THE VEDIC IMPERATIVES \( \text{yódhi} \) ‘FIGHT’ AND \( \text{bodhi} \) ‘HEED’

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The 2nd sg. imperatives \( \text{yódhi} \) (\( \text{yudh-} \) ‘fight’) and \( \text{bodhi} \) (\( \text{budh-} \) ‘awake, heed’) are usually seen as athematic imperatives in -dhi with irregular guna of the root syllable and reduction of the geminate duster -ddhi- to -dh-. It is argued here, by contrast, that these forms are actually analogical creations on the basis of the 2nd sg. imperative \( \text{jósi} \) (\( \text{jus-} \) ‘enjoy’). Etymologically and historically, \( \text{jósi} \) is a “si-imperative” (*júsi, *júasti), hapologized from a 2nd sg. subjunctive *júasu / *júusesi. Synchronically, however, it appeared to be an “i-imperative” based on the gamutated root, and the overall parallelism of the verbs \( \text{yudh-}, \text{budh-}, \) and \( \text{jus-} \) led to the creation of \( \text{yódhi} \) and \( \text{bodhi} \) on the same model.

It was from reading one of Stanley Insler’s stimulating articles nearly thirty years ago that I first came to appreciate the oddity of the Vedic 2nd sg. imperatives \( \text{yódhi} \) (\( \text{yudh-} \) ‘fight’) and \( \text{bodhi} \) (\( \text{budh-} \) ‘awake, heed’). In dedicating this little study to him now, I hope that our honoree will be pleased to see how much my analysis owes to him.

\( \text{yódhi} \) is a hapax, occurring at \( \text{RV V} \ 3.9 \):

\[ \text{āva sprádh} \ \text{piitárum} \ \text{yódhi} \ \text{vidván} \ \text{putrā} \ \text{yás te sahasaḥ} \ \text{sūna} \ \text{āḥ} \]

Insler (p. 556) translates this passage as follows: “Protect (or free) the father. Knowing how, fight (for him) who is considered thy son . . . .” In adopting this interpretation, he specifically upholds the traditional analysis of \( \text{yódhi} \) as a form of \( \text{yudh-} \), correctly rejecting the attempts of Oldenberg, Geldner, and other scholars to refer it to \( \text{yu-} \) ‘keep away’. In insler’s stated reason for preferring \( \text{yudh-} \) to \( \text{yu-} \) is functional: transitive \( \text{yu-} \), he notes, never appears in the Rigveda without an overt direct object. But his discussion as a whole reveals another, more intuitive line of thought: since \( \text{yódhi} \) is inseparable from \( \text{bodhi} \), and since \( \text{bodhi} \) is a form of \( \text{budh-} \), \( \text{yódhi} \) must be a form of the morphologically parallel root \( \text{yudh-} \).

\( \text{bodhi} \) itself—not to be confused with the homophonous but unrelated 2nd sg. impv. \( \text{bodhi} \) (\( \text{bodh-} \) ‘become’)—is attested ten times in the Rigveda. The typical use is seen in passages like IV 3.4:

\[ \text{tásya} \ \text{bodhi} \ \text{ptacit} \ \text{yádhá} \]

Being of good attention, be aware of the truth, thou perceiver of truth.

and VIII 43.27:

\[ \text{ágne sá} \ \text{bodhi} \ \text{me vácaḥ} \]

Agni, be now aware of my words.

Since both \( \text{yudh-} \) and \( \text{budh-} \) have characterized presents in -yá- (\( \text{yádhy-}, \text{bádhy-} \)), the imperatives \( \text{yódhi} \) and \( \text{bódhi} \) must be classified as root aorists. As active athematic imperatives in -dhi, however, they are anomalous in at least two respects: 1) they show single -dh- rather than expected *-ddh-; and 2) they have full grade, rather than zero grade, of the root. The expected root-based imperatives of \( \text{yudh-} \) and

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1 I refer, of course, to insler 1972 (hereinafter “insler”), especially pp. 556–64.

2 See Insler’s discussion, where full references are given. The connection to \( \text{yudh-} \) is maintained by Grassmann, Whitney, and Macdonell.

3 On \( \text{bodhi} \) ‘(be)come’, which was probably accentuated differently from ‘\( \text{bódhi} \) ‘heed’, see especially Jamison 1997, with literature. Jamison’s point of departure is the present imperative \( \text{bhava} \); she assumes that this gave monosyllabic *\( \text{bhó} \), which was then extended by the addition of the imperative particle -dhi. To explain the special development to *\( \text{bha} \), she envisages a precocious Middle Indic sound change of -ava- to -a-; an alternative might be to start with a truncated imperative *\( \text{bha} \)’ (i.e., Hr. *\( \text{bhu} \)’), typologically comparable to Lat. fac ‘do’, dic ‘say’, etc.

4 Insler’s translations in both passages.
*budhi*—the present vs. aorist distinction makes no difference here—would have been *yuddhi* and *buddhi*. The problem here is why these forms seem to have been replaced by *yodhi* and *bodhi*.

Insler (p. 556f., n. 9) attributes the simplification of *-ddhi* to *-dh* in *yodhi* and *bodhi* to the preceding heavy syllable, comparing the loss of the root-final consonant in *trhdi* ( : *trd- ‘bore’), prudhi ( : *prc- ‘mix’), bhndhi ( : *bhmi- ‘break’), rundhi (AV) ( : *rudp- ‘obstruct’), and *vrnhdhi* ( : *vrij- ‘twist’). These examples, however, are not satisfying compared to, since all involve the loss of the medial consonant in sequences of the type *-NCIC*. The *-ddh* in *yoddi* and *boddi*, by contrast, was for all practical purposes intervocalic, even if—as is not unlikely—the root vowel at the time of the putative phonological reduction was the diphthong *-au-*. Clusters, and in particular geminates, were not simplified in this position; direct counterexamples can be seen in agent nouns of the type *yoddh-ri* ( : *yudh-‘do’), cettf ( : *cit- ‘notice’), bhettf ( : *bhid- ‘split’), etc.5 An extreme variant of the “reduction” approach underlies Mayrhofer’s attempt (1986: 111–12) to place the degemination of *-ddh* to *-dh* within Proto-Indo-European. According to Mayrhofer, “im Falle von RV 5, 3, 9 *yodhi*, wehehre ab!” (und in ved. *bodhi* *merke. sei wachsam!”) scheinen Wurzeln auf *-edh* vor dem Morphem -dh- die Silbengrenze nach *-vy- zu legen, wodurch *ydh* in der Position TTV zu TV vereinfacht wurde.” This, however, is merely notational sleight-of-hand: it is almost inconceivable that a preform *-jeudh-dhi* could even have been syllabified *jeudh-dhi* in a phonetically meaningful way.

Even more surprising than the apparent reduction of *-ddh* to *-dh* is the unexpected gonation of the roots *yudh-*, *budh-* to *yodh-*, *bodh-*. The normal Vedic rule for the formation of aorist and present imperatives in *-dh* (-hi) calls for zero grade of the root; cf. *shrudi* ( : *shr- ‘hear’; root aor.), *krdhi* ( : *kr- ‘do’; root aor.), *gahi* ( : *gam- ‘go’; root aor.), *brhhi* ( : *brhi- ‘say’; root pres.), *ihi* ( : *i- ‘go’; root pres.), *dheh* ( : *dhat(d)hi* ( : *dh- ‘put’; reduplicated pres.), *sphdhi* ( : *sp-; nasal pres.), as well as *trhdi, prudhi*, etc., cited above. Exceptions occur: these, however, are mainly of the type *sagdhi* ( : *sak- ‘be able’; root aor.), *edhi* ( : *azdhi* ( : *as- ‘be’; root pres.), *sahi* ( : *sah- ‘bind’; root aor.), and *pahhi* ( : *pah- ‘protect’; root pres.), which illustrate “the overwhelming tendency of roots of the shape *(C)CaC and (C)Ca* to generalize their full-grade morphemes in root formations” (Insler: 552). *yodhi and bodhi* clearly have nothing to do with this phenomenon; roots in medial -i-, -u-, and -r- notoriously retain their inherited zero grades, and even extend zero grade at the expense of full grade in certain grammatical categories. As far as the origin of *yodhi* and *bodhi* is concerned, therefore, one of the following three general scenarios must be correct. Either 1) both forms go back to very ancient—in effect, late PIE—preforms with an atypical but historically justified full grade; or 2) one of *yodhi* and *bodhi* has a historically justified full grade and the other is analogical; or 3) neither *yodhi* and *bodhi* is old, but both are closely modeled on a third form or group of forms with a well-motivated full grade. The first possibility is purely theoretical; no one has ever adduced independent morphological evidence to support the proposition that late or dialectical PIE had *both* a full-grade *iēudh-dhi* and a full-grade *bhēudh-dhi*. Practically speaking, the choices that need to be considered are 2) and 3). These are discussed below.

Insler’s proposed solution to the problem of *yodhi* and *bodhi* falls under the broad heading of 2). The root aorist of *yudh-*, as he points out (558f.), is represented in the Rigveda not only by the imperative *yodhi* but also by the 3rd sg. subjunctive *yodhat* and the middle participle *yodhanā-. Although the full-grade form *yodhanā-, standing in lieu of expected *yudhanā-, is virtually unique, it recalls the present middle participle *stāvānḥ- ( : *stuvān- ‘praise’), with the regular weak vocalism—historically, *e*-grade—of a PIE “Narten” present.7 Insler makes no attempt to argue that the root *iēudh-*, itself formed such a present in the parent language, since the stem *yudhyā- (< *iudh-je/ō-*) shows every sign of being an IE inheritance. He proposes instead to set up a Narten root *aorist*, differing in aspect from a Narten present but having the same *e*: *ē* ablaut pattern. The aorist middle participle *yodhanā- (< *iēudh-ono- or *iēudh-mhono-).8

5 While it is perfectly true that these forms could have restored the double dental sequences by analogy, it is hard to see why an analogical process that restored *yoddh-ri* for *yodh-ri* would not also have restored *yoddh* for *yodhi.

6 Or *Hēudh-dhi*; cf. LIV 2011. Since the evidence for the initial laryngeal is inconclusive, the traditional reconstruction with *ej* will be retained here.

7 The term, which Insler does not employ, refers to the acrostatic (root-accented) present type with *e*: *ē* ablaut, as classically described by Narten (1968).

8 The position of the accent in *yodhanā-, as Insler notes, must be secondary; the shift from acrostatic to “normal” accentuation is also seen in *stāvānḥ- beside stāvānā- and ohānā- ( : *āh- ‘consider’) beside ohānā-.
under this interpretation, was a typical Narten full-grade weak form; another was the imperative yóḍh-dhī < *jeudh-dhī. The inherited yóḍhī, according to Insler, triggered the analogical creation of bodhī. Crucial for the analogy was the fact that yudh-, like yudh-, formed an active root aorist subjunctive (bódhā, bódhati, etc.). In proportional terms,

yudh-, subj. yodhat : impv. yóḍhī : bódh-, subj. bódhat : impv. X,

where X was solved as bodhī (p. 561). As Insler correctly notes, the fact that the root aorist of budh- lacks active forms outside the subjunctive (cf. 3 sg. “passive” aer. ábodhī, pl. abudhran (-ram), bódhānta, ptc. budhānā-) makes an analytical origin for bodhī likely in any case.

This intuitively attractive account is unfortunately compromised by two facts. The first, which Insler could not possibly have foreseen in 1972, is that Narten aorists—root aorists with *ē : *ē ablaut—seem not to have existed as a formal category in PIE. While the parent language did have a handful of root aorists with a Narten-like full grade, rather than zero grade, in the middle (e.g., 3rd sg. *mēn- to 'brought to mind' [ > GAΨ. mantā]; *hēr- to 'got moving'[ > Vcd. ärta, ptc. árāṇā-; etc.), none of these had lengthened-grade actives or, indeed, any active forms at all. More generally, lengthened grade is nowhere unambiguously attested or reflected in a root aorist, either in Vedic, Avestan, or any other early IE language. This is why most current students of the IE verbal system, including Hardterson (1993:57ff.) and LIV (20-21), maintain that, at least in the active, all PIE root aorists were of the “normal,” or *e : zero apophonic type. 10

The second difficulty with Insler’s explanation of yóḍhī is that even if it could be shown that there were Narten root aorists in PIE, and even if it were known that the root *jeudh- in fact formed such an aorist, there would still be no basis for predicting *jeudh-dhī rather than *yudh-dhī as its imperative. The only interestingly parallel Rigvedic case of a “Narten” imperative in *dhī, present or aorist, is stuthī (= VAY. *stāūti) ‘praise’, found nearly two dozen times besides the present stātī. 11 While it is not inconceivable that this form replaced an earlier full-grade *stāūhī or (1r.) *stāudhī, just as zero-grade stāvantī replaced earlier *stāvati (< *stēqntī) in the 3rd pl., the fact remains that there is not a single quotable example of a full-grade Narten imperative of the type allegedly seen in yóḍhī. The proposed derivation of yóḍhī from *jeudh-dhī, in short, is so problematic as to be virtually untenable.

What, then, can we say about the origin of yóḍhī and bodhī? Insler is obviously right that bodhī, as an isolated active form embedded in a basically deponent paradigm, must be analogical. 12 He is also right to stress the morphological parallelism of the roots yudh- and budh-, which goes far beyond yóḍhī, bodhī and the subjunctives yodhat, bódhati. Thus, e.g., both roots also make class IV (-ya-) presents, represented by the multiply attested yidhya- (active and middle) and būdhyā- (middle only), both with Iranian cognates. The stem būdhyā- in particular conforms to a well-known Vedic (and, mutatis mutandis, IE) pattern. Like a number of other primarily intransitive roots, budh- underlies a “stative-intransitive system,” a synchronic array consisting of the present -ya- (būdhyā-), a stative perfect (ptc. budhānā-, subj. būdhati), and an intransitive middle (“passive”) root aorist in 3rd sg. -i, 3rd pl. -ram / -ram

9 Apparent cases of lengthened-grade root aorists are either secondary or better explained in other ways. Thus, e.g., Lat. uénīt ‘came’ and Toch. B šem ‘went’ point to a root-form *gēm-, but the original paradigm was probably a normal root aorist with a long vowel that arose through inner-IE sound changes (1st sg. *gēm-m > *gēm-en; 2nd sg. *gēm-s > *gēm-en [ > *gēn-s]). Gk. κηρύττο ‘gave old’ is traced to a lengthened-grade aorist by Peters (1980: 313ff.), but the vocalism of this perennially troublesome form is inseparable from that of the present yēροκο and the noun γῆρος ‘old age’. Pace Adams (1988: 87ff.), the Tocharian imperfect/preterite type A šavā, B šavaš ‘saw’ is better analyzed as a lengthened-grade (Narten) imperfactive than as an aorist; see Weiss 1996: 674 and Jasanoff 1998: 306ff., where an equation is suggested with the Latin type legi ‘read’.

10 It is important to emphasize, however, that “normal” root aorists were not necessarily the same as “normal” imperfects, their counterparts in the present system. As repeatedly pointed out by Karl Hoffmann (cf., e.g., Hoffmann 1968: 7-8), there is good reason to believe that the zero-grade stem, which characterizes the entire dual and plural in the present/imperfect active, was confined to the 3rd pl. in the indicative of the root aorist.

11 To which may be added mrdhī (< mṛj-, pres. mṛṣṭi, ‘wipes’) in the Atharvaśoud. Although ad- ‘cat’ and takes- ‘fashion’ made Narten presents, the structure of these roots makes it impossible to conclude anything from the imperatives adhī and tāthī.

12 This is also the tentative LIV view, which takes bodhī to be an alteration of the present imperative budhā, formed bodhī cannot be explained in this way, and the supposed change from -dhù to -dhī is unparalleled in other thematic imperatives to roots in -dh-.
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Similar triplets of forms are associated with the roots šac- 'be kindled' (pres. šac+a-, perf. ptcp. šatukvāms-, aor. šac+i), pad- 'fall' (pres. pād-, perf. 3rd sg. papādu, aor. āpāti), jan- 'be born' (pres. jāna-, perf. mid. jajñē, aor. jajni), and ṛṣ- 'irritate' (pres. ṛṣya-, perf. mid. ptcp. ṛṣṭya-, aor. ṛṣya-). Simple pairs consisting of a perfect and a passive aorist are particularly common (e.g., perf. ektē / ektē; aor. ektē [cf. ektē, ektēvā]: cit- 'notice / appear'; perf. sāstrāvā / sāstrāvē: aor. sātri; GAv. vṛṣāvari: ātri-'hear'; perf. varoca / varuce: aor. aroci; ruc- 'shine'; etc.).

The present vaidhya- suggests that the root yudh-, which etymologically meant 'become' or 'act', may originally have formed a stative-intransitive system as well. The lack of a stative perfect does not rule out this possibility (cf. LIV 202), and neither does the absence of a finite middle or passive root aorist paradigm, which could easily be accidental or secondary. Indirect evidence for a middle root aorist of yudh- comes from the 1st pl. s-aorist injunctive yutsmahti (AV), which looks very much like the signification of an earlier *yudsmahti; compare 1st pl. abhutsmahti (RV V 3.4, VII 81.3), clearly the replacement of older *abhudmahi. Pointing specifically to a 3rd sg. "passive" *āyudhi is the aphonically aberrant participle yodhāna-. The closest parallel to yodhāna- elsewhere in the Vedic corpus is the privative adjective ācetana- 'unknowing' (RV VII 13.7), which implies a full-grade participle *cetanā- or *cetāna-. The formal relationship of the participle -cetana- to the passive aorist āceiti (cf. above) is the same as that of yodhāna- to the suspected but unattested *āyudhi. If, as I have suggested elsewhere, the PIE ancestor of the Indo-Iranian passive aorist had *

The general parallelism of the roots yudh- and bodh- is underscored by the surprising and unexplained fact that both also underlie a very rare active iṣ-aorist. In the case of bodh- this is restricted to the hapax 3rd sg. subjunctive bodhitā (II 16.7); in the case of yudh- the subjunctive yudhitā is flanked by an injunctive (2nd sg. yodhīs), an imperative (2nd du. yodhistum), and an indicative (3rd sg. āyodhitī). Putting the iṣ-aorist together with the root aorist, we obtain a Gesamtbild of the aorist of yudh- and bodh- that is best appreciated in tabular form as shown above. No more eloquent confirmation could be found for Inslser's insight that the imperatives yudhi and bodhi are inseparable. Finding an independently motivated explanation for yodhi, as Inslser attempts to do, would clearly translate at once into an explanation for bodhi, and vice versa. Unfortunately, however, neither yodhi nor bodhi appears to lend itself to such an explanation. Neither has a discoverable Indo-European pedigree; neither can be generated analogically from within its own extended paradigm; neither has any claim to historical priority over the other. It will not be amiss at this point to recall, therefore, that there is another possibility to consider—the possibility that both forms are analogical to something else.

There is one, and only one, other verbal root in the Rigveda that forms a root aorist with an exclusively...
“passive”-type indicative and participle beside an exclusively active subjunctive. Remarkably, it is a root that, like yudh- and budh-, also happens to form an active is-aorist subjunctive and a full-grade active aorist imperative. The relevant forms of jüs- ‘enjoy’ are the following:16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form Type</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>root aorist indic. active</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>root aorist indic. middle</td>
<td>ajusam, jusānā-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>root aorist subj. active</td>
<td>jīsāti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>root aorist subj. middle</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is-aorist active</td>
<td>jīsāt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is-aorist middle</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aorist imperative active</td>
<td>jōsti</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The relationship of the imperative jōsti to the other forms, and in particular to the modal forms jōsati(i) and jōsīt, is on one level exactly the same as that of yōdhi and bodhi to yodhat, yodhisat and bōdhatti, bodhisat, respectively. But while yōdhi and bodhi notoriously cry out for explanation, jōsti is perfectly well understood. It is a si-imperative of the same formal type as vēksi ‘convey’, yēksi ‘sacrifice’, nēsi ‘lead’, jēsi ‘conquer’, and nearly twenty others.17 si-imperatives, as shown by Szemerényi (1966) for Indic-Iranian and by the present author for Indo-European as a whole (Jasanoff 1986, 1987: 92–112), are haploglotted 2nd sg. subjunctives in *s-e-si. The first *-s- of the pre-haplologized sequence is typically the *-s- of the x-aorist, as, e.g., in Ved. vēksi, nēsi (cf. 3 sg. indic. āvāt, ānuti < *uēhiH-s-e-si, *nēH-s-e-si) or OIr. com-eir ‘arise’ < *kóm-ess-reś < *-reg-si < *-reg-s-e-si (: s-subj. *ress- < *-reg-s-e-o/o-). In other cases, however, the *-s- is either another sigmatic morpheme (so, e.g., Ved. trōsī ‘hear’ [= Toch. B pākṣyaus] < *klo-si < *klo-s-s-e-si; Hitt. pāḥṣi ‘protect’ < *pehi-si < *pehi-s-e-si, both probably from s-presents), or simply the final consonant of the root (so Hitt. eši ‘settle’ < *hēleH-si < *hēleH-e-si [vel sim.]), jōsti, which forms a word equation with OIr. teg ‘choose’ (< *tē-gos(s) < *-geusi < *-geus-e-si),18 is a case of the latter type.

Merely to review these facts is to grasp the true position of yōdhi and bodhi. Neither form is an archaism: both are analogical pendants to the inherited si-imperative jōsti < *gēusi. The inherent ambiguity of the form jōsti caused it to be reanalyzed by some speakers as an “i-imperative,” and the ending -i was extended, dialectally at first, to the parallel roots yudh- and budh-.19 The proportion was

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>subj. jōs- (iṣa) : impv. jōs- : subj. yodh-(iṣa)at, bodh-(iṣa)at</td>
<td>impv. X,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

where X was solved as yōdh-i, bodh-i. A typologically similar process can be seen in Hittite, where bona fide si-imperatives of the type paḫši, eši (cf. above) induced the creation of Neo-Hittite i-imperatives of the type zāhi ‘light’ and ḫāni ‘draw water’, and other late forms. But in Vedic, unlike Hittite, the career of the imperative ending -i ended as quickly as it began. Transparent as the segmentation yōdhi-i, bodh-i may have been to the first generation of linguistic innovators, the subsequent propagation of yōdhi and bodhi across the Vedic speech community clearly depended on the fact that they were perceived by most native speakers as containing the imperative ending -dhi. The synchronic reinterpretation of yōdhi and bodhi as irregularly altered forms of *yōddhi, *bōddhi or *yuddhi, *buddhī was not an error of Western Sanskritists or the Indian grammarians. It was a reanalysis by the Vedic Aryans themselves.

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16 Not shown is the very common thematic aorist jaqā-, best attested in the imperative and possibly a thematization of the middle root aorist. There was also a stative perfect jajāsā, jujusāṇāt- etc., showing that the root *gēus- / jüs- formed a pair of the same type as vikēsā : ācēti, varūca : uruči, etc.

17 GAv. doṣāt (: doṣ- ‘show’) is the lone Iranian representative of the formation.

18 To be sure, the Irish form was remodeled: both the si-imperative *gēusi and the associated subjunctive *gēusel-o- were perceived as ordinary sigmatic formations and “clarified” to *gēus-si and gēus-se-o-o. The later shortening of expected *ti-o-gos(s) to *ti-o-gos(s) in the imperative was due to the influence of the s-subjunctive, where loss of length was phonologically regular in medial syllables and analogically extended to other positions. See the discussion by Thurneysen (1946: 392ff.), and compare p. 19.

19 This was not, of course, the only possible synchronic analysis. Since the sequence -e-s- was phonotactically impossible in Vedic, jōsti could also be interpreted as the surface realization of an underlying “normal” si-imperative fiōs-si; this parsing may have been responsible for the rise of the analogical nonce form yōsī (RV I 132.4). In the subjunctive (jōsāt, etc.), where there were again two possible readings, the is-aorist offered an obvious way to distinguish the sigmatic from the non-sigmatic analysis. The result was the partial renewal of jōsāt by jōsāt, whence the creation of yodhisat and bōdhisat.


