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Miniature from the collection of Persian poems. Bukhara, the 16<sup>th</sup> c. Persian collection  
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Safarali Shomakhmadov

## **Vyākaraṇa as a Method of Rational Cognition in the Buddhist Written Sources**

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*Abstract:* The article is devoted to the substantiation of the statement that the Buddhist vyākaraṇa is the method of rational ‘forecast’ and at the same time the ‘fore-knowledge’ (from Greek *prognosis*) itself. The proofs that the conventional meaning ‘prophecy’ is invalid are given. The reasons of the opinion that vyākaraṇa is the ‘prognosis’ are based on Buddhist canonical and post-canonical texts. Vyākaraṇa as the dialectical method of the Buddhist philosophy allows to model the scheme of the good conduct that leads to the obtaining of the final goal of the Buddhist spiritual practice — the attainment of nirvāṇa.

*Key words:* analysis and synthesis, Buddhist philosophy, Buddhist texts, dialectical method, prognosis, prophecy, rational cognition, vyākaraṇa.

*Vyākaraṇa* as a special ‘genre’ of Buddhist literature occupies an important place in the written heritage of Buddhism. Whole works as well as separate sections of lengthy texts have a title ‘vyākaraṇa’ that, as a rule, is translated as ‘prophecy, prediction’. But is such an interpretation of this Buddhist term the only correct one?

Let us analyze the term vyākaraṇa. First of all, according to Buddhist written tradition, it refers to the twelve *aṅgas* — divisions of Buddhist canonical literature (*sūtra*, *geyya*, *vyākaraṇa*, *gāthā*, *udāna*, *itivṛttaka*, *jātaka*, *abhuta-dharma*, *vaipulya*, *nidāna*, *avadāna*, *upadeśa*). There are mentions of the first three *aṅgas* (*sūtra*, *geyya*, *vyākaraṇa*) in the period of the written fixation of Pāḷi *Sutta Piṭaka* — the second of the three texts’ collections of Pāḷi Buddhist Canon. Thus, in *Mahāsuññata-sutta* (Sansk. *Mahāsūnyatā sūtra*) Buddha turns to Ānanda with exhortations about the futility of seeking enlightenment only by the texts’ studying, without the diligence in spiritual practice: ‘Verily, Ānanda, one should not seek out the teacher for the sake of

[study] sūtra, geyya, vyākaraṇa <...>'.<sup>1</sup> Undoubtedly, this passage does not exclude the importance of studying written heritage, the possibility of achieving enlightenment exclusively by reading the sacred texts is denied.

It can be assumed that already in the early period of its history (not earlier than the First Buddhist Council, i.e. 6th c.) the Buddhist doctrine existed in the form of these three divisions, and it's likely that Dharma reproduced by Ānanda at the First Buddhist Council three months later Buddha's Parinirvāṇa consisted of aforementioned three aṅgas — sūtras, geyyas, vyākaraṇas.

According to the Indian lingual-philosophical tradition, vyākaraṇa is a circle of grammatical literature devoted to the language analysis. But, as usual, Buddhist term vyākaraṇa is interpreted as 'prediction, prophecy'. For example, in the Sixth chapter of well-known 'Lotus Sūtra' (*Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*) Buddha 'prophesies' that in a future all his nearest disciples — Kaśyapa, Maudgalyāyana, Subhūti and Kātyāyana — will become a buddhas. This chapter has a title *Vyākaraṇa-parivartaḥ* ('Bestowal of Prophecy').

Let us analyze the meaning of the term vyākaraṇa. One of the canonical definitions of it is reflected in the *Dharmaviniścaya* ('The Definition of Dharma') — the second chapter of the comprehensive Asaṅga's treatise *Abhidharma-samuccaya* ('The Collection [of main categories] of Abhidharma') (4–5 cc.): 'What is Vyākaraṇa? <...> this is an explanation [of the reasons that conditioned the circumstances] of the present lives of some outstanding disciples (*aryaśravakāḥ*) depending on their previous lives in the distant past <...>. Or this is explanation of the meaning expressed in the sūtras. This is an exhaustive explanation of the concept expressed [in a text] implicitly'.<sup>2</sup>

Another meaning of the term vyākaraṇa found in the Sanskrit (as well as in the Pāli) Buddhist literature is the interpretation of vyākaraṇa as a detailed answer to the question posed.<sup>3</sup> So, at the end of the Third chapter of *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa Sūtra* (Sutra 'Vimalakīrti's Instructions'), the composite *praśnavyākaraṇanirdeśa* is translated as 'explanation of answers to questions'. Moreover, at the beginning of the Seventh chapter of *Mahāprajñā-paramitāśāstra* attributed to the authorship of Nāgārjuna (2–3 cc.) four types of answers to questions (*praśnavyākaraṇa*) are explained: (1) responding in

<sup>1</sup> *Na kho, Ānanda, arahati sāvako satthāraṃ anubandhituṃ yadidaṃ suttaṃ geyyaṃ veyyākaraṇassa hetu (Majjhima-nikāya 1899, 115).*

<sup>2</sup> *Vyākaraṇaṃ katamat | tat sthāneṣu samatikrāntānāmātītānāmārya śrāvakāṇāṃ prāptyu-tpattiprabhedavyākaraṇam | api ca sūtreṣu nirūpītārthasya sphuṭīkaraṇam | vivṛtyābhisandhi-vyākaraṇāt || (Abhidharma samuccaya 1950, 78).*

<sup>3</sup> The typical example: *pañhassa veyyākaraṇam* ('an answer on question') (*Dīgha-Nikāya 1903, 223*).

a categorical way (*ekāṃśena vyākaraṇa*); (2) responding by distinguishing (*vibhajya vyākaraṇa*); (3) responding by means of a question (*pariprechā-vyākaraṇa*); (4) responding by not answering (*sthāpanīya vyākaraṇa*)<sup>4</sup>.

Therefore, in Buddhist Sanskrit texts the term *vyākaraṇa* is used in three meanings:

1. The explanation of the ‘conditioned causality’ (*pratītya-samutpāda*) between past life (*daśa-kuśala/akuśala-karma-pathāni*) and the karmic result (*karmaphalam*) in present existence. When such relationship is established between the present life acts and the karmic results of the future birth, then we are talking about *vyākaraṇa* as a ‘prediction, prophecy’. However, we assume that the understanding of *vyākaraṇa* as a ‘prophecy, prediction’ is somewhat incorrect.

2. The detailed, exhaustive interpretation of the ideas implicitly included in the text of sūtras.

3. The expanded answer to the question posed.

Let us consider what meanings in the Pāli tradition are included in the term *vyākaraṇa* (pāli *vyākaraṇa*, *veyyākaraṇa*, prakr. *vaiyākaraṇa*). Of course, basically the semantic field of this term in the ‘South Buddhist tradition’ will coincide with the Sanskrit meanings: ‘clarification, explanation, instruction’.<sup>5</sup> Thus, for example, in the fragment of *Chakkavatti-sihanada-sutta* the newly consecrated king is instructed by his servants in the noble conduct of the righteous king: *tassa te ariyaṃ cakkavatti-vattaṃ puṭṭhā vyākariṃsu*.<sup>6</sup>

Along with *veyyākaraṇa/vyākaraṇa* there are some cognate words such as *vyākata* (‘expounded, interpreted, answered, solved’), respectively, *avyākata* (‘unresolved’ [question]); *vyākaroṭi* (‘to answer, interpret, explain’, possible form — *byākareyya*).<sup>7</sup> It’s remarkable that the Pāli *vyākaroṭi*, as well as the similar Sanskrit verb, goes back to the common composite *vi+ā+kṛ*, which, however, in Sanskrit, besides of similar Pāli meanings ‘expound, explain, proclaim’, mainly, has the definitions ‘to be divided or separated’ (*vyākriyate*).<sup>8</sup>

In addition, in the Pāli tradition, namely, in the *Upali-sutta*, *veyyākaraṇa* is mentioned as the epithet of the Buddha — ‘One, who explained [the

<sup>4</sup> *Mahāprajñāparamitāsāstra* 1970, 1127.

<sup>5</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism* 2009, 549–554; *Pali-English Dictionary* 1952, 108, 112.

<sup>6</sup> *Dīgha-Nikāya* 1911, 65.

<sup>7</sup> *Pali-English Dictionary* 1952, 112.

<sup>8</sup> *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* 1997, 1035.

truth]’.<sup>9</sup> Also it should be noted that in the meaning ‘proclaiming, declaring’ *vyākaraṇa* is found in the *Aññavyākaraṇa-sutta* of *Āṅguttara-nikāya*, where we can read on the ‘five variants of the proclamation of the True Knowledge and the arhatship’s state obtaining’ (*pañca aññāvyākaraṇāni*); four of these states are false.<sup>10</sup> Also in the *Āṅguttara-nikāya*, in the *Vyākaraṇa-sutta*, it’s ‘proclaimed’ about the factors of the attainment of the True Knowledge (*aññāṃ vyākaraṇoti*).<sup>11</sup> The similar fragment on the clarifying of the conditions for the True Knowledge attainment is found in the *Chabbisodhana-sutta* of *Majjhima-nikāya* (*anudhammo vyākaraṇa*).<sup>12</sup> That is, in the Pāḷi Suttas it’s very common to use the term *vyākaraṇa* as ‘an explanation of the essence of True Knowledge and methods of its attainment’, whose sacred status is officially fixed in the Buddha’s titlature of the Theravāda tradition.

Therefore, it can be noted that even at the early stage of Buddhist canonical texts fixation (Pāḷi suttas and early Mahāyāna sutras fragmented in *Asaṅga’s Abhidharma-samuccaya*) the circle of the term *vyākaraṇa* meanings is defined mainly by such definitions as an ‘instruction; detailed, exhaustive answer [to any question on the interpretation problem concerning the particular doctrinal moment]’, as well as the ‘clarification, detailed interpretation’ [of the essence and the method of the attainment of the True Knowledge and, as a consequence, the state of the Arhat]; and this meaning is fixed in the Buddha’s title. Also it should be noted that in the early Buddhist canonical texts the using of the term *vyākaraṇa* as ‘prophecy, prediction’ is not confirmed.

The term *vyākaraṇa*, understood as a ‘prophecy’, occurs in the Jain literature of 11th c., namely, in the *Praśnavyākaraṇa-sūtra*; (another titles: *Paṅhavāyaraṇa-*, *Paṅhavāgaraṇa-*) that is the interpretation of practices related to ‘fortune telling’ (in fact, with prophecy, prediction).<sup>13</sup>

In the most common words, a prophecy is one or several messages (oral or written) about events that will certainly take place in a far or near future. The one who gives such ‘messages’ for a wide audience is called a *prophet* (*soothsayer*, *seer*) — a man who, because of the revelation that has come

<sup>9</sup> *Ariyassa bhāvitattassa pattipattassa veyyākaraṇassa <...> Bhagavato tassa sāvako ’hamasmi* (*Majjhima-nikāya* 1899, 386) (‘He is the Noble One, developed in mind, who has gained the goal and expounds the truth <...> The Blessed One is he, and I am his disciple’ (*Middle Length Discourses* 1995, 491).

<sup>10</sup> *Āṅguttara-Nikāya* 1896, 119.

<sup>11</sup> *Āṅguttara-Nikāya* 1900, 155–156.

<sup>12</sup> *Majjhima-Nikāya* 1899, 30.

<sup>13</sup> *Praśnavyākaraṇa sutra* 1973.

upon him, is able to see a future. *Clairvoyance*, as a ‘gift’ to ‘look into the past or future’ that lies outside of any religion but in the field of ‘mystical perception of reality’ (i.e. parascience) is such psychic ability to receive ‘from space immediately’ some ‘information’ on events that were in a deep past or will in a future, far or near. A prophet obtains the ability for prophesy through the mystical experience — direct ‘communication’ with Higher Reality — God, Absolute, extramundane world. As a result of this spiritual relationship the prophet/clairvoyant gets knowledge on a past/future.

The definition of ‘prophetic religion’ includes Judaism, Christianity and Islam, Vedic religion/Hinduism, Jainism. Buddhism is not on this list.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, due to rationality, inherent to ‘classical Buddhism’,<sup>15</sup> mysticism as an integral element of prophetic religion is completely absent in Buddha’s Teaching. Well-known Russian Buddhologist Evgeny Torchinov (1956–2003), confirming the thesis about the absence of mysticism in classical Buddhism, wrote: ‘<...> Buddhism insists that the world has no sacral basis and must be explained out of itself...’.<sup>16</sup> The concept of ‘conditioned causality’ (*praṭītya-samutpāda*) as the theory that explains the genesis of the Universe without Creator became an element connecting the three time modes — past, present, future — and very clearly elucidates the relationship of three adjacent births (past–present–future). The principle of ‘conditioned causality’, provided that past births circumstances were known, made it possible ‘to model’ probable circumstances of a new birth — it is that erroneously, on our opinion, called prophetism in Buddhism.

However, how does Buddhist canonical tradition explain the inherent ability of anyone to know about past births, his own or others? *Karma-nirdeśa* (‘The Doctrine of Karma’), the fourth section of *Vasubandhu*’s treatise *Abhidharmakośa* (‘Encyclopedia of Buddhist Canonical Philosophy’) (5th c.), enumerates the criteria for Bodhisattva status attaining. According to this text, Bodhisattva has an innate ability to remember all his former births.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Thus, for example, the comprehensive encyclopedic article ‘Prophecy’ in the Xth Volume of the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*. (1918; ed. by J. Hastings) analyzes in detail the prophetism phenomenon in American believes and religions, in Christianity, Judaism. There is no one word on Buddhism there (*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* 1918, 381–393).

<sup>15</sup> The Buddhist concept of cosmogenesis, for example, presented in *Loka-nirdeśa* (‘The Doctrine of the World’), the third section of the *Vasubandhu*’s treatise *Abhidharmakośa* (‘The Encyclopedia of Buddhist Canonical Philosophy’) (5th c.) completely denies the idea of the Creator or gods and ‘supernatural world’ in the sense of Biblical tradition, for example.

<sup>16</sup> TORCHINOV 2007, 237–238.

<sup>17</sup> OSTROVSKAIA and RUDOI 2001, 486.

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That is, in the process of being in the womb of the mother, as well as at birth moment, Bodhisattva does not lose the ‘second yogic concentration’ state that permits to remember own past births.<sup>18</sup> Thus, Buddha, descending, according to Buddhist mythology, from the Tuṣita Heavens and being born into Śākya Kṣatriya family as a Bodhisattva, had a knowledge of all his former births and, most likely, of the past births of all living beings.

The memory of former births (*pūrvanivāsānumṛtijñāna*, ‘knowledge/ability to retain in the memory the former births’) is the so-called ‘wordly’ (*laukika*) supernatural skill (*rddhi*). Besides of the memory of former births ‘wordly supernatural skills’ are the ability to create phantoms, the change of face, the telepathy, ‘Divine Hearing’ (*divyaśrotra*) and the ‘Divine Vision’ (*divyacakṣu*).<sup>19</sup> Both worldly and superworldly (*lokottara*) extra-ordinal skills constitute the ‘Highest Knowledge’ (*abhijñā*). In addition to the memory of former births Buddha has the ‘Buddha Vision’ (*buddha-cakṣu*) that allows to see all events in the past, present and future. The ‘Buddha’s Vision’ and also mentioned above the ‘Divine Vision’ and the ‘Fleshy Vision’ (*māṃsa-cakṣu*),<sup>20</sup> the ‘Wisdom Vision’ (*prajñā-cakṣu*),<sup>21</sup> the ‘Dharma Vision’ (*dharma-cakṣu*)<sup>22</sup> constitute the ‘Five kinds of Vision’ (*pañca-cakṣavaḥ*) — Buddha abilities.

It is not for nothing that in the Lalitavistara’s text Buddha is called *Pañca-cakṣu* (‘Five-Eyes [Visions]’) or *Pañca-cakṣuḥ-samanvāgataḥ* (‘One who has Five Visions’). In the same text Buddha is characterized as the ‘One who possesses the Highest Vision’,<sup>23</sup> i.e. the ‘Buddha Vision’ that combines all ‘Five Visions’. Also in the Vyākaraṇa-parivartaḥ of the Lotus Sutra it’s mentioned that Buddha used the Buddha-cakṣu during to the prophecy for Kaśyapa.<sup>24</sup>

Therefore, Śākyamuni knows about former births both his own and all living beings not by means of the gaining a ‘mystical experience’ of communication with the ‘Supernatural Reality’, but through the Knowledge, exhaustive and absolute, obtained by spiritual (yogic) practice. The possession of

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 181.

<sup>19</sup> ‘Divine Vision’ allows to see the many thousands worlds at once.

<sup>20</sup> Māṃsa — (lit.) ‘flesh’, ‘meat’. Māṃsa-cakṣu — the vision of ordinary person — the tool of sensory perception that is the one of initial stages of the reality cognition.

<sup>21</sup> ‘Wisdom Vision’ is obtained also after the Enlightenment and allows to comprehend the ‘Conditioned Causality’ Concept as well as total Non-substantiality.

<sup>22</sup> ‘Dharma Vision’ allows ‘to see’ the True Knowledge; this ability appears after the Enlightenment.

<sup>23</sup> *Lalita Vastara* 1874, 2.

<sup>24</sup> *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* 1909, 145.

the ‘Higher Knowledge’ including the knowledge of former births, the ‘Divine Vision’ and the using of the ‘conditioned causality’ principle allow Buddha ‘to predict’ certain events in a future very strictly without any mysticism. The object of these ‘predictions’ is the obtaining by the prophecy’s addressees, as a rule, of higher forms of existence.

We assume that the meaning of the term *vyākaraṇa* in the Buddhist canonical tradition applying to the so-called ‘prophecies’ but, in fact, to examples of the description of the ‘conditioned causality’ principle is fully revealed in the meanings of the term *vyākṛta* and cognate words. The meaning of these terms is described detailly in II–IV sections of the *Abhidharmakośa*. In *Indriya-nirdeśa* (“The Doctrine of Factors of Domination in the Psyche”) — second section of the treatise — the consciousness activity is directly called *vyākaraṇa*. So, in the *kārikā* 57 of this section we read: ‘[The action is called] ‘definite’ because it is defined in terms of the ‘ripening’ of good and non-good actions’ (*kuśalākuśalaṃ hi vipākaṃ prati vyākaraṇād vyākṛtam*).<sup>25</sup>

Therefore, the action (physical, verbal, mental) is regarded as ‘definite’ (*vyākṛta*), inevitably leading to the ripening of karmic consequence (*vipāka*). *Avyākṛta* (the karmic neutral action) is opposite to *vyākṛta* and makes the ripening of the karma fruit (*karmaphala*) impossible because in this case the consciousness is not affected. *Avyākṛta* actions are ‘darkened’ (‘with obstacles’) activities (*nivṛtāvyākṛta*) where the state of affective consciousness is potentially possible and deeds ‘without obstacles’ (*anivṛtāvyākṛta*) — without affective manifestations that differ from ‘darkened’ ones by the absence of six fundamental affects (*kleśamahābhūmikā*) or so-called ‘six enemies’ that conditioned by the five senses and the mind (*āyatana*). ‘Undefined’ actions — *avyākṛta* — can be contaminated (*kliṣṭa*) as well as uncontaminated (*akliṣṭa*). Thus, for example, the non-attainment (*aprāpti*) of dharmas ‘with an influx of affects’ (*sāsrava*) is characterized as *akliṣṭāvyākṛta*. The consciousness activity of ‘ordinary’ person (*pṛthagjana*) as well as religious ascetic (*yogin*) can be considered as ‘contaminated’ because their spiritual practice still not free of affects. Also the consciousness activity, ‘definite’ as well as ‘indefinite’, can have both a good (*kuśala*) and not-good (*akuśala*) religious nature.

Therefore, we assume that *vyākaraṇa* in the Buddhist canonical tradition is not a ‘prophecy’ or ‘prediction’ but it is the way of describing the ‘condi-

<sup>25</sup> *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya* 1967, 65. The term *vyākṛta* is used in the similar fragment of Yaśomitra Comment (*kārikās* 58–59) (*Sphuṭārthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā* 1971, 223).

tioned causality' principle that determines the consciousness activity of all human beings — from ordinary people to religious ascetics.

As we said above the term *vyākaraṇa* is a composite consisting of the following elements: prefix *vi* — 'separation', 'discrimination'; '[to move] from [something], in different directions'<sup>26</sup>; the verb prefix *-ā-* means the reverse action for *vi-*, i.e. '[to move] towards [something]'; *karaṇa* — 'action' itself. In addition, one of the  $\sqrt{kr}(t)$  meanings whose derivative is *karaṇa* — 'to purify, clarify'; 'to bring to a higher level'. Thus, the term *vyākaraṇa* can be interpreted as 'an action (*karaṇa*) [combining] the separation (*vi-*) and the combination (*-ā-*) [of the examined object for the purpose of] clarifying [its meaning]'. This definition of the term *vyākaraṇa* allows to bring the problem to a qualitatively different, higher, level.

Basing on the dialectical approach we will assume that *vi+ā* in the composition of *vyākaraṇa* mark the analysis (*vi* — 'separation')<sup>27</sup> and synthesis (*ā* — 'combination')<sup>28</sup> as methods of rational cognition allowing to make not predictions or prophecies but prognoses based on a strictly logical approach.<sup>29</sup>

It's necessary to make an important remark. We understand *vyākaraṇa* as the 'Pre-knowledge' itself ('Pro-gnosis') and the method of its obtaining by the establishing of the 'causal-consequence' relations. But a 'pre-diction' can be a peculiar aspect of the *vyākaraṇa* — an exposition/description of the results of the obtained 'Pre-knowledge' that can be an expression of the compassion of the one who has attained this Knowledge-*vyākaraṇa*.

Thus, initially in the Buddhist tradition *vyākaraṇa*, apparently, is the prognosis, 'rational foresight' — 'fore-knowledge'. In this case it is the way of very strict describing of the prospects for the development of any phenomenon<sup>30</sup> represented in the three time modes — past, present and future. The strict 'logical base' within of which the 'analysis and synthesis' of the Buddhist *vyākaraṇa* unfolds is the 'conditioned causality' principle (*pratītya-samutpāda*).

*Ajitasena-vyākaraṇa-nirdeśa-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra* seems to us the very typical example of the consideration of *vyākaraṇa* as a method of Buddhist epistemology. Let us examine how the prefix *vi-* ('separation') is presented

<sup>26</sup> Probably, *vi* is the abbreviated variant of *dvi-* signified the division 'into two parts' (*Sanskrit-English Dictionary* 1997, 949).

<sup>27</sup> Analysis (ἀνάλυσις) — (greek) 'dissociation, division'.

<sup>28</sup> Synthesis (σύνθεσις) — (greek) 'association, connection'.

<sup>29</sup> Prognosis (πρόγνωσις) — (greek) (lit.) 'Fore-Knowledge', i.e. 'Knowledge in advance'.

<sup>30</sup> ИЛ'ИЧЛОВ and ФЕДОСЕЕВ and КОВАЛЮВ and ПАНОВ 1983, 533.

in this text. We know that analysis as an initial stage of any rational knowledge in the case of a theoretical research is a procedure of a mental separation of an object into different parts — signs, properties, relations.<sup>31</sup> Also this process ‘involves the abstracting from the content of the reasoning and the revealing of its logical form (scheme)’.<sup>32</sup>

In this early Mahāyāna text the ‘prophecy’ given by Buddha to the poor girl (*naḡarabalambikādārikā*) can be divided into five main elements unfolded in time — from events in former births through actual existence to events in a future described in the ‘prophecy’. The key elements of the ‘prophetic’ narrative are: (1) the sin action in one of former births that determined (2) the life in poorness during next births till actual existence; (3) the good action made in actual life that led to the finish of bad karmic outcome and the obtaining in the next existence (4) the last human birth (‘from a womb’) in a noble Kṣatriya family as a successor and, finally, through ‘incalculable *kalpas*’ (5) the obtaining of the status of Tathāgata, Arhat, Samyaksambuddha, Bhagavan.<sup>33</sup>

It’s necessary to note that practically all Buddhist texts called *vyākaraṇa* have ‘prophecies’ which contain the temporal aspect — the future obtaining of noble form of existence or Final Liberation that invariably associated with righteous deeds in the preceding time periods. Thus, in the Lotus Sutra three chapters are devoted to Buddha’s ‘prophecies’: Ch. VI *Vyākaraṇa-parivartaḥ* (‘[Handing of] Predictions’), Ch. VIII *Pañcabhikṣuśata-vyākaraṇa-parivartaḥ* (‘Prophecy of Enlightenment for Five Hundred Disciples’) and Ch. IX *Ānanda-adi-vyākaraṇa-parivartaḥ* (‘Prophecies Conferred on Learners and Adepts’). ‘Prophecies’ given by Buddha in Chapters VI and IX, and partly in the Chapter VIII, addressed to his closest disciples — Kaśyapa, Subhūti, Kātyāyana, Maudgalyāyana, Ājñāta Kauṇḍinya, Ānanda and Rāhula — are mainly narratives about future births of the ‘prophecies’ addressees. In this next existences, thanks to their devotion to future buddhas, these disciples will reach the final goal of spiritual practice — they will attain the state of *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*.<sup>34</sup> That is to say, the scheme of this ‘prophecy’-*vyākaraṇa* that unfolds exclusively in a future, is follows: the attainment of a good form of existence in a future birth → the follow the Path of good activity → the achievement of Final Liberation.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>32</sup> VOROBIOVA 1998, 24.

<sup>33</sup> VOROBIOVA-DESIATOVSKAIA and SHOVAKHMADOV 2013, 44.

<sup>34</sup> IGNATOVICH 1998, 154–159, 182–184, 186–188.

Summarizing the ‘analytical part’ of *vyākaraṇa*’s meaning it’s necessary to note the following. Basing on Buddhist *sūtras* it can be argued that ‘prophecy’ scheme taking into account three time modes — past, present and future — usually consists of three pairs: (1) sin deeds in former births → troubles in follows lives; (2) good action in actual existence (the finish of ‘bad karma’) → next noble birth; (3) an increase of righteous deeds in future lives → the attainment of Final Liberation. However, this threefold scheme can be simplified to a twofold one that has, first of all, a didactic goal: (1) misconduct → retribution; (2) good deed → reward. Finally, it boils down to a single pair: cause → consequence.

Having established ‘cause-consequence’ connections between basic elements of the ‘prophetic’ narration of Buddhist *vyākaraṇa* thereby we fulfilled the synthesis (marked by verb prefix *-ā-* in composite *vyākaraṇa*). Because the synthesis is, in fact, the restoration of original unity, the connection of different elements (separated during analysis) of the researched object in one whole, the ascertainment of systemic relations among them.<sup>35</sup> In addition, the synthesis, understood as a reasoning aimed at a step-by-step proof of some initial assumption,<sup>36</sup> moving from cause to consequence (so-called ‘translational’, ‘progressive’, synthesis<sup>37</sup>), creates the possibility of ‘deliberate modeling’ of conditions (doing of good deeds) which open the way to the attainment of good births in a future, i.e. this synthesis allows to forecast the result. On other hand, the comprehension of the actual life as a consequence of previous deeds clearly highlights the karma of former births. This line of reasoning is a so-called ‘recurrent’, or ‘regressive’, synthesis.<sup>38</sup>

Mentioned above ‘progressive synthesis’ following from cause to consequence and allowing deliberately modeling the future situation seems to be the third component of the term *vyākaraṇa* — *karaṇa* that is the forecast actually. How does meanings ‘purify, clarify’; ‘to bring to a higher level’ are manifested in the Buddhist term *vyākaraṇa*?

It’s necessary to note that all Buddhist ‘prophecies’ (prognoses) are positive. In all cases prognoses is oriented toward ‘raising’ the birth’s form (from bad to good one), until the obtaining of Final Liberation by the ‘prophecy’ addressee. From didactic positions, a negative prophesy is, of course, undesirable. Thus, *vyākaraṇa* explains the way of obtaining the best form of birth,

<sup>35</sup> IL’ICHIOV and FEDOSEIEV and KOVALIOV and PANOV 1983, 609.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> VOROBIOVA 1998, 24.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

i.e. it ‘carries the ‘prophecy’ addressee to a higher level’ of existence. In the praxeological aspect vyākaraṇa, in our opinion, is a psychological motivation that stimulates followers to stand on the Path of good deeds.

Buddhist vyākaraṇa, in our opinion, fully corresponds with the definition ‘prognosis’<sup>39</sup> and includes such aspects as goal-setting, planning, programming, projecting, controlling. The *goal-setting* is expressed in the need for all living beings to achieve Final Liberation — *nirvāṇa*. The *planning* in Buddhist vyākaraṇa is the definition of the main tasks, the solution of which contributes to the realization of the ultimate goal in best manner. Among these tasks one can name, for example, the finishing of ‘bad karma’ in actual life and the obtaining of a more perfect form of existence in next births. By the *programming* according to vyākaraṇa we mean a certain algorithm of actions aimed at solving the tasks posed — actions that will stop the maturing of the karmic fruit of unrighteous deeds of former births; good behavior that promotes the acquisition of a better form of existence in the future, and the attainment of *nirvāṇa*. The *projecting* in Buddhist vyākaraṇa, in our opinion, is the creation of some ideal model within which it’s possible to explain the actual state, and also to forecast (‘to vaticinate’) the events that still have to happen. In the Buddhist tradition such model, we believe, presents a ‘causal-consequence’ relation realized in the concept of *praṭītya-samutpāda*. The last aspect — *controlling* — implies, as we see it, the possibility of control by a person over his own actions which determine the maturation of karmic consequence. That is to say, person himself determines his own destiny but not ‘supernatural powers’.

Summarize. Firstly, despite of ‘traditional’ definition of vyākaraṇa as ‘prophecy’ we have all reasons to call in question the validity of this interpretation. First of all, it’s very doubtful to define Buddhism as a prophetic religion, unlike other world religions. And Buddha himself doesn’t correspond to the definition of a prophet — in none of the Buddhist schools Śakyamuni is regarded as a mediator between mankind and ‘divine forces’ the herald of which he could be. Only in the Jain text *Praśnavyākaraṇa-sūtra* (11th c.) dedicated to explaining the divination practice we find the use of the term vyākaraṇa in the sense ‘prophecy’. According to Buddhist canonical tradition Buddha has the ability to see past, present and future through its own exceptional mental powers (‘Higher Knowledge’).

In Buddhist texts, where we find the mention of the vyākaraṇa term, this word is interpreted either as a detailed explanation, an exhaustive interpreta-

<sup>39</sup> IL’ICHOV and FEDOSEIEV and KOVALIOV and PANOV 1983, 533.

tion of ideas implicit in sūtras (that brings together vyākaraṇa and *nirdeśa* as genres of Buddhist literature), or as an explanation of the causal relationship between acts in former births and the karmic fruit ripening in future lives. The definition of vyākaraṇa as a definite action is fixed in the Vasubandhu treatise ‘Encyclopedia of Buddhist Canonical Philosophy’ (*Abhidharmakośa*) (5th c.).

Secondly, the use of the dialectical approach allows to consider vyākaraṇa as a complex of the methods of rational cognition (analysis and synthesis), the aim of which in the context of Buddhist ‘soteriology’ is a controlled forecasting of the results of human activity aimed the realizing the ideal of Buddhist religious practice — the attainment of Final Liberation (*nirvāṇa*).

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