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THE WORLD IN TWO WORDS: BINOMIALS IN TWO ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF THE *LOTUS SUTRA*

The *Lotus Sutra* (or *Lotos Sutra*) is a very important book for Buddhists because it claims to report the teachings of Buddha (Siddharta Gautama), the founder of Buddhism. It seems to go back to the 3rd century B.C., but English translations were only made from the late 19th century onwards, the two most recent ones by Watson (1993) and Reeves (2008). Judging from those two versions, the *Lotus Sutra* is not only a religious, but also a strongly rhetorical text, and binomials (word pairs) are one of the rhetorical figures that are frequently employed; a few examples are: *births and deaths*, *clean and spotless*, *receive and retain*. The binomials used by Watson and Reeves are in the focus of the present study. Among other things I give a brief definition of binomials (which can be extended into multinomials, such as *birth, old age, sickness, and death*) and provide a sketch of scholarship on binomials. I discuss their formal properties, e.g. their word-classes (mainly nouns, less frequently adjectives and verbs), the connection of their elements (mostly *and*, less frequently *or*), their basic structure as well as extended and reduced structures, and their morphological makeup. As far as their etymology is concerned, there are combinations of native words (*births and deaths*, *body and mind*), loan-words (*causes and conditions*, *receive and retain*), and combinations of loan-word plus native word (*supreme and wonderful*, *soft and gentle*). As far as meaning is concerned, there are three main groups, i.e. binomials that show synonymy (*fine robes and superior garments*, *joy and delight*) or antonymy (*births and deaths*, *body and mind*, *good and bad*); or various kinds of complementarity (*leader and teacher*, *soft and gentle*, etc.); I also discuss cultural aspects of binomials. Furthermore I look at the sequence of the elements and factors that determine or influence that sequence. The comparison of Watson and Reeves also shows that frequently one translator uses a binomial where the other does not, and even in passages where both have a binomial the wording is often different, but there are also some instances where both translators use the same binomial.

1. *The Lotus Sutra*, its English versions and their rhetoric

The *Lotus Sutra* is one of the books that report (or at least claim to report) Buddha's teachings,¹ and therefore it is one of the sacred scriptures of Mahayana Buddhism; accordingly there is a lot of literature on it.² Originally it was probably composed in Sanskrit or rather Prakrit (a dialect of Sanskrit) at an early date, i.e. in the 3rd to 1st centuries B.C. The original version is unfortunately lost, but the work exists in several later versions and translations. It is probably best known through the Chinese translation by Kumarajiva from 406 A.D., who used an earlier Chinese translation by Zhu Fahu (3rd century A.D.), which was based on a Prakrit rather than a Sanskrit text.³

Therefore the *Lotus Sutra* is not only important for Buddhists, but also interesting for scholars of Sanskrit, Prakrit and of Chinese. It mixes fact and fiction, achieving a cosmic dimension, and the factual and the fictional level are sometimes easy and sometimes difficult to disentangle. In Kumarajiva's Chinese version, the *Lotus Sutra* consists of 28 chapters, and it is presented as a sequence of prose and verse passages (prosimetrum); the verse passages usually repeat the contents of the prose passages, but in a more poetic way.⁴

Some of the original Sanskrit words and expressions were not translated by Kumarajiva, but taken over (and simply transliterated), a practice which persists in many of the modern translations; to give just a few examples: *arhat*, *Buddha*, *bodhisatva*, *brahma*, *dharma*, *kalpa*, *nirvana*, *stupa*, *sutra*, etc.⁵ There are probably two main reasons (which are often combined) for taking them over as loan-words or foreign words: partly they are felt to be technical terms that are

¹ Buddha or Siddhattha Gotama, or Siddharta Gautama, or Shakyamuni Buddha, ca. 566-486 B.C., or ca. 490-410 B.C.

² See, e.g., the bibliography in Reeves (2008: 476-477). Some information is also available on the internet under *Lotus Sutra* and under *Lotos Sutra*.

³ For information concerning the Chinese language as well as the Chinese and the early versions of the *Lotus Sutra*, and for a detailed scrutiny of my manuscript, I am grateful to my colleague Professor Roland Altenburger at the University of Würzburg. Work on the present article was mainly made possible due to an invitation from the Center for Civilizational Dialogue at the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur (and its director, Professor Faridah Noor Mohd Noor), which enabled me to spend two weeks at the Center and to work there in a relaxed and stimulating atmosphere. My thanks are due to Birgit Schwan for getting this article into its final shape, and to the anonymous reviewer for helpful remarks.

⁴ A well known Western example of a prosimetrum is the *Consolation of Philosophy* by Boethius (ca. 480-524 A.D.), originally written in Latin ca. 523/524.

⁵ Cf., e.g., the glossary in Watson (1993: 325-342): *arhat* 'someone who has attained a certain stage of enlightenment (but not the highest yet)'; *bodhisatva* 'someone who aspires to Buddhahood and helps others to attain it'; *brahma* 'an Indian deity (...)'; *Buddha* 'who has achieved the highest level of enlightenment' (actually *Buddha* has two meanings, see fn. 40 below); *dharma* 'the body or law of Buddhist teachings'; *kalpa* 'a very long period of time'; *nirvana* 'the state in which one has escaped the cycle of birth and death'; *stupa* 'a shrine (...)'; *sutra* 'teaching'; etc.; see also fn. 19 below.

difficult to translate (or even intranslatable) and would require a long explanation, and partly they add a specifically Buddhist touch to the translated text (and for many readers probably also a noticeable exotic touch); interestingly they are used very rarely in binomials (see further section 7 below).

There are ten translations of the *Lotus Sutra* into Modern English, beginning with Kern 1884 (apparently Western interest in Buddhism only began in the later 19th century). The English translations are:⁶ Kern (1884); Soothill (1930); Murano (1974); Kato et al. (1975); Hurvitz (1976); Anonymous (1976-1982); Toda (1983); Kubo & Yuyama (1991); Watson (1993); Reeves (2008); for bibliographical details see the references at the end of this article.

In the present article I shall compare the first chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* in the most recent English translations by Watson (1993) and by Reeves (2008), with particular reference to the binomials and their use. The present study is, however, only preliminary; it could and should be expanded into a much longer and more detailed study by taking the entire text into account as well as by comparing other translations. I have not distinguished between the prose and the verse passages, because their use of binomials does not seem to differ substantially.

Both Watson (1993) and Reeves (2008) are based on the Chinese version by Kumarajiva, therefore it would also be interesting to look at the relation of the translations to their Chinese source in order to see which binomials exist in the Chinese exemplar and were taken over (or translated) and which were newly introduced by the translators, but this would be a separate task.⁷ Apparently many of the binomials in the English translations are not in the Chinese version by Kumarajiva, but have been added by the translators.

The language of the *Lotus Sutra* and its English translations is very rhetorical. Some of the rhetorical strategies used are, for example:⁸

- (1) Lists, e.g., of the gifts to Buddha, “alms, gold, silver, coral, pearls, many jewels, seashell, agate, diamonds and other rarities, men and women servants, carriages ...” (Watson 9 at the top),⁹ or enumerations of the large audiences that came to hear Buddha’s teaching; the latter also nicely illustrate the transition from the factual to the fictional: “the monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, heavenly beings, dragons, yakshas, gandharvas, asuras, garudas, kimnaras, mahoragas ...” (in the translation by Watson 6 at the top),

⁶ See the bibliographies in Watson (1993: xxviii-xxix); Reeves (2008: 475). Most English translations are based on Kumarajiva, but Kern is based on a Sanskrit version. Kern is still being reprinted, see Goddard and Kern (2010).

⁷ Chinese was a monosyllabic language originally, but developed into a polysyllabic language, partly under Buddhist influence and the influence of the Sanskrit (or Prakrit) originals.

⁸ There is a lot of literature on rhetoric; see, e.g., Lausberg (1973).

⁹ In the lists of examples, Watson (1993) and Reeves (2008) will just be referred to by name and page.

or in Reeves' version with more 'English' terms substituted for the Sanskrit terms: "monks and nuns, laymen and laywomen, gods, dragons, satyrs, centaurs, asuras, griffins, chimeras, pythons, humans, and non-humans ..." (Reeves 55).¹⁰ On the structure and the meaning of those lists (multinomials), see also section 10 below.

- (2) Sentences and phrases with parallel structures, forming anaphoras and epiphoras, e.g. (anaphora) "good at the beginning, good in the middle, good at the end" (Watson 14); (epiphora) "to expound the great Law, to rain down the rain of the great Law, to blow the conch of the great Law, to beat the drum of the great Law, to elucidate the meaning of the great Law" (Watson 13 bottom).
- (3) Repeated sentences or phrases, which in the poems sometimes also create a kind of stanzas, e.g. "offering them to the Buddha and his monks" (repeated four times in Watson 1).
- (4) Binomials, e.g. "leader and teacher", "births and deaths", "quakes and trembles"; the binomials used in the first chapter of the translations by Watson (1993) and Reeves (2008) will be the main focus of the present study.
- (5) Binomials and other rhetorical figures (such as lists) and strategies are sometimes combined and can therefore not always be easily separated. For example, binomials are occasionally embedded in longer lists: "through various causes and conditions, various types of faith and understanding and in various forms and aspects" (Watson 6), corresponding to "due to various causes and conditions, with various degrees of faith and understanding, and in various forms" (Reeves 55). Watson's rendering can be analysed at least in two ways, i.e. either as a list consisting of six items, or as a sequence consisting of three binomials – here I analyse it as a sequence of three binomials: "causes and conditions", "faith and understanding", "forms and aspects". Reeves' rendering is slightly shorter, consisting of a list of five items, or alternatively as a sequence of two binomials plus an additional word.

In the following sections I shall briefly deal with the definition of binomials (section 2); their function or rather functions (section 3); previous research on binomials, especially in English (section 4); general similarities and differences in the use of binomials in the translations of the *Lotus Sutra* by Watson (1993) and Reeves (2008) (section 5); the formal properties of binomials, especially their word-classes, the connecting conjunctions (mainly *and*), and their typical, reduced and expanded forms; furthermore additional embellishments such as alliteration, as well as their morphology, especially word-formation (section 6); their etymology (section 7); their meaning, that is the semantic relation between the two elements (synonymy, antonymy, complementary relation) (section 8);

¹⁰ Many of these 'English' terms ultimately go back to Greek and were borrowed into English much later, especially during Middle English and Early Modern English. This list is repeated in somewhat shorter form twice in Watson 6, and again in Watson 7 top, and in other places.

other semantic aspects, especially the division between factual and stylistic binomials, and binomials with a culture-specific background (section 9); multinomials (section 10); the question of fixedness and formulaicity on the one hand and of flexibility on the other hand, where, e.g., frequency and the sequence of the two words play a role (section 11).

2. What are binomials?

Binomials are usually defined as pairs of words of the same word-class and at the same syntactic level, connected by a conjunction (mostly *and* or *or*) and having some semantic relation (synonymy, antonymy, complementarity);¹¹ to give a few examples from outside the *Lotus Sutra*: *lord and master*, *power and might*, *heaven and hell*, *clean and pure*, *malicious and wicked*, *to have and to hold*, *begin and commence*, *answered and said*.¹²

As with many linguistic, literary and other phenomena, there is no fixed terminology but rather a variety of terms – whether this is unfortunate or simply unavoidable in scholarship is another question. The combinations under discussion here have also been called word pairs (repetitive word pairs, tautologic word pairs), doublets, twin formulae, freezes, in German *Wortpaare* or *Paarformeln*, etc. But they are not always repetitive or tautologic (in fact only a minority is tautologic in the material analysed here; see section 8 below), nor are they always formulaic or frozen (although they can be; see section 11 below); therefore the term binomials is preferred here, which leaves it open whether they are formulaic or created on the spur of the moment, and whether they are tautologic or not.

Binomials can be extended into multinomials (trinomials or triplets, quadrinomials etc.), thus shading off into lists; to take two examples from the *Lotus Sutra*, (trinomial) “an immeasurable, boundless, inconceivable number” (Watson 14), or (quadrinomial) “birth, old age, sickness and death” (Watson 14), which is one of the culture-specific multinomials that are important in Buddhist teaching. For typical (prototypical) and less typical forms of binomials see further section 6.3 below; for more on multinomials see section 10 below; for culture-specific binomials and multinomials see section 9 below.

3. The function of binomials

English (or European) binomials have or can have a number of functions, which often cannot be strictly separated, but rather overlap. Their stylistic and rhetorical function is to create a rich, ornate, elevated style (*copia verborum*), and also to add emphasis. At the stage of oral transmission they served as an

¹¹ See, e.g., Malkiel (1959: 113); Bhatia (1993: 108).

¹² In the Chinese text, often there does not seem to be a conjunction.

aid to memory. In Old English, double glosses sometimes provide two (or even more) synonyms for one Latin lemma (word). Especially in legal and theological language they serve to make an argument as comprehensive and unambiguous as possible, in order to avoid or exclude possible misunderstandings – thus the aim to achieve clarity and unequivocality leads to a certain verbosity.¹³ Particularly in Middle English a loan-word borrowed recently from French was occasionally explained by a native word or by an earlier loan-word (this is also called translation theory; see further section 7 below). Antonymous binomials often split up a somewhat abstract entity into its more concrete components, e.g. “men and women” for ‘people’, or “day and night” for ‘the entire day of 24 hours’ (see further section 8 below). In the *Lotus Sutra* and its English versions, it is certainly the stylistic and rhetorical function, but also the striving for emphasis and comprehensiveness which motivate the use of binomials.

4. European research on binomials, mainly English binomials

Binomials are important for rhetoric and stylistics, for phraseology (collocations), semantics and etymology, for the analysis of literary language as well as of legal language. European research on binomials began with Jacob Grimm (1816), who tried to show (although he did not have the term binomials yet) that in the Germanic languages legal binomials and poetic binomials have the same origin.¹⁴ Since Grimm (1816) there has been a continuous tradition of research on binomials in legal language and in Germanic poetry (including Old English poetry); see, e.g., Dilcher (1961) and Berger (1993); the latter provides a good review of relevant 19th and 20th century studies. Research in the 20th century has also rejected Grimm’s claim of a common origin of legal and poetic binomials.

On the whole there has been less research on binomials in English literature, i.e. in Old English prose and glosses and in later English poetry and prose. A reason for this neglect might be changing stylistic ideals. As mentioned above (see section 3), a frequent function of binomials is to create and to be part of an ornate, elevated and rhetorical style, which was popular in the literature of the Middle English and early Modern English periods, at least up to and including Milton (1608-1674). Later authors, however, often favoured a simple and unadorned prose style, and this is apparently reflected in 20th century research and criticism of binomials.

¹³ I owe this insight to Joanna Kopaczyk.

¹⁴ Jacob Grimm is best known to the general public as a collector of fairy tales (together with his brother Wilhelm), but he was also one of the most important linguists of the 19th century, and his impact is still felt today. For example, he formulated Grimm’s Law and coined terms such as strong and weak verbs (*starke – schwache Verben*) as well as strong and weak adjectival declension (*starke – schwache Adjektivdeklination*), and he started off research into binomials.

A typical example of a negative or at least somewhat self-contradictory scholarly attitude towards binomials is Leisi (1947), who actually wrote the first monograph on binomials in a literary Middle English text (a translation from French), namely Caxton's *Eneydos*. Like Grimm, Leisi did not have the term binomials yet. He called them tautologic word-pairs (*G tautologische Wortpaare*), although in his study he then proceeded to show in great detail that they are rarely tautologic (in the sense that both words have exactly the same meaning); rather there are many and quite subtle semantic relations between the two elements of binomials (for a brief sketch of their semantic relations, see section 8 below). Leisi even regarded binomials as an anomaly in language, failing to see that they are by far too frequent to be regarded as an exception. Rather they were and partly still are an important stylistic feature of language and are therefore a legitimate object of linguistic research.

Binomials are, of course, not confined to English, but occur in many languages – perhaps they can even be considered a linguistic universal. William Caxton (ca. 1422-1491), for example, actually took over, adapted or translated many binomials from his French source(s), but also added many of his own invention.¹⁵ Binomials do not seem to be a prominent feature of Chinese, however.

Perhaps as a consequence of this generally rather negative attitude, few monographs were written in the 20th century on binomials in English literary texts and in Modern English, in fact only three. Apart from Leisi (1947) there are Koskenniemi (1968) and Gustafsson (1975). Koskenniemi (1968) gives a survey of what she calls *Repetitive Word Pairs in Old and Early Middle English Prose* – although, as stated above, these pairs are by no means always repetitive.¹⁶ Gustafsson (1975) has collected and analysed binomial expressions in present-day English. But a lot of research still needs to be done. For many Middle English and Modern English authors and texts not even inventories of their binomials have been compiled (or at least have not been published), and (apart from a number of usually fairly short articles) analyses of their structure, function and use are accordingly also rare.

Fortunately this state of affairs is changing, and there is an increased interest in binomials at present, as witnessed, e.g., by Kopaczyk (2013) and by Mollin (2014). Kopaczyk provides the most recent monograph on legal language (especially in Middle Scots), including its use of binomials, whereas Mollin in her monograph is mainly concerned with the sequence of the elements in bino-

¹⁵ On Caxton's binomials cf. also Sauer and Mager (2011). Caxton translated fairly literally on the whole, with few additions or omissions, but his habit of using binomials seems to have been so engrained that he often added binomials even if they were not in his source(s). Unfortunately Leisi excluded the question which binomials Caxton took over from his source(s) and which ones he introduced himself. – I hasten to add that Leisi was a great scholar who wrote several important and insightful books, and my critical remarks are not intended to detract from his overall importance.

¹⁶ See also section 8 below. Koskenniemi also did not take the entire corpus of Old and Early Middle English prose into account.

mials, analysing how far their order is variable and how far it is fixed, and which factors play a role for the sequence, a line of investigation which goes back at least to Malkiel (1959), who apparently also coined the term binomial (see further section 11 below). For the use of binomials in some late Middle English (15th century) prose texts see now Sauer (2014).¹⁷ Still there is a large potential for further research; for example as far as I am aware there has been no study of the binomials in the English versions of the *Lotus Sutra* (nor of the binomials in the Chinese version – but those are apparently rarer), thus I shall look at the binomials in two of the English translations in a little more detail.

5. Differences and similarities in the use of binomials by Watson (1993) and Reeves (2008)

Binomials can be used flexibly and can be created on the spur of the moment, but they can also be or become fixed and formulaic (see also section 11 below). This can be nicely seen in the versions of the *Lotus Sutra* by Watson (1993) and Reeves (2008). Looking at these versions three groups can be distinguished, namely (1) cases where one of the two translators has a binomial but the other does not; (2) cases where both have a binomial, but use different wording; (3) cases where both have the same binomial, i.e. a binomial with identical wording. How far the agreement of the binomials in this latter group is due to chance, how far translating the same original leads to the same translation, how far it points to a formulaic character of the binomials concerned, or how far Reeves imitates Watson, is, of course, still another question. As the similarities and differences between Watson and Reeves show, the same original sometimes leads to identical words and phrases in the translations, but sometimes also to different ones.¹⁸

Taken together there are 90 different binomials in chapter 1 of Watson's (1993) and Reeves' (2008) translations of the *Lotus Sutra*, that is counting types, not tokens – since some binomials are used repeatedly, there are slightly more tokens than types.

- (1) In 32 instances one translator has a binomial where the other has a simple word or expression, e.g. “lord of the Saha world” (Watson 4)¹⁹ – “king of heaven and lord of this world” (Reeves 54), “about this” (Watson 6) – “inconceivable and unprecedented wonders” (Reeves 56), “were happy and eager” (Watson 15) – “happily” (Reeves 66), “They divided and portioned” (Watson 20) – “were distributed” (Reeves 72). On the whole Watson has

¹⁷ Cf. also Kopaczyk and Sauer (2017).

¹⁸ Probably Reeves knew the translation by Watson and was occasionally influenced by it, but on the whole apparently he wanted his translation to be different from Watson's.

¹⁹ *Saha* ‘the present world (where a lot of suffering has to be endured)’.

24 instances of binomials where Reeves has none; conversely Reeves has only 8 instances of binomials where Watson has none, i.e. Watson uses three times as many binomials than Reeves.

- (2) In 33 instances both Watson and Reeves have a binomial but use different wording. Often the difference lies just in one word (i.e. the binomials are partly identical), e.g. “good and bad (deeds)” (Watson 7) – “good and evil (deeds and circumstances)” (Reeves 57), “hair and beard” (Watson 9) – “beards and heads” (Reeves 59), “profoundly still and silent” (Watson 10) – “calm and silent” (Reeves 60), “read and recited” (Watson 16) – “read and memorized” (Reeves 67). In some cases, however, both words of the binomials differ, e.g. “accept and abide” (Watson 10) – “receive and retain” (Reeves 60), “gladly and without regret” (Watson 11) – “joyfully and without grudging” (Reeves 62).
- (3) In 25 instances (types) both translators have identical binomials, e.g. “body and mind” (six times in each), “to hear and understand (the law)” (Watson 14; Reeves 65), “heavenly and human (beings)” (Watson 18, 19) – “human and heavenly (beings)” (Reeves 69, 71) – i.e. I disregard the different sequence of the elements and still count ‘heavenly – human’ and ‘human – heavenly’ as variants of the same binomial.

There are thus 58 cases (types) where both Watson and Reeves use a binomial (either with identical or with variant wording), but 32 cases where only one of them has a binomial and the other does not.

6. Formal properties of binomials

Here belong (1) the word-classes of the elements making up the binomials; (2) their connection; (3) the structure of the binomials (simple, extended or reduced); (4) additional embellishments, especially alliteration; (5) their morphology (simple or complex). Their etymological makeup could also be analysed here, but because the etymological analysis moves beyond purely formal aspects and touches also on semantic and cultural questions, a separate section (section 7) will be devoted to it.

6.1. Word-classes

In general binomials consisting of two nouns (substantival binomials) are the largest group, followed by adjectives and verbs, whereas other word classes (adverbs, pronouns etc.) are rare. This is confirmed by the 25 binomials from the *Lotus Sutra* that are identical in both Watson and Reeves, where substantival binomials also form the most frequent group with 14 examples (types), followed by adjectival binomials with 8 examples. Verbal binomials are surprisingly rare with just two examples (“seeing and hearing”, Watson 8, corresponding to “seen

and heard”, Reeves 58; “to hear and understand”, Watson 14, Reeves 65), and there is just one pronominal binomial, “you and me” (Watson 13; Reeves 64).

The picture is, however, somewhat different in the 33 binomials where Watson and Reeves have different wording: If we count in this group the 23 binomials with different wording, but the same word-class, then adjectival binomials with nine examples are slightly more frequent than substantival binomials with eight examples. Verbal binomials come again in the third place, but are better represented with six examples. There remain, however, ten cases where not only the wording, but also the word class differs; where, for example, Watson has a substantival binomial (“abuse and blows”, Watson 11), but Reeves has a verbal binomial (“abuse and beat them”, Reeves 61), or the other way round (verbal “eat and drink”, Watson 11 – substantival “food and drink”, Reeves 61), or where Watson has an adverbial binomial (“bravely and vigorously”, Watson 10), but Reeves has a substantival binomial (embedded in a prepositional phrase: “with perseverance and zeal”, Reeves 60).

If we analyse the 33 binomials in Watson and Reeves separately, then we get for Watson 15 substantival binomials, ten adjectival binomials, seven verbal binomials, and one adverbial binomial (“bravely and vigorously”, Watson 10), i.e. the expected sequence with substantival binomials as the most frequent group, followed by adjectival and verbal binomials. For Reeves we get, however, a slightly different order, with 15 adjectival binomials as the – unexpectedly – most frequent group, followed by 11 substantival binomials, and seven verbal binomials.

But if we take together the 25 binomials which are identical in Watson and Reeves and the 23 binomials where Watson and Reeves have different wording, but the same word class, i.e. 48 binomials altogether, then we get once again the expected result: substantival binomials come in the first place with 22 examples, followed by adjectives with 17 examples, and verbs come in the third place with eight examples.

It should be added that some forms are ambiguous and cannot always be easily assigned to a specific word-class, or have to be assigned to different word classes according to their different functions. This applies especially to the *-ed*-form and to the *-ing*-form: *-ed* has three functions; the first two belong to inflexion and the third to word-formation. The first function is to form the past and the second to form the past participle of regular verbs. The past participles (including those of irregular verbs) can be used as verbal forms, but can also function as adjectives. If they form pairs together with an adjective, I have classified them as adjectives, e.g. “pure and unadulterated” (Reeves 65),²⁰ or “dignified and virtuous” (Reeves 66), but if they occur in clearly verbal constructions, e.g. in the passive, I have classified them as verbs, e.g. “(one that is) guarded and kept in mind” (Watson 5,

²⁰ The prefix *un-* also shows that *unadulterated* is a (prefixed) adjective, derived from the past participle but no longer a past participle itself, because there is the verb *adulterate*, but there is no verb *unadulterate*. Thus the sequence of derivation is *adulterate* > *adulterated* (past participle; a form belonging to inflexion) > *unadulterated* (adjective; a form belonging to word-formation).

15, 16, 17). The third function of the *-ed*-form is to derive extended bahuvrihi adjectives (possessive adjectives) from nouns. In these cases the forms look like past particles, but they are not past participles, as in “railings and flowered canopies” (Watson 9), where *flowered* means ‘having flowers’, i.e. ‘decorated with flowers’ (and is thus derived from the noun *flower*, and not from the verb *to flower*).²¹ The *-ing*-form also has (at least) three main functions: it can be used as the present participle, as the gerund or as a deverbal noun (substantive).²²

6.2. Connection

The majority of binomials are connected with *and*; in the two English translations of the *Lotus Sutra* which are compared here, the binomials connected with *and* even form the vast majority.²³ Among the 25 binomials that are identical in Watson and Reeves, 24 are connected with *and* (e.g. “body and mind”, Watson 5 etc.; “heavenly and human (beings)”, Watson 18, 19; “seeing and hearing”, Watson 8), and only one is connected with *or*: “pleasing or ugly” (Watson 8; Reeves 57). A similar picture emerges from the 33 binomials where Watson and Reeves chose a different wording and from the 32 cases where one of the two translators has a binomial but the other does not. Among the 33 binomials where Watson and Reeves have different wording Watson has 31 binomials connected with *and*, but only one binomial connected with *or* (“concerned or fearful”, Watson 20; corresponding to “sad or afraid”, Reeves 71), and one reduced binomial not connected with any conjunction (see also the next section 6.3), and the result is almost the same for Reeves. Conjunctions other than *and* and *or* are not used by Watson and Reeves (at least not in chapter 1 of the *Lotus Sutra*).

6.3. Simple, reduced, extended and excluded structures

In their simple form, which is also their typical (or normal) and their most frequent form, binomials consist just of two words connected by *and* or *or* (formula: ‘word + word’), e.g. “causes and conditions” (Watson 6; Reeves 55); “leader and teacher” (Watson 7, 21; Reeves 56, 72); “pleasing or ugly” (Watson 8; Reeves 7); “clear and pure” (Watson 8; Reeves 57); “to hear and understand (the law)” (Watson 14; Reeves 65).

²¹ But *flowering* in “flowering springs” can be regarded as a present participle; see also the following footnote.

²² To illustrate this I give an example from Modern English: *Smoking* is used as a present participle in “He was smoking a cigarette” (expanded or continuous form) or in “He sat there, smoking”; it is used as a gerund in “Smoking cigarettes is dangerous”, and as a deverbal noun in “The smoking of cigarettes is dangerous”; for examples from the translations of the *Lotus Sutra* analysed here see also the preceding footnote and section 6.5 below.

²³ In the Chinese original *and* is mostly implicit and to be inferred from the context, but rarely explicitly expressed.

Occasionally the conjunction is omitted, resulting in a reduced (or simplified) structure (formula: ‘word, word’).²⁴ These cases are rare, however. In the 25 binomials common to Watson and Reeves, Reeves once simplifies a binomial as compared with Watson: “soft and gentle” (Watson 8) – “soft, gentle” (Reeves 57).²⁵ In the 33 binomials where Watson and Reeves have different wording, Reeves twice has a reduced binomial where Watson has a typical binomial: “emptiness and stillness” (Watson 10) – “empty, quiet places” (Reeves 60); “gardens and groves” (Watson 11) – “pure, immaculate gardens” (Reeves 62). In the 32 cases where one of the translators has a binomial but the other does not have one, no examples of reduced binomials occur. Thus in chapter 1 of the *Lotus Sutra* it is mainly Reeves who has a few cases of reduced binomials, three in all (for one instance in Watson, see the following paragraph).

Also occasionally, binomials are extended, e.g. to the form ‘adjective – noun + adjective – noun’, as in “fine robes and superior garments” (Watson 11; Reeves 61), and “flowering springs and bathing pools” (Watson 11; Reeves 62),²⁶ see also “perfect clarity and conduct” (Watson 14 – no binomial in Reeves 65: “fully clear in conduct”), or to the form ‘noun with prepositional phrase + noun with prepositional phrase’, as in “king of heaven and lord of this world” (Reeves 54 – no corresponding binomial in Watson). Adjectives are occasionally intensified with an adverb, e.g., “profoundly still and silent” (Watson 10 – but simple “calm and silent”, Reeves 60); “outstandingly wonderful and lovely” (Watson 12) – “extraordinarily wonderful and fine” (Reeves 63). Rarely do we find a combination of reduction (i.e. omission of the conjunction) plus extension (adjective plus prepositional phrase): “profound in wisdom, firm in purpose” (Watson 10), but only extension and no reduction in the corresponding “profound in wisdom and firm in will” (Reeves 60).²⁷

But of course a borderline has to be drawn somewhere and not all phrases or sequences connected by *and* (or *or*) can be regarded as binomials (or multinomials). Thus I have normally excluded coordinated combinations of ‘verb + object (+ prepositional phrase)’, as in “settle these doubts and occasion joy” (Watson 13), corresponding to “remove our doubts and make us glad” (Reeves 64), or “who had carried out religious practices and attained the way” (Watson 6), or “scattering them over the Buddha and over the great assembly” (Watson 5); these phrases (clauses) seem to be too long for binomials. But there

²⁴ This is the common structure in the Chinese original.

²⁵ But there is no conjunction in the Chinese text.

²⁶ The relation of the *-ing* forms to the nouns which they modify and their functions are not identical in this binomial: “flowering springs” are ‘springs that are flowering’ (probably ‘springs where flowers are growing’), and *flowering* can be regarded as a present participle, whereas “bathing pools” are not *‘pools that are bathing’, but rather ‘pools that are used for bathing’, i.e. *bathing* must here be regarded as a deverbal noun.

²⁷ In addition to binomials there are also multinomials (see section 10 below). How far multinomials are extensions of binomials and how far they are created independently is another question, but often they seem to be independent creations.

will always be borderline cases and room for discussion; thus I have included “is guarded and kept in mind”, a mixture of simple verb plus verb with prepositional phrase (Watson 15; Reeves 66 has simply “watch”).

6.4. Additional embellishment (alliteration and rhyme)

Additional embellishment of binomials in the English translations, which of course also strengthen and highlight the cohesion between their elements, can be alliteration and rhyme (apparently alliteration and rhyme do not play a role in the Chinese original). Alliteration is apparently generally much more frequent in English than rhyme, and this is also true of the binomials in the English translations of the *Lotus Sutra*. Whereas there are no instances of rhyming binomials in our material, there are several examples of alliterating binomials, seven altogether. Among the 25 binomials that are identical in Watson and Reeves, three examples occur: “causes and conditions” (Watson 6; Reeves 55); “flowers and fruit” (Watson 11; cf. Reeves 62); “heavenly and human (beings)” (Watson 18, 19; cf. Reeves 69, 71). Among the binomials with different wording in Watson and Reeves, altogether four examples occur, i.e. three in Watson and one in Reeves: “accept and abide” (Watson 10); “gardens and groves” (Watson 11); “read and recited” (Watson 16); “receive and retain” (Reeves 60). Apparently there are no examples with alliteration in the cases where one translator has a binomial but not the other. Although alliteration goes back to Old English (and was ultimately inherited from Germanic), in Middle English and Modern English loan-words are also used for alliteration, see several of the examples just given. The closest approximation to rhyme is one case of assonance: “fame and gain” /feim ənd gein/ (Reeves 73).

6.5. Morphology

The basic distinction in English is between morphologically simple and morphologically complex words; the latter can be subdivided into compounds, prefix-formations and suffix-formations.²⁸

- (1) Among the 25 binomials in chapter 1 of the *Lotus Sutra* that are identical in the translations by Watson and Reeves, the binomials consisting of simple words amount to slightly more than half with 13 instances, e.g. “births and deaths” (Watson 7; Reeves 57); “flowers and fruit” (Watson 11;

²⁸ Other word-formation processes do not seem to be relevant in our material, and I normally disregard inflection in this section, e.g. plural forms of nouns or past forms of verbs, but I include the *-ing*-form and the *-ed*-form, because they are ambiguous, see section 6.1 above, and footnotes 20-21, 25. I also only classify words as complex that are synchronically complex; I classify words as simple that are synchronically simple, but were originally complex, such as *birth*; cf. also fn. 31 below.

Reeves 62); “doubts and regrets” (Watson 22; Reeves 74); “clear and pure” (Watson 8; Reeves 57); these are closely followed by binomials where one or both words are suffixed with 11 examples (six of which have the suffix *-ing*). Compounds do not occur and prefix-formations are also very rare: the only prefix-formation, namely *understand* in “to hear and understand” (Watson 14; Reeves 65), is not a good example because morphologically it apparently consists of *under* + *stand*, but it is semantically obscure and the meaning cannot be deduced from its elements.²⁹ The suffixes used are: (a) substantival: *-er* (“leader and teacher”, Watson 7, Reeves 56); *-ation* and *-dom* (“meditation and wisdom”, Watson 10, Reeves 60); (b) adjectival: *-ful*, occurring several times in *wonderful*, e.g. “lofty and wonderful” (Watson 12; Reeves 63); “the supreme and wonderful” (Watson 19; Reeves 71) (on binomials with *wonderful* see also section 8.3.(2) below); *-ly* (“heavenly and human”, Watson 18, 19; cf. Reeves 69, 71); *-y* (*lofty*, in “lofty and wonderful”, Watson 12, Reeves 63); (c) ambiguous: *-ing*, occurring six times; it functions as (i) a deverbal noun in *understanding* (“faith and understanding”, Watson 6; Reeves 55) and in *bathing* (“bathing pools”), but (ii) as a present participle in “seeing and hearing” (Watson 8; slightly different in Reeves 58), and as a present participle in adjectival use in *pleasing* (“pleasing or ugly”, Watson 8, Reeves 57); and in *flowering* (“flowering springs and bathing pools”, Watson 11, Reeves 62).³⁰

- (2) A similar picture emerges from the group of 33 instances where both Watson and Reeves have binomials, but different ones, and from the group of 32 instances where only Watson or only Reeves has a binomial. In these groups there are also many binomials that consist of simple words (e.g. “quaked and trembled”, Watson 5, 7, 15; corresponding to “trembled and shook”, Reeves 55, 56), and there is a considerable number of words with suffixes (35 altogether), but there are very few compounds (only two: “profound and far-reaching”, Watson 14; “clansmen”, Watson 21) and relatively few prefix-formations; but on the whole there is a wider range of prefixes and suffixes in these groups. The prefixes occurring in the material are (seven instances altogether): *in-* (“inconceivable and unprecedented wonders”, Reeves 56); *re-* (“comforted and reassured”, Watson 20); *up-* (“was accepted and upheld”, Watson 19; cf. 20), and *un-* (4x) (“pure and unadulterated”, Reeves 65; “flowers open and unfold”, Watson 12; “still and unmoving”, Watson 19; “unprecedented”, Reeves 56).³¹ The suffixes in the material are (35 instances altogether): (a) substantival: *-ance / -ence* (3x) (“with perseverance and zeal”, Reeves 60; “delight and eloquence”, Reeves 54; “indulgence and lax-

²⁹ *Understand* means ‘to comprehend’, but not *‘to stand under’.

³⁰ For a discussion of *bathing* and *flowering* see footnotes 16-18 above, and of *flowered*, see section 6.1 above.

³¹ On binomials where a word with a positive meaning is followed by a negation of its antonym with *un-*, see also section 8.1 below.

ity”, Watson 20f.); *-dom* (“wisdom”, Watson 11, also in Reeves 60); *-ity* (6x) (“frivolity and laughter”, Watson 11; “clarity and conduct”, Watson 14; “dignity and virtue”, Watson 15; also “laxity”, “purity”, “tranquility”, see the preceding and following items);³² *-ment* and *-ion* (“adornment and purity”, Watson 13; “tranquility and extinction”, Watson 19; cf. “garment”, which, however, has no synchronic basis, no **gar*); *-ness* (3x) (“emptiness and stillness”, Watson 10; “laziness and sloth”, Watson 21); *-ter* (*laughter*, in “frivolity and laughter”, Watson 11; the suffix *-ter* is unproductive, however); (b) adjectival: *-able* (*inconceivable*, “an immeasurable, boundless, inconceivable number”, Watson 14; “inconceivable and unprecedented wonders”, Reeves 56); *-ful* (4x) and *-ous* (“profound and wonderful”, Watson 8 etc.; “skillful and wondrous”, Watson 14, cf. Reeves 65; “concerned or fearful”, Watson 20; *wonderful* also in Reeves, e.g. 57, 63, 65; “lazy and slothful”, Watson 21); *-less* (2x) (“clean and spotless”, Watson 14; “flawless”, Reeves 72); *-ly* (2x) (“heavenly kings and dragons”, Watson 10; *lovely*, as in “outstandingly wonderful and lovely”, Watson 12);³³ *-ual* (or *-al*) (2x) (“auspicious and spiritual (sign)”, Reeves 56; “right and universal”, Watson 14); (c) adverbial: *-ly* (5x), i.e. “bravely and vigorously” (Watson 10), “gladly and without regret” (Watson 11); “joyfully and without grudging” (Reeves 62); “outstandingly wonderful and lovely” (Watson 12); (d) verbal: *-ify* (2x) (“adorned and purified”, Watson 7; “dignified and virtuous”, Reeves 66); *-ize* (“read and memorized”, Reeves 67); (e) ambiguous: *-ed* (on “railings and flowered canopies”, Watson 9, see section 6.1 above); *-ing* (3x): *grudging* (in “joyfully and without grudging”, Reeves 62) and *railings* (in “railings and flowered canopies”, Watson 9) are deverbal nouns, as is *suffering* (in “grief and suffering”, Reeves 71).

- (3) Why compounds are used rarely in binomials is an intriguing question. One tentative answer is that compounds condense information, whereas binomials expand information – i.e. they have two different functions that basically exclude each other.³⁴

³² Most of these nouns also have a synchronic basis and can thus be regarded as synchronically derived: *laxity* from *lax*, *purity* from *pure*, and *tranquility* from *tranquil*, but there is no synchronic basis for *dignity* (no **dign(e)*), for *clarity* (no **clare*, but *clear*); *frivolity* is related to *frivolous*, but the *-ous* has been dropped; I have still included them. I have, however, excluded some other nouns which have no synchronic bases, e.g. *garment* (synchronically not analysable as **gar-ment*). A similar problem arises with some verbs (especially loan-words); thus I have not included verbs such as *accept*, *receive*, *retain*, *regret*, because synchronically they cannot be analysed as **ac-cept*, **re-ceive*, **re-tain*, **re-gret*.

³³ *-ly* is ambiguous; it can derive adjectives (from nouns), as in *heaven-ly*, and (much more frequently) adverbs (from adjectives), as in *vigorous-ly*. These two functions should be kept apart, but whether they should be classified as cases of polysemy or of homonymy is a different question which I cannot discuss here.

³⁴ See Sauer and Schwan forthc., § 8.5.

7. Etymology

As far as the etymological structure of binomials in English is concerned, there are four basic possibilities, namely native word plus native word, loan-word plus loan-word, native word plus loan-word, loan-word plus native word.³⁵ Broadly speaking native words are normally words going back to Old English (and ultimately often to Germanic and Indo-European); loan-words are mainly words borrowed from Latin or from French.³⁶ The words borrowed from Sanskrit are obviously a special case and will be briefly discussed below, but they are very rarely used in binomials. To give a few examples for the four possible combinations (all examples in sections (1)-(4) are taken from the 25 binomials identical in Watson and Reeves):

- (1) native word + native word, e.g.: “body and mind” (Watson 5 etc.; Reeves 55), “leader and teacher” (Watson 7; Reeves 56), “births and deaths” (Watson 7; Reeves 57);³⁷ “seeing and hearing” (Watson 8; cf. Reeves 58); “wives and children” (Watson 9; Reeves 59); “to hear and understand” (Watson 14; Reeves 65); altogether 11 examples;
- (2) loan-word plus loan-word, e.g.: “causes and conditions” (Watson 6, 9; Reeves 55); “clear and pure” (Watson 8; Reeves 57); “fine robes and superior garments” (Watson 11; Reeves 61 – here all four lexical words are loan-words); “flowers and fruit” (Watson 11; Reeves 62); “monks and nuns” (Watson 20; Reeves 71); “doubts and regrets” (Watson 22; Reeves 74); altogether 8 examples;
- (3) native word + loan-word, e.g.: “soft and gentle” (Watson 8; Reeves 57); “heavenly and human (beings)” (Watson 18, 19; Reeves 69, 71); altogether only two examples;
- (4) loan-word + native word as in “faith and understanding” (Watson 6; Reeves 55), “meditation and wisdom” (Watson 10; Reeves 60), “the supreme and wonderful” (Watson 19; Reeves 71); altogether four examples – (3) and (4), i.e. combinations of a native word and a loan-word, taken together yield six examples.

An analysis of English binomials according to their etymological components is particularly interesting for Middle English and Early Modern English texts, where there was a large influx of loan-words (mainly from French and

³⁵ The last two could also be grouped together under a heading native word plus loan-word (or vice versa), but here I list them as two different groups.

³⁶ Especially with loan-words taken over in Middle English it is not always certain whether they were borrowed from French or from Latin or from both languages, the two influences reinforcing each other.

³⁷ *Birth* actually is a loan-word from Old Norse, but I have classified it here among the native words (i.e. words of Germanic origin, as opposed to loan-words from Latin or French).

Latin) that also affected the native vocabulary, and where in some cases (but apparently not in all that many cases) a native word (or an early loan-word) explained a recent loan-word (according to the so-called translation theory).

But – apart from the Sanskrit words mentioned above – no new Latin or French loan-words seem to have been introduced into the translations of the *Lotus Sutra*, and accordingly no loan-words from Latin or French are explained by native words. The English vocabulary had apparently reached a relatively fixed state and no new words from Latin or French seem to have been needed. Furthermore, since the *Lotus Sutra* is an ancient text, no words for modern inventions or discoveries or ideas are to be expected – again, of course, with the notable exception of the numerous Buddhist concepts relatively new and largely unknown to English speakers who are not Buddhists, i.e. to the large majority of native English speakers. As mentioned above (see section 1), for these specifically Buddhist concepts often Sanskrit words were borrowed into the translations (and not translated). Most of them should probably be regarded as foreign words rather than as loan-words; they are usually explained in a separate glossary (e.g. in Watson 1993: 325-342; cf. Reeves 2008: 431-474).³⁸

It is perhaps tempting to assume that the native words express the more basic or concrete concepts (persons, things, ideas, or actions), and that the loan-words express the rarer and more abstract concepts (things, ideas or actions). This is certainly true in some cases, but it is not true in all cases. Thus binomials consisting of native words such as “body and mind”, “births and deaths” (Watson 7; Reeves 57), “wives and children” (Watson 9; Reeves 59) certainly express basic and concrete concepts, but binomials consisting of loan-words such as “flowers and fruit” (Watson 11; Reeves 62) and – at least for a religious society such as the Buddhist one – “monks and nuns” (Watson 20; Reeves 71) also express fairly concrete and basic concepts, as do etymologically mixed binomials such as “heavenly and human (beings)” (Watson 18, 19; Reeves 69, 71) – this of course also shows that what are regarded as basic concepts depends at least partly on the specific culture and religion (see further section 9 below). Conversely, more abstract concepts or attributes can also be expressed by binomials consisting of native words (as in “deep and wonderful”, Reeves 57) as well as by binomials consisting of loan-words (as in “splendid and pure”, Reeves 56). Therefore a distinction into the four etymological groups mentioned above is perhaps not so important for the analysis of the binomials in the *Lotus Sutra*.

What is striking, however, is that in chapter 1 of the *Lotus Sutra* none of the relatively many words borrowed from Sanskrit is used in a binomial, neither by Watson nor by Reeves, and neither in the binomials common to both, nor in the cases where they differ in their use (or non-use) of binomials. There are

³⁸ The only one of the Sanskrit words mentioned in section 1 above (with fn. 4) which is not explained in Watson’s glossary is *sutra* ‘teaching’. This is either due to an oversight, or perhaps Watson assumed that his readers would know the meaning of *sutra*.

several possible reasons for this: on the more negative side perhaps both native words and loan-words (from Latin or French) are felt to be part of the English vocabulary, whereas most of the Sanskrit words are still felt to be foreign words in English, so that translators are reluctant to use them in binomials.³⁹ On the more positive side the Sanskrit words add a somewhat exotic touch to the English text, but they are kept apart and not used in binomials, i.e. not mixed with English words or earlier loan-words (from Latin or French). The only exception is the word *Buddha*, which is probably regarded as a name, and which is used in the binomial “the Buddha and his monks” (Watson 11; Reeves 62).⁴⁰

8. Meaning (semantic relations)

The semantic relations between the elements of the binomials are probably more difficult to classify than the other relations discussed so far, but three broad categories seem to be fairly clear, namely synonymy (including tautology), antonymy (or contrasting pairs), and complementarity; the latter has many subgroups (see section 8.3 below). It is, however, not always easy to assign a binomial clearly to one of the three groups, and in some instances a classification which is different from my classification is certainly possible. The semantic relations within many binomials could be discussed in some detail,⁴¹ but I can only give a brief sketch here. In all three groups there are pairs of words that belong to the same word-field (semantic field) and that can be regarded as co-hyponyms in that semantic field. Actually all synonyms and most antonyms seem to belong to the same semantic field, whereas among the complementary binomials some also belong to the same semantic field, but sometimes words are coupled in this group that belong to different semantic fields and whose relation is only established through combining them in a binomial, e.g. “adornment and purity” (Watson 13).

Among the 90 binomials discussed here, the complementary binomials form by far the largest subgroup with 53 examples (i.e. more than half); the second largest subgroup are the synonymous binomials with 26 examples (i.e. a little more than a third), and the smallest subgroup are the antonymous binomials with 11 examples (i.e. roughly a ninth).

³⁹ A parallel case is perhaps the linguistic terminology taken over from Sanskrit in the 19th century, i.e. words such as *bahuvrihi* (compounds), *tatpuruṣa*, *sandhi*, which are apparently confined to the language of linguistics but have not entered the common (or core) English vocabulary.

⁴⁰ *Buddha*, originally ‘an awakened one’, is actually used in two senses in the *Lotus Sutra*, namely as the name of Shakyamuni Buddha, the founder and the main figure of Buddhism, but also as a common word (often in the plural *buddhas*) for his followers and especially for all those who have reached the highest level of enlightenment; see Watson (1993: 327-328).

⁴¹ For a detailed and subtle semantic discussion of binomials see, e.g., Leisi (1947).

8.1. Synonymy

Synonyms are usually defined as words that have a similar or the same basic meaning and that can be exchanged at least in some contexts, but normally they cannot be exchanged in all contexts.⁴² Sometimes the basic meaning is the same, but the stylistic value is different, e.g. in ModE *begin* and *commence*, where the loan-word *commence* is the much more formal (and also more rarely used) word, whereas the native word *begin* is the neutral and the usual word. If a distinction is made between synonymy and tautology, then tautology can be regarded as a subgroup of synonymy:⁴³ It refers to words with exactly the same meaning (and which can accordingly be exchanged in all contexts), but as has become clear from the preceding remarks, strict tautology is rare: an example from Modern English is perhaps *to baptize* and *to christen* (“She was baptized Monica” = “She was christened Monica”).

In chapter 1 of the two translations of the *Lotus Sutra* which I have analysed here, I have counted 26 certain or possible binomials consisting of synonyms. Among the 25 binomials which are identical in Watson and Reeves there is only *robes – garments* (in “fine robes and superior garments”, Watson 11, Reeves 61), and perhaps “soft and gentle” (Watson 8; cf. Reeves 57). Among the 33 binomials that are different in Watson and Reeves there are: “quaked and trembled” (Watson 5, 7, 15, 18) corresponding to “trembled and shook” (Reeves 55, 56); furthermore “banners and streamers” (Watson 12) corresponding to “banners and flags” (Reeves 63), and perhaps “(profoundly) still and silent” (Watson 10) corresponding to “calm and silent” (Reeves 60); “clean and spotless” (Watson 14) corresponding to “pure and unadulterated” (Reeves 65); “sorrow and distress” (Watson 20) corresponding to “grief and suffering” (Reeves 71).

Among the 32 cases where only one of the translators has a binomial but the other does not have one (see section 5 above) there are: “joy and delight” (Watson 7); “jewels and gems” (Watson 11); “open and unfold” (Watson 12); “still and unmoving” (Watson 19); “laziness and sloth” (Watson 21);⁴⁴ “indulgence and laxity” (Watson 20); “cheerfully and gladly” (Reeves 59) – as indi-

⁴² Many words are polysemous; accordingly they can have different synonyms (and also different antonyms) for their various meanings.

⁴³ But this distinction is not always made and there does not seem to be a uniform terminology. For example Leisi (1947) speaks of ‘tautologic word-pairs’, but he does not discuss how tautology relates to synonymy (it seems that he actually uses tautology for synonymy). And Koskeniemi (1968) speaks of “repetitive word-pairs”, but often they are not repetitive, either. As our (very preliminary) results show, synonymous binomials (i.e. binomials the elements of which are synonymous) comprise only about a third of all binomials.

⁴⁴ In Modern English, *sloth* is apparently more formal than *laziness*, and in the Christian Middle Ages, *sloth* was also regarded as one of the seven deadly sins, and thus was the much stronger term – but this distinction is probably not relevant to Buddhism.

cated in section 5 above, Reeves has far fewer binomials just on his own than Watson has.

In some binomials (six altogether) synonymity is achieved by first stating a positive concept, and then negating its antonym, as in: “clean and spotless” (Watson 14), “pure and unadulterated” (Reeves 65), “open and unfold” (Watson 12), “still and unmoving” (Watson 19); see also “gladly and without regret” (Watson 11) corresponding to “joyfully and without grudging” (Reeves 62); “pure and without alloy” (Watson 14), and, although not regarded as a binomial here, “settle these doubts and occasion joy” (Watson 13), corresponding to “remove our doubts and make us glad” (Reeves 64). Negation is thus achieved partly through word-formation, i.e. by the prefix *un-* (3x) and by the suffix *-less* (1x), and partly through syntax, i.e. a prepositional phrase with the preposition *without*; see also section 6.5.(2) above.

8.2. Antonymy (or oppositeness, or contrast)

Antonymy is also a difficult and complex concept, because it covers several semantic relations; to mention only three of the better known ones:

- (1) strict antonymy, where the opposition is absolute and one concept normally excludes the other, as in *friend – enemy*, *life – death*, *alive – dead*, and where the adjectives normally cannot be graded;
- (2) gradable antonymy, where the opposition is relative and the adjectives can be graded, as in *hot – cold*;⁴⁵
- (3) converseness, where one concept implies or presupposes the other, as in *father – son*, *husband – wife*, *to sell – to buy*: one can only be a father if one has a son or a daughter and only be a husband if one has a wife, and one can only sell something if somebody else buys it.

I do not make these finer distinctions here, but simply list the examples which can be subsumed under a relatively broad concept of antonymy or contrast; there are nine altogether in chapter 1 of the translations by Watson (1993) and Reeves (2008): “body and mind” (Watson 5, 6, 15, 16, 19; Reeves 55, etc.); “births and deaths” (Watson 7; Reeves 57); “pleasing and ugly” (Watson 8; Reeves 57); “good and bad (deeds)” (Watson 7), corresponding to “good and evil (deeds and circumstances)” (Reeves 57); “sun and moon”; and for groups of people: “heavenly and human (beings)” (Watson 18, 19; Reeves 69, 71); “the

⁴⁵ They can be graded into *hotter – colder* and can be supplemented by other adjectives referring to temperature, e.g. *lukewarm*, *warm*, *boiling*, etc. on the one side and by *cool*, *ice-cold*, *freezing*, etc. on the other side, thus forming a semantic field which could be called ‘temperature’ (semantic fields consisting of adjectives often do not have an adjective as their superordinate term, but a noun).

Buddha and his monks” (Watson 11; Reeves 62); “monks and nuns” (Watson 20; Reeves 71); “wives and children” (Watson 9; Reeves 59); “heavenly beings and dragons” (Watson 10).

It is important to note that these word-pairs are antonyms or contrasting pairs on one level, but that simultaneously they also express the parts of a whole, of a higher or more complete entity or concept. This is what the first phrase in the title of the present article, “The World in Two Words”, refers to. And, as indicated in section 3 above, the two words of the binomial are often more specific and more concrete, whereas the complete concept or entity which they illustrate is more abstract and more difficult to paraphrase, e.g.: “body and mind” (‘the central elements or constituents of a human being’); “births and deaths” (‘beginning and end of life’); “the Buddha and his monks” (‘people with the same ideals’); “monks and nuns” (‘persons leading a religious life’); “pleasing and ugly” (‘ways of aesthetic appeal’); “good and bad”, “good and evil” (‘ways of moral behaviour’); “heavenly and human (beings)” (‘ways of existence’ or ‘entirety of creatures’?). In some cases antonymy is changed into a kind of synonymy or complementarity by negating the antonym, as in “open and unfold” (cf. section 8.1 above).

As the antonyms in the English translations of the *Lotus Sutra* show, thinking in antonyms or opposites is apparently common to human nature and is accordingly also reflected in language, but the way of looking at antonyms which I have just sketched (i.e. antonymous binomials expressing a higher entity) also reconciles their use with Buddhism. According to Buddhist teaching there is no duality, rather there is “the concept of Emptiness or Void (*shunyata*)” or “non-dualism” (Watson 1993: xv), which basically means that “all mental and physical distinctions that we perceive or conceive of with our minds must be part of a single underlying unity” (Watson 1993: xv). Thus all the contrasts or oppositions expressed by antonyms in a language are resolved and united on a higher (non-linguistic) level.

8.3. Complementary relations

With 53 examples, this group is the largest and the most diverse; it comprises all binomials whose parts are neither clearly synonymous nor clearly antonymous. It has many subgroups, which are not always easy to differentiate and sometimes overlap. Not all of the possible subgroups are attested in chapter 1 of the translations by Watson (1993) and Reeves (2008); in the following I discuss briefly those that are attested:

- (1) a more general concept combined with a more specific concept, e.g. “abuse and blows” (Watson 11; cf. “abuse and beat (them)”, Reeves 61);
- (2) a combination of two generally positive concepts (persons, things, attributes, actions); this is more frequent than the opposite (i.e. a combination

of two negative things); e.g., (a) nouns: “leader and teacher” (Watson 7; Reeves 56); “emptiness and stillness” (Watson 10); “tranquillity and extinction” (Watson 19),⁴⁶ “perseverance and zeal” (Reeves 60); “adornment and purity” (Watson 13); (and the corresponding adjectives “adorned and purified”, Watson 7; for the corresponding verb see section 8.3.(4) below);⁴⁷ “dignity and virtue” (Watson 15); “faith and understanding” (Watson 6; Reeves 55); (b) adjectives: “clear and pure” (Watson 8); “splendid and pure” (Reeves 56); “soft and gentle” (Watson 8; Reeves 57); “bravely and vigorously” (Watson 10); “auspicious and spiritual” (Reeves 56). Several times *wonderful* (or *wondrous*) is used as a kind of generally positive attribute which always occupies the second position in the binomials, e.g. “outstandingly lovely and wonderful” (Watson 12); “profound and wonderful” (Watson 8); “lofty and wonderful” (Watson 12; Reeves 63); “supreme and wonderful” (Watson 19; Reeves 71); “deep and wonderful” (Reeves 57); “skilful and wondrous” (Watson 14); for the use of *wonderful* in multinomials, see section 10 below;

- (3) a combination of two generally negative concepts (persons, things, attributes, actions), which, however, occurs more rarely than a combination of positive concepts, e.g. “doubts and regrets” (Watson 22; Reeves 74); “sorrow and distress” (Watson 20); “concerned or fearful” (Watson 20); “frivolity and laughter” (Watson 11);⁴⁸ “fame and profit” (Watson 21-2x);⁴⁹ “(greedy for) gain and support” (Watson 16); “concerned or fearful” (Watson 20);
- (4) a sequence of actions (in some cases this could also be analysed as ‘cause and effect’ or ‘source and result’). Since actions are primarily expressed by verbs, the binomials in this subgroup are mostly verbal binomials, e.g. “to hear and understand” (Watson 14; Reeves 65; understanding as a consequence of hearing); “receive and retain” (Reeves 60); “adorned and purified” (Watson 7); “accept and abide” (Watson 10); “studied and memorized” (Watson 21); “read and recited” (Watson 16); “read and memorized” (Reeves 67); “taught and converted them”; “was accepted and upheld” (Watson 19); “comforted and reassured” (Watson 20); “(they) divided and apportioned” (Watson 20); “guarded and kept in mind” (Watson 5, 15, 16, 17); but a substantival binomial also occurs, e.g. “meditation and wisdom” (Watson 10; Reeves 60; i.e. wisdom following from meditation);

⁴⁶ “emptiness and stillness” as well as “tranquillity and extinction” are probably negative for many modern readers, but for Buddhists they are positive; see section 9.2 below.

⁴⁷ I think that *purification* should precede *adornment*, but the translators present it the other way round.

⁴⁸ *Laughter* is probably a neutral (or even positive) term, but in combination with the negative term *frivolity* it also assumes a negative connotation.

⁴⁹ The negative connotation of “fame and profit” is clear from the context.

- (5) co-hyponyms in a semantic field, e.g., (a) nouns: “hair and beard” (Watson 9; kinds of hair); “lapis lazuli and crystal” (Watson 18; precious stones); “flowers and fruit” (Watson 11; Reeves 62); “flowering springs and bathing pools” (Watson 11; Reeves 62); “top and sides” (Watson 9); “railings and flowered canopies” (Watson 9); “mountains and forests” (Watson 11); “gardens and groves” (Watson 11); “causes and conditions” (Watson 6; Reeves 55); (b) verbs: “read and recited” (Watson 16); “seeing and hearing” (Watson 8; cf. Reeves 58; perhaps the two most important of the five senses); “eat and drink” (Watson 11; cf. Reeves 61; the two kinds of food); “expounding and preaching” (Watson 8; Reeves 57 has just “preaching”).

9. Factual and cultural aspects of binomials and multinomials

In the preceding section 8, I have looked at the semantic structure of binomials (i.e. the meaning relations of the two words that form the binomial) mainly from an intralinguistic angle, but since words, including binomials, usually also refer to something in the (extralinguistic) world, I shall now sketch very briefly two aspects that form a kind of bridge between language, culture and the world.

9.1. Stylistic and factual binomials

Whereas many of the binomials discussed so far can be regarded as having primarily a stylistic effect in the English translations, others can be regarded as factual, although the latter also carry a certain stylistic weight and contribute to the rhetoric and the rich style of the text. Therefore this distinction should not be regarded as absolute. Many stylistic binomials occur among the synonyms, e.g. “fine robes and superior garments” (Watson 11; Reeves 61), “banners and flags” (Reeves 63), “clean and spotless” (Watson 14), “still and unmoving” (Watson 19), “trembled and shook” (Reeves 55, 56), etc. Some factual binomials occur among the antonyms, e.g. “good and bad” (Watson 7), “births and deaths” (Watson 7; Reeves 57), “body and mind” (Watson 5; Reeves 55), and the complementary binomials, e.g. “mountains and forests” (Watson 11), “meditation and wisdom” (Watson 10; Reeves 60), “seeing and hearing” (Watson 8; two of the five senses), “receive and retain” (Reeves 60), “divided and apportioned” (Watson 20). But there is no simple equation ‘stylistic : synonyms’, and ‘factual: complementary (and antonyms)’, because the complementary binomials also contain some stylistic binomials, e.g. those where *wonderful* has been added as a kind of general positive reinforcement (booster), as in “profound and wonderful” (Watson 8); see section 8.1 above.

9.2. Binomials and their relation to a specific culture (culture-specific binomials)

Many binomials refer to things or concepts that are more or less universal (among human beings), e.g. “seeing and hearing” (Watson 8), whereas others are connected with a specific culture. Religious references make, of course, only sense in religious societies and for religious people, such as “heavenly and human (beings)” (Watson 18, 19; Reeves 69, 71). “Monks and nuns” (Watson 20; Reeves 71) exist in Buddhist societies, but also in Christian (especially Catholic) societies. “Emptiness and stillness” (Watson 10) has probably negative connotations in capitalist societies whose typical aim it is to make money and where the slogan ‘Time is money’ is important, and also among many politicians for whom *innovation* is a word which they love,⁵⁰ but “emptiness and stillness” has a positive connotation in Buddhist teaching as well as in Christian mysticism.⁵¹ Similarly *extinction* (as in “emptiness and extinction”) probably has a negative connotation for many people, but for Buddhists it is the highest aim to become extinct and enter the nirvana.

Sometimes binomials or multinomials have a general significance, but take on a specific significance within a specific culture, in our case in Buddhism. Thus the quadrinomial “birth, old age, sickness and death” (Watson 14) refers to universal events (everybody is born and must die, and most people are occasionally sick during their lives, and many get to be old and suffer the concomitant illnesses of old age), but in Buddhist teaching it is particularly important because it refers to the four evils which are the fate of mankind, and which can only be overcome by finally entering the nirvana, which is the main aim for Buddhists.

10. Multinomials (lists)

As just indicated (and see also section 1 above), apart from binomials there are also multinomials (trinomials, quadrinomials etc.), which could alternatively be regarded as lists. Sometimes binomials are part of such lists, and these lists can be shortened or expanded: Thus the above-mentioned quadrinomial “birth, old age, sickness and death” (Watson 14) appears also in a shortened form as the trinomial “old age, sickness and death” (Watson 8) or “age, disease or death” (Reeves 58); this shows the flexibility of binomials and multinomials (see also the following section 11). In this case the quadrinomial can probably be regarded as the basic form (because of religious significance it has in Bud-

⁵⁰ “Emptiness and stillness” is also not valued in many modern universities that compete about external funding and about the top places in various rankings.

⁵¹ The mind or soul must become empty and still if it wants to achieve enlightenment (or the union with God in Christian mysticism).

dhism, see section 9.2 above) and the trinomial as the shortened form; the quadrinomial also contains the antonym *birth – death*, which is actually also used as a binomial in other passages (“births and deaths”, Watson 7). But multinomials are not always extended binomials; they can be formed independently. Multinomials can be grouped according to their length, but also according to their semantic structure.

10.1. Length

As far as length is concerned, trinomials are probably the most frequent group among the multinomials, followed by quadrinomials etc. To give some examples from chapter 1 of the *Lotus Sutra*:

- (1) trinomials: (a) nouns: “old age, sickness and death” (Watson 8), corresponding to “age, sickness or death” (Reeves 58) – but this has been shortened from a quadrinomial (see above); “flesh, hands and feet” (Watson 9; Reeves 59); “with incense, flowers and music” (Watson 12; cf. Reeves 63); (b) adjectives: “subtle, wonderful and foremost” (Watson 8), corresponding to “fine, wonderful and supreme” (Reeves 57); “an immeasurable, boundless, inconceivable number” (Watson 14) – but Reeves has a corresponding quadrinomial: “innumerable, unlimited, inconceivable, countless (eons)”; “fine, wonderful and supreme” (Reeves 57); (c) verbs: “(was given offerings,) revered, honoured and praised” (Reeves 55).
- (2) quadrinomials: (a) nouns: “heads, eyes, bodies and limbs” (Watson 9; cf. Reeves 59 – a ‘factual’ quadrinomial, but also rhetorically effective); “their happy lands, their palaces, their men and women attendants” (Watson 9 – it contains the antonymous binomial ‘men and women’); (b) adjectives: “upright, imposing, very subtle and wonderful” (Watson 18);
- (3) quintuplet: “pure and without alloy, complete, clean and spotless” (Watson 14 – containing the binomials “pure and without alloy” and “clean and spotless”);
- (4) for examples of much longer lists see section 1 above; at least theoretically there is probably no limit to the length of the lists.

10.2. Semantic structure of multinomials

As far as the semantic structure of multinomials is concerned, there are sequences of generally positive and of generally negative elements, and also sequences of factual elements, for example:

- (1) generally positive elements, e.g.: “with incense, flowers and music” (Watson 12; cf. Reeves 63); “subtle, wonderful and foremost” (Watson 8); “fine, wonderful and supreme” (Reeves 57); “upright, imposing, very subtle and wonderful” (Watson 13); “revered, honoured and praised” (Reeves 55);

- here belong also “immeasurable, boundless, inconceivable” (Watson 14) – “innumerable, unlimited, inconceivable, countless” (Reeves), etc.; once more the use of *wonderful* as a positive but vague term is noticeable;
- (2) generally negative elements; as with binomials, the sequences of negative terms are apparently rarer in multinomials than the sequences of positive terms. An example is: “birth, old age, sickness and death” (Watson 14; and its shortened forms, e.g. “old age, sickness, and death”, Watson 8);
 - (3) factual elements, e.g. “flesh, hands and feet” (Watson 9; Reeves 59); “heads, eyes, bodies and limbs” (Watson 9; cf. Reeves 59).

11. Fixedness and formulaicity versus flexibility

As shown in the preceding section and also mentioned earlier, binomials and multinomials can be fixed and formulaic, but they can also be flexible: they can be created on the spur of the moment, and they can be expanded or shortened. Fixedness has to do with the frequency of the binomials, with the sequence of their elements and with the exchangeability of their elements.

11.1. Frequency

Binomials can be regarded as fixed and formulaic if they occur frequently and if the order (sequence) of their elements is stable. Since I have analysed only the first chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* in the translations by Watson (1993) and Reeves (2008), I can, of course, give only a very tentative statement concerning the frequency of binomials there. But even in chapter 1 some binomials occur several times and with a fixed sequence; they can therefore be regarded as formulaic, at least within the context of the translations of the *Lotus Sutra* analysed here, or even as formulaic just for a specific translator. Thus “body and mind” is used six times by both Watson and Reeves;⁵² “guarded and kept in mind” is used four times by Watson (5, 15, 16, 17), and “quaked and trembled” three times by Watson (5, 7, 15), while Reeves has “trembled and shook” (55, 56).

11.2. Sequence

There has been a lot of research on the factors that govern the sequence of the words in a binomial (e.g. Malkiel 1959; Mollin 2014). Several factors can play a role, which sometimes overlap and reinforce each other, but sometimes also contradict each other. Thus we are dealing with tendencies and not with strict rules. Some of them are:

⁵² The Christian correspondence (in Western societies) is “body and soul”, which is also formulaic.

- (1) The more important element precedes the less important element, e.g. “the Buddha and his monks” (Watson 11; Reeves 62); “heavenly and human” (Watson 18, 19); “heavenly beings and dragons” (Watson 10); probably also “wives and children” (Watson 9; Reeves 59); Reeves, however, has “human and heavenly” (Reeves 69, 71).
- (2) Good precedes bad, i.e. the word with a positive meaning comes first, and the word with a negative meaning comes second, e.g. “good and bad” (Watson 7), “good and evil” (Reeves 57). This is also the case with most of the originally negative terms that have been changed to positive terms, e.g. “pure and unadulterated” (Reeves 65), “joyfully and without grudging” (Reeves 62), etc., but here the first word is usually also shorter than the second word, see below.
- (3) Men precede women, e.g., “monks and nuns” (Watson 20; Reeves 71).
- (4) The shorter word precedes the longer word,⁵³ e.g., “pure and unadulterated” (Reeves 65), “adorned and purified” (Watson 7), “clean and spotless” (Watson 14), “joy and delight” (Watson 7), “faith and understanding” (Watson 6; Reeves 55), “fine robes and superior garments” (Watson 11; Reeves 61), “good and evil” (Reeves 57), etc. There are, however, many exceptions where the longer word actually precedes the shorter word, e.g. “meditation and wisdom” (Watson 10; Reeves 60), “lapis lazuli and crystal” (Watson 18), “emptiness and stillness” (Watson 10), “banners and flags” (Reeves 63), “perseverance and zeal” (Reeves 60), etc.
- (5) Cause precedes effect, e.g. “meditation and wisdom” (Watson 10; Reeves 60; i.e. wisdom as a result of meditation).
- (6) The temporal sequence is mirrored, e.g. “births and deaths” (Watson 7; Reeves 57), “to hear and understand” (Watson 14; Reeves 65), “receive and retain” (Reeves 60), “taught and converted them”, etc.
- (7) Sometimes the reason for the sequence is difficult to explain. Thus Watson and Reeves have the formulaic binomial “body and mind” (or “bodies and minds”; see section 11.1 above). In some religions (e.g. Christianity) the mind (or the soul) is regarded as more important than the body, but an explanation for putting the body first in the binomial could be that the body is visible whereas the mind is invisible.

In cases where the sequence varies (as in ModE “men and women”– “women and men”) the question is, of course, whether they should be regarded as variants of the same binomial or as different binomials – I regard them as variants of the same binomial.

⁵³ Of course there are also many binomials whose elements are of equal length, e.g. “leader and teacher”, “adornment and purity”, “good and bad”, “pleasing and ugly”, etc.

11.3. Exchangeability of the elements

Often one word appears in several pairs where the other word varies; this shows, of course, the flexibility of binomials. In the translations of the *Lotus Sutra* this can be best seen in those cases where both translators (Watson and Reeves) have a binomial but where one word is identical in both, and the other word varies (see section 5.(2) above), e.g. “quaked and trembled” (Watson 5, 7, 15) – “trembled and shook” (Reeves 55, 56), “banners and streamers” (Watson 12) – “banners and flags” (Reeves 63), “still and silent” (Watson 10) – “calm and silent” (Reeves 60), “good and bad” (Watson 7) – “good and evil” (Reeves 57), “hair and beard” (Watson 9) – “beards and heads” (Reeves 59).

12. Conclusion

The most recent English translations of the *Lotus Sutra* (or *Lotos Sutra*) by Watson (1993) and Reeves (2008) are similar in that both are strongly rhetorical, but they also differ in many aspects. Thus both employ binomials (and multinomials) as one of their rhetorical tools. Ninety binomials occur altogether in book I alone, but Watson and Reeve have identical binomials only in a minority of cases (65 different binomials, but only 25 identical binomials) – probably Reeves wanted his translation to be clearly different from Watson’s translation. In addition both translators also employ multinomials – how far multinomials (“birth, old age, sickness and death”) are combinations of binomials, and how far they should be regarded as lists is not always easy to decide. Binomials are multi-faceted phenomena that can be analysed on various levels. As far as word-classes are concerned, substantival binomials (*hair and beard*) are the most frequent group, followed by adjectival binomials (*happy and eager*), and at some distance by verbal binomials (*receive and retain*); in the vast majority of instances, the two elements are connected with *and* (see the examples just given). Both the frequency of word-classes and the connection mostly with *and* conform to the use of binomials in many other texts. The basic (or prototypical) structure of binomials is ‘word + word’ (see also the examples just given), but there are also various extended structures (as in *fine robes and superior garments*) as well as occasional reduced structures, with the conjunction omitted (*empty, quiet places*). But where exactly to draw the borderline between binomials and non-binomials is a difficult question and the decision will at least partly depend on the judgement of the individual researcher. Alliteration is occasionally used as an additional ornament; it also strengthens the cohesion of the elements (*causes and conditions*). With regards to etymology there are four main possibilities, namely native word + native word (*wives and children*), loan-word + loan-word (*flowers and fruit*), native word + loan-word (rare, e.g. *soft and gentle*), and loan-word + native word (*the supreme and wonderful*), but the latter two groups are rare in the translations analysed here.

In both translations, some Sanskrit words for specifically Buddhist phenomena are retained (e.g. *arhat*, *brahma*, *dharma*, *kalpa*, *sutra*), but it is striking that none of those is used in binomials, with the single exception of Buddha (*the Buddha and his monks*). Semantic analysis is often more difficult than morphologic or etymologic analysis. Basically there are three possible semantic relations between the elements of binomials, namely synonymy (*sorrow and distress*), antonymy (*births and deaths*) and what I call complementary relations. The latter group comprises all relations that are neither clearly synonymous nor clearly antonymous, and it has many subgroups, e.g. two positive concepts (*adornment and purity*), a sequence of actions (*receive and retain*), etc. The complementary binomials also constitute the largest group (53 examples), whereas synonymous binomials (26 examples) and antonymous binomials (11 examples) are less frequent. One of the problems of semantic analysis and classification is that some binomials may be viewed differently in different cultures. Thus *emptiness and stillness* probably expresses a negative concept in modern capitalist societies, but it expresses a positive concept in Buddhism and also in Christian mysticism. Some binomials are employed frequently by both translators, especially *body and mind*; this binomial (as well as a few others) can be regarded as formulaic, at least for the translations of the *Lotus Sutra*. There are also tendencies for the sequence of the elements. Phonologically, the shorter word tends to precede the longer word (*faith and understanding*); semantically, the more important element tends to precede the less important element (*heavenly and human*; *good and bad*) – what is thought of as more important can, of course, also change in time. Thus *body and mind* perhaps mirrors the modern view that the body is visible, whereas the mind is invisible; but the sequence in the Old English binomial *soul and body* (or rather *sawol and lichama*) probably mirrored the (Christian) view that the soul is more important than the body.

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