond to the other versions of the sutra, but the name “*puṇḍarīka*” appears as a *pratyekanaraka* in other Buddhist literature, according to Sadakata 1978. On the other hand, the two Chinese Āgamas read the proper names of the hell, “Like a Bouncing Ball” or “Bouncing Ball.”

¹⁵ Taga 1974 explores examples of the *pratyekabuddha* prophecies mainly among Sanskrit and Chinese Buddhist sources. Hiraoka 2002 deals with those in the *Divyāvadāna* and Iibuchi 1997 deals with those in the *Karmaśataka*.

retribution.” [...]

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “After Devadatta’s life ends [in that hell], he will be reborn into the Heaven of the Four Deva-kings.”

Ānanda asked [the Buddha], “When his life ends there (= the Heaven of the Four Deva-kings), where will he be reborn?”

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “After his life ends there, he will be reborn into the Heaven of the Thirty-three Gods, the Heaven of Yama, the Heaven of Tuṣita, the Heaven where one’s desires are magically fulfilled (*nirmāṇarati*), and the Heaven where one can partake in the pleasures of others (*parinirmitavasa-vartin*).”

Ānanda asked [the Buddha]: “When his life ends there, where will he be reborn?”

The Buddha said to Ānanda: “At that time, Devadatta will stay in the heavens after his life ends in the hell, for sixty kalpas he will never fall into the three lower realms, but will transmigrate between the heavenly and human realms. Finally, he will gain a [human] body and become a Buddhist monk by shaving his head and beard and wearing three kinds of robes, with strong faith. He will become a *pratyekabuddha* named ‘*Namo.’”¹⁶

We can also find another similar example in Chapter XI of the *Divyāvadāna*, which describes an evil cow that becomes a *pratyekabuddha*.¹⁷

¹⁶ 佛告阿難：“今此提婆達兜身壞命終，入阿鼻地獄中。所以然者，由其造五逆惡故，致斯報。” [...] 佛告阿難：“提婆達兜於彼命終，當生四天王上。”阿難復問：“於彼命終當生何處？”佛告阿難：“於彼命終展轉當生三十三天、焰天、兜率天、化自在天、他化自在天。”阿難復問：“於彼命終當生何處？”佛告阿難：“於是提婆達兜從地獄終生善處天上，經歷六十劫中不墮三悉趣，往來天人。最後受身，當剃除鬚髮，著三法衣，以信堅固出家學道，辟支佛名曰南無。” (T. 2.804b8–c16)

As previous studies point out, other similar accounts that Devadatta will become a *pratyekabuddha* after being reborn into the hell and heavens appear in other Buddhist texts, such as the *Saṅgahedavastu* of the *Sarvāstivāda Vinaya* (*SbhV*), *Milindapañhā* (*Mp*), and the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā* (*DhA*). Hiraoka 2007 pointed out that the account in the *SbhV* is similar to the above quotation from the *CEA* 38.11, but the latter one includes some unique points. For example, in the *CEA* 49.11 the *pratyekabuddha* is named as “*Namo,” but the names of the *pratyekabuddha* in the others resemble each other: “Asthimat” (*SbhV*) or “Aṭṭhisara” (*Mp* and *DhA*). Only the *CEA* 49.11 describes how Devadatta ascends to the heavens one after another, as well as in the *CEA* 38.11 and *AWJ*. Goshima 1986 also mentions the above accounts that Devadatta will become a *pratyekabuddha*.

¹⁷ Chapter XI of the *Divyāvadāna* contains the narrative of an evil cow’s future: A cow takes refuge in the Buddha before being killed by a butcher, and the cow receives a prophecy that he will travel among the Six Heavens in the Desire realms, and finally he will become a *pratyekabuddha* after becoming a king. The remarkable difference with the above quotation from the *CEA* 49.9 is that the cow will never fall into a hell.

According to Taga 1974, as underlined in the above quotation from the *CEA* 49.9, the account that someone “will never fall into the three lower realms and will instead transmigrate between the heavenly and human realms” is common to the other stories of becoming a *pratyekabuddha*. However, its preceding description of ascending through the heavens one by one after descending into hell seems infrequent among the other narratives of becoming a *pratyekabuddha*, but this account is shared with the above-quoted descriptions of King Ajātaśatru’s future in the *AWJ* and the *CEA* 38.11.

5.2 The Accounts of King Ajātaśatru Reducing His Evil Deeds and Their Retribution in Non-Mahāyāna Literature

The description of King Ajātaśatru taking refuge in the Buddha and reducing his sin and its retribution before his death is marked with broken lines in the quotations from the *CEA* 38.11 and *Sv.*¹⁸ Similar accounts appear in the following non-Mahāyāna literature:

- *Pusa benxing jing* 菩薩本行經 (T. No. 155): The Buddha said to the messenger again, “Please tell King Ajātaśatru, ‘Because you repent in front of the Tathāgata, your sin for murdering your father will make you stay in the hell for five hundred days, and after that you will be liberated [from that].’”¹⁹
- *Sapoduo pini piposha* 薩婆多毘尼毘婆沙 (T. No. 1440): Even though King Ajātaśatru committed a grave sin that should make him fall into the Avīci hell, he dispelled the sin that makes him descend to the Avīci hell, by relying on the Buddha sincerely. He will fall into the “Black Rope” hell. After staying in the hell for what is seven days in the human realm, his grave sin will be dispelled. This is what is called the salvific power of the Three Treasures.²⁰

¹⁸ The *AWJ* does not include the same description as the above quotations, but we could infer that that is because the sutra describes King Ajātaśatru before he seeks refuge in the Buddha.

¹⁹ 佛重告使言：“語阿闍世王：‘殺父惡逆之罪，用向如來改悔故，在地獄中當受世間五百日罪，便當得脫。’” (T. 3.116c18–21)

The *Pusa benxing jing* (*PBJ*) is also one of the Buddhist texts dealing with the “Legend of Buddha’s Visit to Vaiśāli.” The above quotation from the *PBJ* is a part of the words of the Buddha, who is about to depart for Vaiśāli, like the *CEA* 38.11, but their contents differ from each other. Wu 2012:182 translates the above part into English.

²⁰ 如阿闍世王，雖有逆罪應入阿鼻獄，以誠心向佛故，滅阿鼻罪。入黑繩地獄，如人中七日，重罪即盡。是謂三寶救護力也(T. 23.505b14–16)

- ***Mahākarmavibhaṅga (MKV)***: [Question:] In this case, what is the karma by which someone leaves [the hell] as soon as he is born into the hell? Answer: Here someone does deeds (*karma*) that lead him to the hell, and he accumulates them. He did it, but he is distressed and is ashamed. He blames himself and shrinks away from it. He talks, confesses, and admits it. He will show restraint in the future. He never does it again. If he is reborn into the hell, he will leave there immediately after his rebirth. Like King Ajātaśatru.[...] Therefore, he (= Ajātaśatru) heard of his going to the Avīci hell, but he shows his faith in the Lord because of his fear. In the *Śrāmaṇyaphala sūtra*, [he] confessed his sin and put down the roots of merit. When he died, he purified his mind. [He said,] “Even if I become only bones, I will go to the Buddha, the Lord for protection.” He will leave [the hell] as soon as he is reborn there. The above is the deed (*karma*) by which someone leaves [the hell] as soon as he is born into the hell.²¹

The above quotations show that King Ajātaśatru tries to reduce his sin by seeking refuge in the Buddha or confessing his sin to the Buddha, and as a result he avoids being reborn into the Avīci hell. As indicated in the quotation from the *MKV*, we can assume that the above-quoted passages from the non-Mahāyāna Buddhist texts are based on the *Śrāmaṇyaphala sūtra*.

They also resemble the beginning part of the quotation from the *AjKV* in Section 3, which describes that King Ajātaśatru reduces his evil deed by understanding the profound teachings from Mañjuśrī and the Buddha. Therefore, I infer that they may be linked.

The same phrase appears in the *Da fangbian fobaoen jing* 大方便佛報恩經 (T. No. 156 3.156b24–27), which was composed in China.

²¹ *atra katamat karma yena samanvāgataḥ pudgalo narakeṣūpapannamātra eva cyavati. ucyate. ihaikatyaena nārakīyaṃ karma kṛtaṃ bhavaty upacitaṃ ca. sa tat kṛtvāstīryati. jihrīyati. vigarhati vijugupsati ācaṣṭe. deśayati. vyaktīkaroti. āyatyaṃ saṃvaram āpadyate. na punaḥ kurute. sacen narakeṣūpapadyate upāpannamātra eva cyavati. yathā rājājātaśatruḥ. [...] tasmād avīcinarakāgamaṃ śrutvā tena saṃvignena bhagavati cittaṃ prasāditam. śrāmaṇyaphalasūtre 'tyayadeśanaṃ kṛtam. pratisaṃdadhāti kuśalamūlāni. tena maraṇakāle cittaṃ prasāditam. asthibhir api buddhaṃ bhagavantaṃ śaraṇaṃ gacchāmi. sa upāpannamātra eva cyavati. idaṃ karma yena samanvāgataḥ pudgalo narakeṣūpapannamātra eva cyavati. (MKV pp. 49–50)*

We can find the corresponding sentences in the Chinese versions of the *MKV*: T. No. 80 1.893c7–13; T. No. 81 1.898a20–27.

6 Concluding Remarks

This final section discusses the relationship among the three sorts of accounts considered in the previous sections; that is, King Ajātaśatru's future in Chapter XI of the *AjKV* (Section 3), the prophecy that King Ajātaśatru will become a *pratyekabuddha* in the two Chinese Āgamas (Section 4), and the prophecy of becoming a *pratyekabuddha* in non-Mahāyāna Buddhist literature (Section 5). As already explored in the previous section, we can find many examples of the prophecy of becoming a *pratyekabuddha* among non-Mahāyāna Buddhist texts, especially the Sarvāstivāda literature. It is natural to consider that the descriptions of King Ajātaśatru becoming a *pratyekabuddha* in the two Chinese Āgamas, the *AWJ* and *CEA* 38.11, are derivative forms of the *pratyekabuddha* prophecy.

As examined in 4.3, it is probable that the accounts of King Ajātaśatru's future in the *AjKV* relate to the prophecy that King Ajātaśatru becomes a *pratyekabuddha* in the two Chinese Āgamas. Regarding this relationship between the *AjKV* and the two Chinese Āgamas, Wu 2012: 232ff suggests the possibility that the description in the *AjKV* influences those in the two Chinese Āgamas. Her argument seems mainly to be grounded in the following two points: first, the Chinese *Ekotta Āgama* (T. No. 125) is supposed to be influenced by Mahāyāna Buddhism, and second, the *AjKV* is one of the earliest Mahāyāna sutras that could affect the Chinese *Ekotta Āgama*.

In contrast to Dr. Wu's opinion, I suggest that the account regarding King Ajātaśatru's future in the *AjKV* was composed under the influence of the accounts in the two Chinese Āgamas, based on the following reasons: First, as examined in the previous section, we can find that the non-Mahāyāna Buddhist literature includes some elements that could affect or develop into the narrative of King Ajātaśatru becoming a *pratyekabuddha*: namely, the stories of evil characters becoming *pratyekabuddhas* and the accounts of King Ajātaśatru reducing his evil deeds and their retributions. Therefore, it is possible to assume that these accounts in the non-Mahāyāna Buddhist literature form the background of the accounts of King Ajātaśatru becoming a *pratyekabuddha* in the two Chinese Āgamas. Second, the Chinese *Ekottara Āgama* (T. No. 125) includes some characteristic elements of Mahāyāna Buddhism, as the previous studies and Dr. Wu pointed out, but it is necessary to examine carefully whether they are the result of influences from Mahāyāna Buddhism or primitive forms of Mahāyāna

Buddhism.²² In addition, the *AWJ*, one of these two Chinese *Āgamas*, is supposed to be a part of the lost Chinese *Ekottara Āgama*, translated by *Dharmanandi, which is one of the genuine *Āgamas* of Traditional Sectarian Buddhism with no influence from Mahāyāna Buddhism, according to Mizuno 1989. As mentioned above, the *AWJ* does not include any evident trace of influence from Mahāyāna Buddhism, as far as I have investigated. These facts are not conclusive enough to refute completely the opposite view, but they lead to my presumption that the description of King Ajātaśatru's future lives in the *AjKV* was modeled after the accounts of King Ajātaśatru becoming a *pratyekabuddha* in the two Chinese *Āgamas*.

Abbreviations

- AjKV* *Ajātaśatrukaukṛtyavinodana*.
- BHSD *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, Vol. II: Dictionary, F Edgerton ed., Yale University Press, New Haven, 1953. (repr. Rinsen Book, Kyoto, 1985).
- BHSG *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, Vol. I: Grammar, F Edgerton ed., Yale University Press, New Haven, 1953. (repr. Rinsen Book, Kyoto, 1985).
- DhR Dharmarakṣa's version of the *AjKV* = *Puchao sanmei jing* 普超三昧經 (T. No. 627).
- Ft Fatian's version of the *AjKV* = *Weicengyou zhengfa jing* 未曾有正法經 (T. No. 628).
- JIBS *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies* (印度學佛教學研究).
- Lk Lokakṣema's version of the *AjKV* = *Asheshiwang jing* 阿闍世王經 (T. No. 626).
- MKV *Mahākarmavibhaṅga et Karmavibhaṅgopadeśa: textes sanscrits rapportés du Népal*, Sylvain Lévi ed., Paris, E. Leroux, 1932.
- MVy *Mahāvvyūtpatti, Bon-Zō-Kan-Wa yon'yaku taikō Hon'yaku myōgi taishū* (梵藏漢和四譯對校 翻譯名義大集), R. Sakaki ed., Suzuki Gakujutsu Zaidan,

²² Wu 2012 mentions the possibility that the *AjKV* was composed earlier than the Chinese *Ekottara Āgama* (T. No. 125), because the first Chinese translation of the former, namely the Lk (T. No. 626), is older than the latter. In general, however, the dates of the first Chinese translation indicate just the *terminus ad quem*, and it is still difficult to judge which texts were originally formed earlier or later, based on their Chinese translation dates.

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JSPS Postdoctoral Fellow for Research Abroad,

Visiting Fellow of the Ho Center for Buddhist Studies at Stanford