From the first century of its history, the Buddhist Community was divided into numerous schools or sects, on occasion sometimes by quite noticeable schisms, and each of these divisions held opinions which were treated as heresies by the others. It is with these schools, sects, schisms and heresies that the present work is concerned.

Before approaching the heart of the subject, it is important to specify the meaning of the above terms, which we use for lack of anything better but which do not precisely express the Indian ideas they claim to represent.

We will call school what Sanskrit Buddhism terms nikāya and Pāli Buddhism ācariyavāda. A nikāya consists of a group of people subjected to the same regulations. It is also, and more usually, a collection of objects, such as the collection of sūtras, precisely called nikāya in Pāli. Compared with the word kāya, which also has the same root and means body, it can be said that a nikāya is an organised body or a doctrinal body, depending on whether the word is applied to people or things. It therefore renders our word school quite well, although it is etymologically quite differently constructed. The Pāli term ācariyavāda means oral teaching (vāda) from a master (ācariya) and corresponds somewhat to our word school. Since the Sanskrit texts call nikāya what the Pāli texts term ācariyavāda, we will use the words school and

1. [Ed.: In the French text Bareau indicates that he will use secte and école interchangeably, but in practice he favours secte most of the time. The translator has made the decision to amalgamate Bareau’s secte and école since he was not using them to denote different entities, and translate both simply as ‘school’. She has rejected the term ‘sect’, with its negative connotations in English, as a label for these groupings of the early Sangha. This word now appears in the English version only in cited titles.]
subschool in the same sense.\textsuperscript{2} They express the idea of a spiritual association organised under the patronage of a master whose teaching it follows.

The Buddhist schools differ from those of early Christianity in that, since the Buddhist Community did not possess, as did the Christian Church, a supreme authority incarnated in a single person, pope or patriarch, the school was not truly separate from the Community and its heresy related purely to the doctrines of other groups. In the majority of cases, even, relations between the various schools were not lacking in peace and harmony, and the Buddhist schools can be compared to the Protestant sects which, even while differing considerably with regard to doctrine and form of worship, are no less united in a certain way within the ecumenical movement.

We will term schism what Buddhists call saṅghabhedā, ‘a split in the Community’, and which constitutes one of the five major offences, comparable in its gravity to patricide, matricide, the murder of an arhat and the wounding of a buddha. It occurs when an intelligent and virtuous monk, who consequently has great authority, takes in his wake part of the Community and gives it a new master and a new Way.\textsuperscript{3} However, once again, since the Community lacks a supreme authority, the Buddhist schism is purely relative and the schismatic claims to be the guardian of moral and doctrinal purity is weakened by the decadence of the Community which produced him and which he purports to reform.

We will term heresy what the Buddhists call dṛṣṭi (Pāli diṭṭhi), mental ‘view’, a personal opinion which does not conform to the Buddha’s teaching. It is also called mithyādṛṣṭi, ‘false view’, as opposed to samyagdṛṣṭi, ‘right view’. Moreover, these terms are of only relative value; what is heresy or a false view for one school is a right view for another.

With regard to the twenty or thirty schools of the Hīnayāna, we possess only the works of the Theravādins and Sarvāstivādins, plus a few works, especially Vinayas, of the Dharmaguptakas, Mahīśāsakas, Mahāsāṃghikas, Lokottaravādins, Mūlasarvāstivādins, Sammatīyas, Kāśyapīyas, Haimava-

\textsuperscript{2} [Ed.: The translator here uses ‘school’ and ‘subschool’ where Bareau juxtaposes secte and école in the same phrase. Otherwise she employs school throughout, and subschool for Bareau’s secte-fille or where he is discussing what are clearly subdivisions of a named group, even if he uses écoles.]

\textsuperscript{3} La Vallée Poussin, L’Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu. IV, pp. 208–9.
tas, Abhayagirivásins, Bahuśrutīyas or Prajñāaptivādins.

Fortunately, there exist collections of theses classified by school, as well as collections of controversies, a few commentaries on both and quite a large amount of data dispersed in several treatises such as the Vībhāṣā and Abhidhamma-kosā. A comparative and critical study of all these documents, so varied in origin, turned out to be very much less disappointing than might generally have been expected on the strength of works which are summary, ancient and often badly compiled. It was thus established that certain pessimistic judgements were based on the misreading of texts, the use of faulty editions and quite simply on serious errors of method such as that, all too frequently committed, which consists of placing on the same level documents of greatly varying periods and values and then concluding, after superficial examination, that the contradictions which exist between them make them completely useless. What is worse is that these errors are long-lived; some have been carefully preserved for a century and used, without the least verification, by quite often eminent researchers.

Doubtless, the value and correctness of the documents used, and the wholly provisional conclusions that can be drawn from their study, should not be overrated. The study of Indian Buddhism requires much prudence and it can almost unreservedly be said that, in that field, historical certainty does not exist and that there are only greater or lesser probabilities. This is all the more true in that, despite magnificent efforts made for more than a century, much remains to be discovered in the immense forest of documents which have come down to us, not counting those, certainly more numerous, which sadly have disappeared without a trace. Here, more than anywhere else, it should constantly be recalled that our data are fragile and uncertain, that they always require an interpretation of which it is very difficult and doubtless even impossible to extract the part due to ‘the personal equation’, that of the reader and that of the author, whatever the integrity and experience of one or the other may be.

The object of the present work has first and foremost been to provide documents and references. In its early form, it was merely to have been a series of notes incorporated into a translation of the treatises by Vasumitra,

4. [Ed.: Some progress has been made in the identification of texts belonging to the schools since this statement was accurate. See supplementary bibliography.]
Bhavya and Vinītadeva. The general sections and various hypotheses which have resulted from the first direct study of the documents thus collated are no more than mere proposals, mere theses awaiting antitheses, and not definitive conclusions. They have no other aim than to show new aspects of old problems and to pose new questions.