

The Second Decade of the *Avadānaśataka*

Translated with an Introduction

by

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Despite its richness as a source for one of the lost schools of Indian Buddhism (the Sarvāstivāda), and its potential contributions to our understanding of the development of narrative and ideology in early Buddhism more generally, the *Avadānaśataka* has never been fully translated into English. It was edited by J. S. Speyer in 1906-1909, and this edition, reprinted with some corrections and some new errors by P. L. Vaidya in 1958, is widely available, including online.¹ Less easy to obtain, though still widely present in academic libraries, is Léon Feer's 1891 French translation of the text, complete with a thorough introduction and commentary. This translation pre-dates Speyer's edition and was made from a single manuscript, but with the help of the Tibetan version Feer makes a fairly complete and reliable work, albeit one that could now be improved upon given the progress of Buddhological scholarship in the intervening years. With these copies of the text available, an English rendering appears far easier than it would be for many other texts of early India. The question remains, therefore, why such a rendering has not yet been published. In answer one might mention the history of Buddhist studies and its well-documented bias against narrative and mythological texts.² One might also point out that the edition is in need of some improvement in the light of available manuscripts and the Tibetan and Chinese versions. The text as a whole is also enormously repetitive in a way that often belies elegant translation. In addition the composite nature of the text, with its ten chapters on different themes each containing ten stories, has encouraged more partial studies. For example Chapter 5 is of interest for its stories of *pretas*, while Chapter 8 has a rare and intriguing focus on female arhatship.³ Even when a scholar has taken an interest in the text as a whole, the result has been a study rather than a translation.⁴

This article contains a translation of Chapter 2, the second decade of the *Avadānaśataka*. The reason for not starting at Chapter 1 is simple: I have a particular interest in *jātaka* stories and in the notion of genre in Buddhist narrative, and Chapter 2 consists of what might be termed "*jātaka-avadānas*".

¹ This edition is available on GRETIL – the Göttingen Register of Electronic Texts in Indian Languages – <http://gretil.sub.uni-goettingen.de/gretil.htm>

² In tackling this bias Steven Collins has argued that 'narrative' and 'systematic' thought are of equal interest when studying Buddhist texts (Collins 1998). Perhaps partly under his influence, as well as thanks to the pioneering work of John Strong (1983, 1992), interest in Buddhist narrative texts has grown in recent years, and several monographs have appeared on the subject in the past decade (for example Ohnuma 2007, Rotman 2009 and Appleton 2010).

³ On the latter see for example Collett 2009 and Muldoon-Hules 2009, and forthcoming.

⁴ For an interesting article on the text's rationale as a whole, see Strong 1979.

Thus my translation began as a working translation to allow reflection on the characteristics of these particular stories and how they contribute to our understanding of both the *jātaka* and *avadāna* genres. My study of this theme will, I hope, shortly appear elsewhere. Meanwhile, I have polished the translation in order to present it as an offering to the scholarly community. It is my hope that other scholars whose interest in the *Avadānaśataka* has led to them creating a working translation of one or more chapters may be encouraged to do the same. By this method, within a few years we could have a full translation of the *Avadānaśataka* freely available online, and in time a publisher might be interested in printing a revised version of this in full. In the modern academic environment, in which it is difficult to justify working on an extensive piece of translation, such a method may help to make more texts widely available.⁵

The Text

As my base text I use Vaidya's edition, which is in essence a reprint of Speyer's earlier work, with the correction of some typographical and other minor errors and the addition of several more. Since Vaidya does not include Speyer's apparatus I have also made reference to Speyer in order to check his alternate readings, notes, and index of rare forms. The text is fairly coherent, and with the aid of Edgerton's *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary* it is not difficult to make a simple working translation. Editing this working translation into something readable and with some degree of elegance is somewhat harder, with the vast repetition of stock terms and passages posing a particular difficulty, as discussed below.

The dating of the *Avadānaśataka*, as with so many Indian texts, is difficult to pin down. The mention in story 83 of a *dīnāra*, a coin not used in India until the first century, along with the presence of a third-century Chinese translation of the text, suggested to Speyer (1958: xv) a date of around 100 CE. However, Demoto Hahn has recently questioned the dating (and authorship) of the Chinese translation, suggesting it may be as late as the 6th century. Based on this revised dating, but taking into account the archaic style of the Sanskrit text, she suggests a *terminus ante quem* of the 4th century. She also notes that the text continued to be revised for several centuries, undergoing serious revision at the hands of Mūlasarvāstivādins perhaps as late as the 7th century.⁶ To complicate matters, we

⁵ My own point of reference, and that of most British academics, is the research assessment cycle in which scholars are rated – and institutional funding allocated – according to a periodic assessment of research outputs. This has had the effect of discouraging long-term projects, in addition to which there has been a reluctance to acknowledge the status of scholarly translations as research outputs. A model of collaborative translation work is one response to such pressures.

⁶ Demoto Hahn 2006: 209-12. Demoto provides a thorough overview of the various manuscript sources for the text before discussing fragments from the Schøyen collection. None of the fragments contain material from the second decade.

cannot use the presence of a single mention of a coin to date the origin of all the stories in the collection, which has features that suggest an oral transmission.⁷

Repetition, Reiteration, Restatement and Redundancy

One of the most difficult features of the *Avadānaśataka* when it comes to translation is the constant repetition of both individual concepts and whole passages. One word is often followed by several (usually three) synonyms or near-synonyms, and finding a subtly different meaning for each is a challenge, to say the least. For example the Buddha was never simply ‘honoured’ (*satkṛto*) but ‘honoured, praised, respected and worshipped’ (*satkṛto gurukṛto mānitaḥ pūjito*), and in turn he never simply taught, but ‘taught, inspired, incited and pleased’ (*saṃdarśayati samādāpayati samuttejayati saṃpraharṣayati*). In addition, stock phrases, including these lists of synonyms, are repeated in multiple stories, often making up the bulk of the text. Descriptions of the Buddha, including his status as object of honour and his magical smile, and of the setting for a past-life story in the time of a past *buddha*, are particularly prone to such stock phrases.

Feer’s approach to the extensive repetition in his text was to abbreviate within the story and provide these stock passages at the start of the book, numbered for easy reference. This has obvious advantages but also compromises the text. If the reader is simply trying to ascertain what the unique elements are of a particular story – that it is about a sailor rather than a king, for example, or was told in Śrāvastī rather than Rājagṛha – then Feer’s method will facilitate this. However, if the reader wishes to read a story in full, she must refer back and forth in the book to fill in all the stock passages and recreate the story’s detail. One consequence of this inconvenience is that the stories become unable to affect the reader (or hearer) in the same way as they would in full. The repetition arguably serves the purpose of creating a familiar atmosphere and setting the scene. It is also most likely a feature of the text’s oral past, and thus a window into the text’s history and origins.⁸ It thus feels necessary to preserve the repetition in my translation.

However, choosing to translate each repeated passage in full in every story brings its own challenges, for when a passage reappears several times within a single text it becomes particularly important that the translation is smooth and readable. A slightly clumsy translation of a phrase that only appears once may be easily glossed over and forgotten by the reader, but if it appears three, four, or even ten times then the reader might well become frustrated. This puts extra pressure on a translator of a text such as the *Avadānaśataka*. I have tried to pay special attention to the stock passages that appear in the text, but I would welcome the attempts of others to improve upon what I have begun. I hope that

⁷ For evidence of possible oral origins for the stories see Collett 2006.

⁸ See discussion in Collett 2006.

what I have provided here, though not a literary translation, is at least readable and interesting to other scholars and students of Buddhism.

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11. The Sailors

The Buddha, the Exalted One,⁹ honoured by gods, *nāgas*, *yakṣas*, *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *kinnaras* and *mahoragas*¹⁰ – that is to say honoured, praised, respected and worshipped by kings, regents,¹¹ the wealthy, the city-dwellers, bankers, caravan leaders, gods, *nāgas*, *yakṣas*, *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *kinnaras* and *mahoragas* – and who was knowing¹² and of great merit, dwelled in Śrāvastī with his community of disciples, provided with the requisite robes, almsbowls, beds, seats, and medicines for the sick, below a village of sailors on the river Ajiravatī. Those sailors approached the Exalted One, and having approached they honoured the Exalted One's feet with their heads and sat to one side. The Exalted One taught, inspired, incited and delighted those sailors seated to one side with discourses on the *dharma*. Having taught, inspired, incited and delighted them with many kinds of *dharma* discourse he was silent. Then those sailors rose from their seats, placed their outer garments on one shoulder, saluted¹³ the Exalted One and said to him, “Let the Exalted One, along with his community of monks, consent to take tomorrow's meal with us on the banks of the river Ajiravatī. We will transport you across by boat.” The Exalted One consented to the sailors through his silence.

Then the sailors prepared the bank of the river Ajiravatī by removing all the stones, pebbles and gravel. They raised up parasols, flags and banners, and scattered various flowers there, and perfumed it with incense sticks.¹⁴ They had excellent food prepared, and made lots of bouquets of flowers, and decorated the

⁹ I have chosen to translate *bhagavat* as ‘Exalted One’, or simply ‘exalted’ when used in combination with other epithets.

¹⁰ These are various categories of what DeCaroli (2004 *passim*) has usefully dubbed ‘spirit-deities’. Although the categories are not well-defined and often overlap, there are some general characteristics associated with each: *nāgas* are serpent deities associated with underwater palaces, *yakṣas* are often local demons or deities, *asura* is the term given to anti-gods or demons, *garuḍas* are bird-deities in conflict with the *nāgas*, *kinnaras* are often said to be half-man half-horse, and *mahoragas* are a type of serpent-demon. The term that precedes these – which I have translated as gods – is *deva*, which is usually used to refer to gods of the heavens, though it can also refer to earth-dwelling gods such as those that inhabit trees.

¹¹ A *rājamātra* is anyone who claims equivalent rank to king. Compare Pāli *rāja-mahāmatta*.

¹² Although MMW only records the meaning ‘known’ or ‘known as’ for *jñāta*, DP records a possible alternative reading ‘knowing’ for the Pāli equivalent *ñāta*. This seems more natural here, in this praise of the Buddha. However, an alternative is that he was ‘well-known’ i.e. famous.

¹³ Literally ‘made an *añjali*’, which is a traditional gesture of respect that involves placing the hands palms together and fingers pointing upwards, and raising this towards the object of respect.

¹⁴ The term *ghaṭikā* could mean either small sticks or water-pitchers (see DP), but the former meaning seems most likely in the context.

boat that was going¹⁵ with flower-pavilions. A messenger announced to the Exalted One that it was time: “It is the moment, sir. The food is prepared, so the Exalted One should know that it is time.” The Exalted One, surrounded by a group of monks and attended by the monastic community, approached the village of the sailors. Having approached, he sat on a seat that had been prepared, in front of the community of monks. When the sailors saw that the community of monks with the Buddha at their head were happily seated nearby, they served them with their own hands, entertaining them with pure and excellent hard and soft foods. Having served them with their own hands and entertained them in various ways with pure and excellent hard and soft foods, when they saw that the Exalted One had eaten, his hands were washed and the bowl removed, they took lower seats and sat in front of the Exalted One in order to hear the *dharma*. And the Exalted One, understanding the dispositions, propensities, character and nature of those sailors, furnished them with a *dharma* teaching of such a kind that penetrated the four noble truths. Having heard this some sailors attained the fruit of stream-entry, others the fruit of once-returning, others the fruit of non-returning, some renounced and by abandoning all defilements realised arhatship, others produced a resolve to attain *śrāvaka-bodhi*,¹⁶ others a resolve to *pratyeka-bodhi*¹⁷ and yet others a resolve to full and perfect buddhahood. And the whole assembly was established in commitment to the Buddha, inclination towards the *dharma*, and devotion to the *saṅgha*. And then with great reverence the sailors transported the Exalted One across by boat, along with his community of monks.

The monks, their minds overcome by seeing the honour paid to the Buddha, asked the Exalted Buddha, “Where were these skillful roots planted by the Exalted One?”¹⁸ The Exalted One said, “O monks, actions that the Tathāgata performed and accumulated in other previous births have come together and their conditions have matured. Being inevitable¹⁹ they have approached like a river. That is why the Tathāgata is honoured in this way. Would you like to hear about it, monks?” “Indeed, sir.” “Then listen, monks, concentrate the mind on the good and the right, and I will speak.”

“Formerly, monks, in a past time, a fully and perfectly awakened one called Bhāgīratha arose in the world – a *tathāgata*, *arhat*, fully and perfectly

¹⁵ According to Speyer’s index, the term *nausaṃkrama*, which only appears in this story, means ‘bridge made up of ships joined together’. However, this seems without basis. See Edgerton’s note (BHSD p.313) for further discussion.

¹⁶ The ‘awakening of the hearers’, in other words that attained by disciples, also known as arhatship. The distinction with the preceding group would appear to be that the former attain arhatship in their present life whereas the latter resolve to do so in the future.

¹⁷ This is ‘awakening for/by oneself’ in other words the attainment of awakening without the aid of a teacher (in contrast to arhatship) and without proclaiming the teaching to others (in contrast to *saṃyaksambodhi*).

¹⁸ Here ‘planted’ is rather a liberal translation, for the verb is simply *kr* - to do. However, it seems to be the meaning that best fits the metaphor of planting actions and reaping their fruits.

¹⁹ For the translation of *avaśyam* as ‘inevitable’ see Pāli *avassam*.

awakened, perfect in wisdom and conduct, well-farer (*sugata*), unsurpassed knower of the world, trainer of those ready to be trained, teacher of gods and men, awakened and exalted. Surrounded by 62 thousand *arhats* he wandered on a journey through the countryside, and reached the shore of the Ganges. At that time a caravan leader with a retinue of several hundred was transporting his goods across the river Ganges, and in that place there was a great danger from thieves. The caravan leader saw the perfect Buddha Bhāgīratha with his assembly of 62 thousand *arhats*, and having seen him his mind became full of faith.²⁰ With mind full of faith he addressed the Exalted One: 'I will carry the Exalted One across first of all.' The perfect Buddha Bhāgīratha consented to the caravan leader through his silence, and then the caravan leader conveyed the perfect Buddha Bhāgīratha and his assembly of 62 thousand *arhats* across by boat, with great might. And having refreshed them with excellent food, he made an aspiration to attain unsurpassed and perfect full buddhahood."

The Exalted One said, "What do you think, monks? The person who was the caravan leader at that time, on that occasion, that was me. I transported the perfect Buddha Bhāgīratha across by boat, in addition to his retinue of 62 thousand *arhats*, refreshed them with excellent food, and made the vow. Because of the ripening of that action of mine I have experienced great happiness in boundless *saṃsāra*, and now I have attained unsurpassed perfect and full awakening and receive great honour of this kind. In this way, monks, one should train: 'We will revere, pay respects to, honour and worship the teacher. And having revered, paid respects to, honoured and worshipped the teacher, we will live in reliance on him.' In this way, monks, you should train."

Thus spoke the Exalted One, and the monks were delighted and praised the Exalted One's speech.

12. The Post

The Buddha, the Exalted One, honoured by gods, *nāgas*, *yakṣas*, *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *kinnaras* and *mahoragas* – that is to say honoured, praised, respected and worshipped by kings, regents, the wealthy, the city-dwellers, bankers, caravan leaders, gods, *nāgas*, *yakṣas*, *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *kinnaras* and *mahoragas* – and who was knowing and of great merit, with his community of disciples, provided with the requisite robes, almsbowls, beds, seats, and medicines for the sick, wandered on a journey through the countryside amongst the Kauravyas and arrived at the city of Kauravya. But the multitude of Kauravya people needed converting by the Buddha to being generous minded and delighted by giving.²¹ Thus it occurred to the

²⁰ *cittaṃ prasādayāmāsa*. The term *prasāda* has a variety of implications, ranging from mental calm to faith. In some instances it is glossed as *śraddhā*. For discussions of the role of *prasāda* in the *Avadānaśataka* and *Divyāvadāna* respectively see Fifield 2008 and Rotman 2009.

²¹ Here I depart dramatically from Feer's rendering, for he understands the passage to say that the people were already generous, and 'avait des tendances d'esprit généreuses à l'égard de la

Exalted One: “If I were to summon Śakra, king of the gods, surrounded by his retinue of *maruts*,²² as a result of seeing him they would increase their skillful roots.” So the Exalted One had a worldly thought:²³ “Well now! If only Śakra the king of the gods, together with his retinue of *maruts*, would come bringing a post of *gośīrṣa*²⁴ sandalwood!” With the arising of this thought Śakra the king of gods, surrounded by his retinue of *maruts*, came there, as did Viśvakarman and the great kings of the four directions, surrounded by many gods, *nāgas*, *yakṣas* and *kumbhāṇḍas*,²⁵ bringing a post of *gośīrṣa* sandalwood. They cried out loudly – “Ha! Ha! Kila! Kila!” – and according to the Exalted One’s intention they constructed a palace made of *gośīrṣa* sandalwood. Then in that palace Śakra the king of the gods honoured, praised, respected and worshipped the Exalted One, along with his community of disciples, with divine food, divine beds and seats, and celestial perfumes, garlands and flowers.²⁶

The multitude of Kauravya people saw that divine magnificence²⁷ and then they were amazed and had this thought: “Surely the Exalted Buddha is supreme in the world, for he is honoured by gods with their kings!” Their minds were overcome and they turned to the Exalted One. Having honoured the Exalted One’s feet they sat to one side. Seated to one side in that palace, the group of Kauravya people became extremely faithful.

Then the Exalted One made that palace disappear and taught a *dharma* teaching about such things as attachment to transient objects, hearing which many people who were Kauravya inhabitants attained the fruit of stream entry. Others attained the fruit of once-returning, some the fruit of non-returning, and some renounced and by abandoning all defilements realised arhatship . Others produced a resolve to attain *śrāvaka-bodhi*, others a resolve to *pratyeka-bodhi* and yet others a resolve to full and perfect buddhahood. And the whole assembly was established in commitment to the Buddha, inclination towards the *dharma*, and devotion to the *saṅgha*.

The monks, their minds overcome by seeing the divine honour paid to the Exalted One, asked the Exalted Buddha, “Where were these skillful roots planted by the Exalted One?” The Exalted One said, “O monks, actions that the Tathāgata performed and accumulated in other previous births have come together and their conditions have matured. Being inevitable they have approached like a

discipline du Boudha’ (p.57), the Sanskrit phrase being: *buddhavaineya udāracittaḥ pradānaruciśca*. Edgerton notes *vaineya* as meaning one to be trained or converted, and thus *buddhavaineya* as one to be converted by the Buddha.

²² A type of god, attendant of Śakra.

²³ A *laukika citta*, thus readable by the gods.

²⁴ *gośīrṣa* is said to be the most precious variety of sandalwood.

²⁵ Another type of spirit-deity.

²⁶ *gandhamālyapuṣpaiḥ* could also mean ‘with perfumed garlands of flowers’.

²⁷ Following Speyer’s MS reading *vibhūṣitān* rather than his emendation *vibhūṣikāṃ* or Vaidya’s suggested alternative *vibhūṣikāṃ*, which he attributes, apparently without basis, to Speyer. See discussion in BHSD.

river. That is why the Tathāgata is honoured in this way. Would you like to hear about it, monks?” “Indeed, sir.” “Then listen, monks, concentrate the mind on the good and the right, and I will speak.”

“Formerly, monks, in a past time, a fully and perfectly awakened one called Brahmā arose in the world – a *tathāgata*, *arhat*, fully and perfectly awakened, perfect in wisdom and conduct, well-farer, unsurpassed knower of the world, trainer of those ready to be trained, teacher of gods and men, awakened and exalted. Surrounded by 62 thousand *arhats* the perfect Buddha Brahmā wandered on a journey through the countryside, and reached a certain royal city. The consecrated warrior king heard, ‘The perfect Buddha Brahmā along with his retinue of 62 thousand *arhats*, wandering on a journey through the countryside, has arrived in our realm.’ Hearing this, with great royal power and great regal pomp, he went to the place where the exalted and perfect Buddha Brahmā was. Having arrived he honoured the perfect Buddha Brahmā’s feet with his head and sat to one side. The Exalted One inspired that consecrated warrior king who was seated to one side with the *dharmas* that bring about awakening. That king became faithful, and getting up from his seat he put his upper robe over one shoulder, saluted the Exalted One and said to the Exalted One, ‘May the Exalted One consent to live in this royal residence for the three-month rainy season. I will attend upon the Exalted One and his community of disciples with the requisite robes, almsbowls, beds, seats, and medicines for the sick.’ The perfect Buddha Brahmā consented to the king through his silence. Then that consecrated king, according to the Exalted One’s intention, had a palace constructed out of *gośīrṣa* sandalwood. He presented this, decorated with a myriad of cloths and ornaments, covered with various flowers and perfumed with incense sticks, to the Exalted One along with his community of disciples. For three months he entertained them with excellent food and clothed them with diverse kinds of cloths, and then made an aspiration to full and perfect buddhahood.”

The Exalted One said, “What do you think, monks? The person who was the consecrated warrior king at that time, on that occasion, that was me. I honoured the perfect Buddha Brahmā,²⁸ and because of the ripening of that action of mine I have experienced great happiness in boundless *saṃsāra*, and now I have attained unsurpassed perfect and full awakening and receive great honour of this kind. In this way, monks, one should train: ‘We will revere, pay respects to, honour and worship the teacher. And having revered, paid respects to, honoured and worshipped the teacher, we will live in reliance on him.’ In this way, monks, you should train.”

Thus spoke the Exalted One, and the monks were delighted and praised the Exalted One’s speech.

²⁸ Speyer and Vaidya read *brahmaṇaḥ* here but given the context this looks like an error.

13. The Bath

The Buddha, the Exalted One, honoured by gods, *nāgas*, *yakṣas*, *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *kinnaras* and *mahoragas* – that is to say honoured, praised, respected and worshipped by kings, regents, the wealthy, the city-dwellers, bankers, caravan leaders, gods, *nāgas*, *yakṣas*, *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *kinnaras* and *mahoragas* – and who was knowing and of great merit, dwelled in Anāthapiṇḍada’s park, the Jeta Grove in Śrāvastī, with his community of disciples, provided with the requisite robes, almsbowls, beds, seats and medicines for the sick. At that time in Śrāvastī, five hundred merchants went along a forest road. Losing the way, they reached a desert.²⁹ Tormented by heat and fatigue, their provisions used up, scorched by the hot rays of the sun at midday, they rolled around on the earth like fish taken out of water, suffering severe and harsh pain and sharp and unpleasant feelings. They entreated thousands of deities, namely Śiva, Varuṇa, Kubera, Vāsava and so on, but none of them was able to rescue them.

But one of them was a layman who recognised the Buddha’s teachings, and that merchant said to them, “Good sirs, go to the Buddha for refuge!” And they all, in a single cry, went to the Buddha for refuge.

Now there is nothing that is not known, seen, understood and discerned by the Exalted Buddhas. Indeed, it is a rule that Exalted Buddhas – who are greatly compassionate, devoted to benefitting the world, the one protector, delighting in calm and insight,³⁰ skilled in the threefold self control,³¹ who have overcome the four floods,³² established in the bases of conduct that are the four bases of supernormal power, having practised for a long time the four articles of attraction,³³ lacking the five [bad] qualities,³⁴ gone beyond the five realms,³⁵ furnished with the six qualities [of equanimity],³⁶ who have accomplished the six perfections,³⁷ abounding in the flowers that are the seven factors of awakening,³⁸ guides on the eightfold path, skilled in the nine successive attainments [of

²⁹ Literally a ‘sandy place’ – *vālukāsthala*.

³⁰ *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*, the two types of meditation practice/goal.

³¹ Presumably this is control over body, speech and mind.

³² The four floods of evil or passions, often equated with the four *āśravas* (‘defilements’), namely *kāma*- (passion, sense pleasures), *bhava*- (existence), *avidyā*- (ignorance) and *dṛṣṭi*- ([wrong] views).

³³ The *saṃgraha-vastu* are the means by which Buddhas draw beings towards the teaching, and they are said to be *dāna* (giving), *priya-vacana* (sweet speech), *artha-caryā* (conduct for the benefit [of others]) and *samānārthatā* (equality or empathy).

³⁴ *pañcāṅgaviprahīṇānaṃ*. The *Visuddhimagga* says these are the five hindrances. See BHSD *aṅga*.

³⁵ The realms of rebirth, namely heavenly, *preta*, hellish, human, and animal.

³⁶ Equanimity regarding each of the six senses. See BHSD *aṅga*.

³⁷ These are *dāna* (giving), *śīla* (good conduct, morality), *kṣānti* (forbearance, patience), *vīrya* (energy, determination), *dhyāna* (meditation), *prajñā* (wisdom).

³⁸ These are *smṛti* (mindfulness), *dharmapracicaya* (discriminating comprehension of the dharma), *vīrya* (energy, determination), *prīti* (joy), *praśrabdhi* (serenity), *samādhi* (meditative absorption) and *upekṣā* (equanimity).

meditation], mighty with the ten powers, whose splendour pervades equally the ten directions, and who are more distinguished than ten hundred rulers – survey the world with their Buddha-vision for three days and three nights, knowing and seeing the motion: “Who is abandoned? Who is cut off? Who has met with pain? Who is in danger? Who is afflicted? Who has met with pain, danger and affliction? Who is headed for a state of woe? Who is inclined towards an evil state? Who is bent on a bad destiny? I would raise them³⁹ up from evil states and establish them in heaven and liberation! I would raise up with my hands the one who has sunk into the mire of sense pleasures. The one who is deprived of the honourable treasures⁴⁰ I would establish in mastery over and excellence in the honourable treasures. For the one who has not planted skillful roots I would plant them, and for the one who has planted them I would bring them to maturity, and for the one who has them matured I would bring to liberation.” And it is said:

Though the ocean, abode of monsters, may pass over the shore,
a Buddha cannot pass over the opportunity⁴¹ of children in need of training.⁴²

In such a way the Exalted One saw the many merchants who had met with misfortune, danger and affliction. At the very looking of his eye he disappeared from the Jeta Grove with his retinue of monks and reached that place. The merchants saw the Exalted One with his community of monks, and seeing him they let forth a loud cry. Then this worldly thought occurred to the Exalted One: “Well now! Śakra, king of the gods, let loose the rain of great Indra, and send forth cold winds!” And with the arising of this thought in the Exalted One, Śakra let loose the rain of great Indra and set in motion cold wind. Thus the thirst of those merchants was quenched, and their heat was calmed. Those merchants obtained clear knowledge, and with the Exalted One showing them the road they reached Śrāvastī.

Their fatigue from the journey dispelled, they turned to to the Exalted One, and the Exalted One gave a *dharma* teaching of such a kind that penetrated the four noble truths. Hearing this, some achieved the fruit of stream entry, some the fruit of once return, some the fruit of non-return, and some renounced and by abandoning all defilements realised arhatship. Others produced a resolve to attain *śrāvaka-bodhi*, others a resolve to *pratyeka-bodhi* and yet others a resolve to full and perfect buddhahood. And the assembly was established in a high degree of commitment to the Buddha, inclination towards the *dharma*, and devotion to the *saṅgha*.

³⁹ Here I am interpreting *kam* as an indefinite pronoun, a rare but attested use of *kaḥ* alone, though it is more usually found in this meaning with a particle such as *cit*. It is also possible to interpret the long string of interrogatives that precede this phrase as indefinite pronouns.

⁴⁰ *āryadhana*. In the Pāli tradition these are seven in number: faith, good conduct, shame, fear of evil, learning, liberality and wisdom.

⁴¹ There is a pun here that is slightly lost in translation: *velām atikramet* can mean ‘exceed the shore’ or ‘neglect the opportunity,’ amongst many other possible meanings.

⁴² For a slightly different translation of this stock passage and a discussion of its features see Collett 2006.

The monks became doubtful and asked the Exalted Buddha, remover of all doubts, “It is a marvel, Exalted One, that these merchants were rescued from the path in the wilderness by the Exalted One, and that with the arising of a thought the rains of great Indra rained down and cooling winds blew.” The Exalted One said, “O monks, actions that the Tathāgata performed and accumulated in other previous births have come together and their conditions have matured. Being inevitable they have approached like a river. These actions have been done and accumulated by me. Who else will experience their results? O monks, deeds done do not mature in the earth element, nor in the water element, nor in the fire element, nor in the wind element. Rather, deeds done, whether pure or impure, ripen in what is enumerated as the aggregates, the physical elements and the elements of sense-experience (*skandhadhātvāyataneṣu*).”

“Actions do not disappear even after a hundred aeons.

When they have reached completion and it is time, they fruit for living beings.”

“Formerly, monks, in a past time, a fully and perfectly awakened one named Candana arose in the world – a *tathāgata*, *arhat*, fully and perfectly awakened, perfect in wisdom and conduct, well-farer, unsurpassed knower of the world, trainer of those ready to be trained, teacher of gods and men, awakened and exalted. The perfect Buddha Candana wandered on a journey through the countryside and reached a certain royal city. The consecrated warrior king approached the place where the perfect Buddha Candana was. Having approached he honoured the perfect Buddha Candana’s feet with his head and sat to one side. And the perfect Buddha Candana inspired that consecrated warrior king who was seated to one side with the *dharmas* that bring about awakening. Getting up from his seat, the consecrated warrior king put his upper robe over one shoulder, placed his right knee on the ground, saluted the perfect Buddha Candana, and said to the perfect Buddha Candana, ‘May the Exalted One consent to live in this royal residence for the three month rainy season, along with his community of monks.’ The perfect Buddha Candana consented to the king through his silence.”

“Now at that time a great drought appeared, as a result of which it happened that the rivers and wells contained little water and the trees lost their flowers and fruits. The king made a request of the perfect Buddha Candana: ‘Exalted One, I will have a lotus pool filled with perfumed water built in the middle of our city, in which the Exalted One together with his community of disciples will bathe. Surely as a result of the Exalted One’s bath the god will rain in our country.’ The Exalted One, the perfect Buddha Candana, consented to the king through his silence.”

“Then the consecrated warrior king gave an order to his courtiers: ‘Sirs, make ready perfumed water and water pitchers made of jewels, with which we will bathe the Exalted One together with his community of disciples.’ Then the king, surrounded by his retinue of courtiers, arranged that the city be cleared of stones, pebbles and gravel, raised up flags and banners, scattered various flowers, sprinkled fragrant water, and perfumed with a variety of incense. And the lotus

pool was prepared. Then the Exalted One, the perfect Buddha Candana, whose purpose is to benefit all, in a single robe stood in the lotus pool. The king, surrounded by his retinue of courtiers, bathed the perfect Buddha Candana together with his community of disciples with water that was infused with various perfumes. And with that bathing of Candana the perfect Buddha, Śakra the king of the gods sent forth rains of the Great Indra kind, which revived all the crops. And because of this a great body of the people gained faith⁴³ in the Exalted Buddha, and some of them established a perfumed *stūpa*. All those who went to the perfect Buddha Candana for refuge entered *nirvāṇa*, and I am one of the remainder.”

“Therefore in this way, monks, one should train: ‘We will revere, pay respects to, honour and worship the teacher. And having revered, paid respects to, honoured and worshipped the teacher, we will live in reliance on him.’ In this way, monks, you should train.”

Thus spoke the Exalted One, and the monks were delighted and praised the Exalted One’s speech.

14. The Plague

The Buddha, the Exalted One, honoured by gods, *nāgas*, *yakṣas*, *gandharvas*,⁴⁴ *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *kinnaras* and *mahoragas* – that is to say honoured, praised, respected and worshipped by kings, regents, the wealthy, the city-dwellers, bankers, caravan leaders, gods, *nāgas*, *yakṣas*, *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *kinnaras* and *mahoragas* – and who was knowing and of great merit, approached Rājagṛha and took residence in Kalandakanivāpa⁴⁵ in the Veṇu Grove, with his community of disciples, provided with the requisite robes, almsbowls, beds, seats and medicines for the sick. And at that time there was an epidemic amongst the inhabitants of Nāḍakanthā, and a mass of people were afflicted with diseases. They entreated several thousand different deities, including Śiva, Varuṇa, Kubera, Vāsava and so on, but none calmed the plague. Now a certain layman lived in Nāḍakanthā, and he said to the brahmins and householders⁴⁶ who lived in Nāḍakanthā, “Come, you should go to the Buddha for refuge, and entreat the Exalted One to come here. Then the Exalted One would put an end to the epidemic and lessen our pain.” Then the brahmins and householders of Nāḍakanthā began to entreat the Exalted One: “May the Exalted One come and free us from our dangerous plight!”

Now there is nothing that is not known, seen, understood and discerned by the Exalted Buddhas. Indeed, it is a rule that Exalted Buddhas – who are greatly compassionate, devoted to benefitting the world, the one protector, delighting in calm and insight, skilled in the threefold self control, who have overcome the four

⁴³ Here the term is *śraddhā*, though *prasāda* is often used in this context too.

⁴⁴ Despite this being a stock passage, in this chapter *gandharvas* (celestial musicians) are added to the list of spirit deities.

⁴⁵ As Edgerton translates, ‘squirrel food offering’, the name of a place near Rājagṛha.

⁴⁶ Alternatively this could mean those brahmins who were also householders.

floods, established in the bases of conduct that are the four bases of supernormal power, having practised for a long time the four articles of attraction, lacking the five [bad] qualities, gone beyond the five realms, furnished with the six qualities [of equanimity], who have accomplished the six perfections, abounding in the flowers that are the seven factors of awakening, guides on the eightfold path, skilled in the nine successive attainments [of meditation], mighty with the ten powers, whose splendour pervades equally the ten directions, and who are more distinguished than ten hundred rulers – survey the world with their Buddha-vision for three days and three nights, knowing and seeing the motion: “Who is abandoned? Who is cut off? Who has met with pain? Who is in danger? Who is afflicted? Who has met with pain, danger and affliction? Who is headed for a state of woe? Who is inclined towards an evil state? Who is bent on a bad destiny? I would raise them up from evil states and establish them in heaven and liberation! I would raise up with my hands the one who has sunk into the mire of sense pleasures. The one who is deprived of the honourable treasures I would establish in mastery over and excellence in the honourable treasures. For the one who has not planted skillful roots I would plant them, and for the one who has planted them I would bring them to maturity, and for the one who has them matured I would bring to liberation.” And it is said:

Though the ocean, abode of monsters, may pass over the shore,
a Buddha cannot pass over the opportunity of children in need of training.

In the morning the Exalted One dressed and, taking his robe and bowl and accompanied by a group of monks and preceded by the monastic community, reached Nāḍakanthā. Then the Exalted One suffused the whole city with heartfelt loving kindness, and as a result the epidemic was gone, and the plague calmed. Then from seeing the Buddha great faith arose in those brahmins and householders, and those in whom faith had arisen served the Exalted One and his community of disciples with the requisite robes, almsbowls, beds, seats and medicines for the sick. Then the Exalted One gave a *dharma* teaching of such a kind that penetrated the four noble truths. Hearing this, some of the brahmins and householders achieved the fruit of stream entry, others attained the fruit of once return, others the fruit of non-return, and others renounced and by abandoning all defilements realised arhatship. And the whole city was established in commitment to the Buddha, inclination towards the *dharma*, and devotion to the *saṅgha*.

The monks became doubtful and asked the Exalted Buddha, remover of all doubts, “It is a marvel, sir, that these beings who had experienced calamity, through faith in the Exalted One were completely freed from their woe.” The Exalted One said, “O monks, actions that the Tathāgata performed and accumulated in other previous births have come together and their conditions have matured. Being inevitable they have approached like a river. These actions have been done and accumulated by me. Who else will experience their results? O monks, deeds done do not mature in the earth element, nor in the water element,

nor in the fire element, nor in the wind element. Rather, deeds done, whether pure or impure, ripen in what is enumerated as the aggregates, the physical elements and the elements of sense experience.”

“Actions do not disappear even after a hundred aeons.

When they have reached completion and it is time, they fruit for living beings.”

“Formerly, monks, in a past time, a fully and perfectly awakened one called Candra arose in the world – a *tathāgata*, *arhat*, fully and perfectly awakened, perfect in wisdom and conduct, well-farer, unsurpassed knower of the world, trainer of those ready to be trained, teacher of gods and men, awakened and exalted. The perfect Buddha Candra wandered on a journey through the countryside and reached a certain royal city. The consecrated warrior king heard: ‘A fully and perfectly awakened one has arrived in our realm.’ Having heard this, with great royal power and great regal pomp he went to the place where the perfect Buddha Candra was. Having arrived he honoured the perfect Buddha Candra’s feet with his head and sat to one side. The perfect Buddha Candra inspired that consecrated warrior king who was seated to one side with the *dharma*s that bring about awakening. Then that consecrated warrior king gained faith, and getting up from his seat he placed his robe on his shoulder, put his right knee on the ground, and saluting the perfect and full Buddha Candra he said this to the perfect Buddha Candra: ‘May the Exalted One consent to live here with his community of monks for the three month rainy season. I will attend upon the Exalted One with the requisite robes, almsbowls, beds, seats, and medicines for the sick.’ The perfect Buddha Candra consented to the king through his silence.”

“At that time in the king’s city there was a great epidemic amongst the populace, and a plague that seriously afflicted a great body of people. The king, for the sake of appeasing the sickness, requested of Candra the perfect Buddha, ‘It would be good, Exalted One, if you were able by some means to calm the epidemic.’ Then the exalted and perfect Buddha Candra said to the king, ‘Go, great king! Having fastened this robe on the top of a banner, have it paraded about in your realm with great reverence and make a great festival for it. And instruct all the great populace to keep their minds on the Buddha. It will be for your benefit.’ So the king did everything as he had been instructed, and by that means and for that reason all the diseases were calmed. Then a body of people became faithful and the citizens and royal courtiers went to the Buddha for refuge, also taking refuge in the *dharma* and the *saṅgha*.”

The Exalted One said, “What do you think, monks? The person who was the king at that time, on that occasion, that was me. I greatly honoured the perfect Buddha Candra, and because of the ripening of that action of mine I have experienced great happiness in *saṃsāra*. It caused me to attain divine and human birth, and because of it I am now powerful. All this was attained because of that thought and according to that wish. In this way, monks, one should train: ‘We will revere, pay respects to, honour and worship the teacher. And having revered,

paid respects to, honoured and worshipped the teacher, we will live in reliance on him.’ In this way, monks, you should train.”

Thus spoke the Exalted One, and the monks were delighted and praised the Exalted One’s speech.

15. The Miracle

The Buddha, the Exalted One, honoured by gods, *nāgas*, *yakṣas*, *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *kinnaras* and *mahoraḡas* – that is to say honoured, praised, respected and worshipped by kings, regents, the wealthy, the city-dwellers, bankers, caravan leaders, gods, *nāgas*, *yakṣas*, *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *kinnaras* and *mahoraḡas* – and who was knowing and of great merit, approached Rājagṛha and took residence in Kalandakanivāpa in the Veṇu Grove, with his community of disciples, provided with the requisite robes, almsbowls, beds, seats and medicines for the sick. When King Ajātaśatru, under the influence of Devadatta, put an end to the life of his father, a righteous and just monarch, and established himself as king, faithlessness became strong and faithfulness became weak. A certain senior courtier had no faith and was hostile to the teaching of the Exalted One, and he began to commission sacrifices from brahmins. Several hundred thousand brahmins assembled and made a resolution that nobody should approach the *śramaṇa* Gautama. Then those skilled brahmins, all in agreement, began to supplicate Śakra in the middle of the bazaar with rites and utterances from the *Vedas* – “Come, come, lover of Ahalyā!”⁴⁷

Now there is nothing that is not known, seen, understood and discerned by the Exalted Buddhas. Indeed, it is a rule that Exalted Buddhas – who are greatly compassionate, devoted to benefitting the world, the one protector, delighting in calm and insight, skilled in the threefold self control, who have overcome the four floods, established in the bases of conduct that are the four bases of supernormal power, having practised for a long time the four articles of attraction, lacking the five [bad] qualities, gone beyond the five realms, furnished with the six qualities [of equanimity], who have accomplished the six perfections, abounding in the flowers that are the seven factors of awakening, guides on the eightfold path, skilled in the nine successive attainments [of meditation], mighty with the ten powers, whose splendour pervades equally the ten directions, and who are more distinguished than ten hundred rulers – survey the world with their Buddha-vision for three days and three nights, knowing and seeing the motion: “Who is abandoned? Who is cut off? Who has met with pain? Who is in danger? Who is afflicted? Who has met with pain, danger and affliction? Who is headed for a state of woe? Who is inclined towards an evil state? Who is bent on a bad destiny? I would raise them up from evil states and establish them in heaven and liberation! I would raise up with my hands the one who has sunk into the mire of sense

⁴⁷ Ahalyā is the sage Gautama’s wife, and she was seduced by Indra, hence “lover of Ahalyā” is an epithet of Indra/Śakra.

pleasures. The one who is deprived of the honourable treasures I would establish in mastery over and excellence in the honourable treasures. For the one who has not planted skillful roots I would plant them, and for the one who has planted them I would bring them to maturity, and for the one who has them matured I would bring to liberation.” And it is said:

Though the ocean, abode of monsters, may pass over the shore,
a Buddha cannot pass over the opportunity of children in need of training.

The Exalted One saw: “These brahmins formerly planted skillful roots and seized the path to liberation, desiring their own welfare and well-disposed towards *nirvāṇa*, indifferent towards *saṃsāra*. But now, because of lacking a spiritual guide they are hostile towards my teaching. I should approach eagerly for the purpose of training them.” Then the Exalted One made himself look like Śakra, and shining forth with divine appearance he began to descend into the sacrificial arena. As a result those brahmins were thrilled, pleased and delighted, becoming intensely joyful and happy, and all as one said: “Come, come, Exalted One! You are welcome Exalted One!” Then the Exalted One, bearing the appearance of Śakra, sat on the seat that was prepared. Word spread throughout the city of Rājagṛha: “During a sacrifice Śakra the king of the gods has descended!” Hearing this many hundreds of thousands of beings assembled. Then after the humbled brahmins had honoured him in this way, the Exalted One removed his disguise as Śakra and resumed once again the appearance of the Buddha. He gave a *dharma* teaching of the kind that penetrates the four noble truths, hearing which sixty thousand brahmins, having broken with the thunderbolt of knowledge the mountain of wrong views about individuality (*satkāya-dṛṣṭi*) that rises up with twenty peaks, realised the fruit of stream entry, and many hundreds of thousands of beings gained faith in the Exalted One.

Then the monks became doubtful and questioned the Buddha, the Exalted One, destroyer of all doubt, “It is marvelous, sir, that having come to the Exalted One these brahmins were made to see the truth, and that many hundreds of thousands of beings became greatly faithful.” The Exalted One said, “O monks, actions that the Tathāgata performed and accumulated in other previous births have come together and their conditions have matured. Being inevitable they have approached like a river. These actions have been done and accumulated by me. Who else will experience their results? O monks, deeds done do not mature in the earth element, nor in the water element, nor in the fire element, nor in the wind element. Rather, deeds done, whether pure or impure, ripen in what is enumerated as the aggregates, the physical elements and the elements of sense experience.”

“Actions do not disappear even after a hundred aeons.

When they have reached completion and it is time, they fruit for living beings.”

“Formerly, monks, in a past time, a fully and perfectly awakened one called Indradamana arose in the world – a *tathāgata*, *arhat*, fully and perfectly awakened, perfect in wisdom and conduct, well-farer, unsurpassed knower of the

world, trainer of those ready to be trained, teacher of gods and men, awakened and exalted. He wandered on a journey through the countryside and reached a certain royal city. That royal city was stubbornly heretical. A certain consecrated warrior king heard, 'The perfect Buddha Indradamana has arrived in our realm.' Having heard this, with great royal power and great regal pomp he went to the place where the perfect Buddha Indradamana was. Having arrived he honoured the exalted perfect Buddha Indradamana's feet with his head and sat to one side. The perfect Buddha Indradamana inspired that consecrated warrior king who was seated to one side with the *dharmas* that bring about awakening. Then that king gained faith, and getting up from his seat he placed his robe on his shoulder, put his right knee on the ground, and saluting the perfect Buddha Indradamana he said this to the perfect Buddha Indradamana: 'May the Exalted One consent to live here for the three month rainy season. I will attend upon the Exalted One with the requisite robes, almsbowls, beds, seats, and medicines for the sick.' The Exalted One said, 'Great King, is there any monastery in this realm in which monks who are coming or going can make their abode?' The King said, 'There is not, Exalted One. But may the Exalted One stay! I will have a monastery built, in which monks who are coming and going may make their abode.' Then the king had a monastery built according to the wishes of the Tathāgata, with solid walls and an arched doorway, adorned with round windows, turrets, half-moon shaped lattice windows and balconies, furnished with rugs, with abundant streams and filled with groves of trees that contained various flowers and fruits. And when it was made it was presented to the Exalted One and his community of disciples. At their request the Exalted One performed a great miracle in return. Entreated by the king the Exalted One, the perfect Buddha Indradamana, displayed a great miracle involving playing with a multitude of *buddhas*. As a result of seeing this the king, together with his courtiers and the town and country folk and the whole city became very faithful and exceedingly enamoured with the teaching."

"What do you think, monks? The one who was the king at that time, on that occasion, that was me. I honoured the perfect Buddha Indradamana in this way, and because of the ripening of that action I experienced boundless happiness in *saṃsāra*, and now being a Tathāgata I have this brilliant teaching. In this way, monks, one should train: 'We will revere, pay respects to, honour and worship the teacher. And having revered, paid respects to, honoured and worshipped the teacher, we will live in reliance on him.' In this way, monks, you should train."

Thus spoke the Exalted One, and the monks were delighted and praised the Exalted One's speech.

16. Five Year Festival⁴⁸

The Buddha, the Exalted One, honoured by gods, *nāgas*, *yakṣas*, *gandharvas*, *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *kinnaras* and *mahoragas* – that is to say honoured, praised, respected and worshipped by kings, regents, the wealthy, the city-dwellers, bankers, caravan leaders, gods, *nāgas*, *yakṣas*, *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *kinnaras* and *mahoragas* – and who was knowing and of great merit, with his community of disciples, provided with the requisite robes, almsbowls, beds, seats, and medicines for the sick, approached Rājagṛha and took residence in Kalandakanivāpa in the Veṇu Grove. When that deluded person Devadatta had done a thousand evils with regard to the Exalted One's teaching, but was unable even to move a hair of the Exalted One, he addressed King Ajātaśatru: "One should make a resolution that nobody in Rājagṛha is to approach the *śramaṇa* Gautama, or give him alms. Then, getting no goods and no honour, surely he will move on to another country." The king did this. Then those laypeople who had seen the truth began to lament: "Oh it is dreadful that the city of Rājagṛha has no protector! For it is not possible to approach the Exalted One, the Buddha whose appearance is as rare as the flower of the *udumbara* tree,⁴⁹ and make provision for him." Word of this passed on from person to person and was heard by the monks. Venerable Ānanda heard it and announced it to the Exalted One. The Exalted One said, "Be little anxious Ānanda. In this matter the Tathāgatas know the seasons. But as long as there is my teaching, as before and now, there will be no insufficiency in the service of the disciples."

Now it happened that Śakra, the king of the gods, came to know about this matter, and saw the alteration with regard to the Exalted One's religion.⁵⁰ For the sake of strengthening the generous givers, highlighting the greatness of the arising of a Buddha, breaking the pride and arrogance of Ajātaśatru and Devadatta, and increasing his own faith, he manifested with splendour and nobility and made a loud announcement to the whole of Rājagṛha: "Today I will serve the Exalted One together with his community of disciples with divine requisite robes, almsbowls, beds, seats, and medicines for the sick." Having announced this he approached the Exalted One. Having approached he honoured the Exalted One's feet with his head and stood to one side. Then Śakra the king of the gods said this to the Exalted One: "May the Exalted One consent that in this city of Rājagṛha I will serve the Exalted One with divine requisite robes,

⁴⁸ The title of this story, *Pañcavārśīkam*, means 'something related to five years' or 'five yearly'. Since it would appear that some sort of festival is meant I have translated the term as 'five year festival' here and at its other occurrences throughout the story.

⁴⁹ *Ficus Glomerata* or *Ficus Racemosa*. The flowers cannot be seen as they are within the fruit. A legend therefore emerged that the tree only flowers extremely rarely.

⁵⁰ The term is *śāsana*, which is usually translated as 'teaching' or 'dispensation', since it also shades over into meaning the Buddhist religion. Here it is clear that it is not the teaching that is suffering so much as the teachers, and thus the religion as a whole.

almsbowls, beds, seats, and medicines for the sick.” The Exalted One said, “Enough, Kauśika. It is sufficient to make your mind fully faithful, for there are many in the world who desire merit.” Śakra said, “May the Exalted One consent to stay for five years. I will make the five year festival for the sake of the Tathāgata.” The Exalted One said, “Enough, Kauśika. It is sufficient to make your mind fully faithful, for there are many in the world who desire merit.” Śakra said, “May the Exalted One consent to five days.” Then the Exalted One, for the sake of displaying the strength of his own virtue, and in order to benefit Śakra the king of the gods, and to ensure the continuity of the future five year festival,⁵¹ consented through his silence.

Then Śakra the king of the gods, understanding that the Exalted One had consented through his silence, made that Veṇu Grove look like Vaijayanta Palace⁵² with divine seats, heavenly lotus pools and divine food. The Exalted One sat on the seat that had been prepared. Śakra the king of the gods, seeing that the Buddha first of all and also the community of monks were happily seated, served and waited on them with his own hands, surrounded by several thousand deities. Having served and waited on him in several ways with his own hands, understanding that the Exalted One had eaten, his hands washed and the bowl removed, he took a lower seat and sat before the Exalted One in order to hear the *dharma*. Then the Exalted One taught, inspired, incited and delighted Śakra the king of the gods and his retinue with a *dharma* discourse. And King Ajātaśatru, who had gone on the palace roof-terrace, saw this type of worship of the Exalted One in the Veṇu Grove, and having seen it he was remorseful and experienced great faith. The citizens who lived in Rājagṛha became agitated for the *dharma* and having approached the king they spoke thus: “Great king, your majesty, the citizens who live in Rājagṛha have been robbed, for the gods, despite being heedless and delighting in intoxication, have abandoned their divine realm and worship the Exalted One. It would be good, your majesty, to undo the resolution.”

Then King Ajātaśatru undid the resolution and proclaimed with a gong: “Honour should be paid to the Exalted One as desired.” The citizens who lived in Rājagṛha and their followers were thrilled, pleased and delighted, became intensely joyful and happy, and approached in order to see the Exalted One, bringing perfumes, garlands and flowers. Then the gods and humans paid great honour to the Exalted One, and the Exalted One gave a *dharma* talk of the kind that penetrates the four noble truths for the gods and humans standing there. Hearing this, many of the gods and men saw the truth.

Seeing the honour paid to the Exalted One, the monks became doubtful and asked the Exalted One, “It is a marvel, sir, that there be a festival of this kind in the Exalted One’s dispensation.” The Exalted One said, “O monks, actions that the Tathāgata performed and accumulated in other previous births have come

⁵¹ *anāgatapañcavārṣikaprabandhahetor*. I follow the Tibetan interpretation, translated by Feer (p.73) as ‘pour ne pas interrompre la durée de la fête de cinq ans’.

⁵² Indra’s own palace in the Trāyastriṃśa Heaven.

together and their conditions have matured. Being inevitable they have approached like a river. These actions have been done and accumulated by me. Who else will experience their results? O monks, deeds done do not mature in the earth element, nor in the water element, nor in the fire element, nor in the wind element. Rather, deeds done, whether pure or impure, ripen in what is enumerated as the aggregates, the physical elements and the elements of sense experience.”

“Actions do not disappear even after a hundred aeons.

When they have reached completion and it is time, they fruit for living beings.”

“Formerly, monks, in a past time, a fully and perfectly awakened one named Ratnaśaila arose in the world – a *tathāgata*, *arhat*, fully and perfectly awakened, perfect in wisdom and conduct, well-farer, unsurpassed knower of the world, trainer of those ready to be trained, teacher of gods and men, awakened and exalted. He wandered on a journey through the countryside and reached a certain royal city. In that royal city a king called Dharmaśuddhi ruled the kingdom. And in that royal city there was a great epidemic, so that king offered the Exalted One and his community of disciples food for three months, in order to cure the epidemic. With the passing of three months the epidemic was pacified, and so the king and the citizens, their minds converted, made the five year festival for the Tathāgata and his community of disciples.”

And he said:

“Ānanda, Ratnaśaila of great splendour, entreated by the king who desired peace, carried out the five year festival.”

“What do you think, monks? He who at that time, on that occasion, was the king, that was me. I carried out the five year festival for the Tathāgata Ratnaśaila, and because of that I experienced great happiness in *saṃsāra*, and for that reason now I am honoured in this manner as a Tathāgata. And when I am fully liberated there will be many hundreds of five year festivals in my dispensation. In this way, monks, one should train: ‘We will revere, pay respects to, honour and worship the teacher. And having revered, paid respects to, honoured and worshipped the teacher, we will live in reliance on him.’ In this way, monks, you should train.”

Thus spoke the Exalted One, and the monks were delighted and praised the Exalted One’s speech.

17. Eulogy

The Buddha, the Exalted One, honoured by gods, *nāgas*, *yakṣas*, *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *kinnaras* and *mahoragas* – that is to say honoured, praised, respected and worshipped by kings, regents, the wealthy, the city-dwellers, bankers, caravan leaders, gods, *nāgas*, *yakṣas*, *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *kinnaras* and *mahoragas* – and who was knowing and of great merit, dwelled in Anāthapiṇḍada’s park, the Jeta Grove in Śrāvastī, with his community of disciples, provided with the requisite robes, almsbowls, beds, seats and medicines for the sick. On that occasion five hundred

musicians were living in Śrāvastī as a company. At that time the king of musicians, named Supriya, arrived, and his power was of such a kind that he produced seven notes and twenty-one modes⁵³ on a single string. Proclaiming loudly that there were no skilled musicians⁵⁴ in the six great cities, he arrived in Śrāvastī. The residents of Śrāvastī and the musicians reported this to the king. The king said, “Do not worry, gentlemen. We will know what to do.”

Then Supriya the king of musicians thought this: “It is often heard that King Prasenajit is very skilled in music. I should propose a contest with him.” Then Supriya the king of musicians approached King Prasenajit the Kośalan, and having approached he said this to King Prasenajit the Kośalan: “I have heard, king, that you are skilled in music. If you are without a teacher you should be examined.” King Prasenajit put him off, saying, “I have an accomplished teacher, an unsurpassed king of musicians, stationed in the Jeta Grove. Come, we should go to his presence.” Then King Prasenajit the Kośalan went to the Jeta Grove surrounded by the five hundred musicians, along with Supriya the king of musicians and many hundreds of thousands of beings.

Now there is nothing that is not known, seen, understood and discerned by the Exalted Buddhas. Indeed, it is a rule that Exalted Buddhas – who are greatly compassionate, devoted to benefitting the world, the one protector, delighting in calm and insight, skilled in the threefold self control, who have overcome the four floods, established in the bases of conduct that are the four bases of supernormal power, having practised for a long time the four articles of attraction, lacking the five [bad] qualities, gone beyond the five realms, furnished with the six qualities [of equanimity], who have accomplished the six perfections, abounding in the flowers that are the seven factors of awakening, guides on the eightfold path, skilled in the nine successive attainments [of meditation], mighty with the ten powers, whose splendour pervades equally the ten directions, and who are more distinguished than ten hundred rulers – survey the world with their Buddha-vision for three days and three nights, knowing and seeing the motion: “Who is abandoned? Who is cut off? Who has met with pain? Who is in danger? Who is afflicted? Who has met with pain, danger and affliction? Who is headed for a state of woe? Who is inclined towards an evil state? Who is bent on a bad destiny? I would raise them up from evil states and establish them in heaven and liberation! I would raise up with my hands the one who has sunk into the mire of sense pleasures. The one who is deprived of the honourable treasures I would establish in mastery over and excellence in the honourable treasures. For the one who has not planted skillful roots I would plant them, and for the one who has planted

⁵³ *sapta svarānādarśayati ekaviṃśati mūrchanāḥ*. In Indian music there are seven notes (*svara*) in the scale, which are combined in various patterns to form the basis of melodies, and these combinations are known as *mūrchanas*.

⁵⁴ Following Speyer’s suggested emendation of *apaṭunāni* to *apaṭukāni*, as supported by the Tibetan version.

them I would bring them to maturity, and for the one who has them matured I would bring to liberation.” And it is said:

Though the ocean, abode of monsters, may pass over the shore,
a Buddha cannot pass over the opportunity of children in need of training.

Then the Exalted One had a worldly thought to benefit those beings in need of training: “Oh, that Pañcaśikha, the son of a *gandharva*,⁵⁵ would enter my presence, with his retinue of seven thousand *gandharvas* and bringing his lute with the stick of cat’s-eye gems.” With the arising of that thought, Pañcaśikha the son of a *gandharva* with his retinue of seven thousand *gandharvas* was there, duly praising the Exalted One and bringing his lute with the stick of cat’s-eye gems for the Exalted One. Then Supriya the king of musicians began to play the lute before the Exalted One, and he began to produce seven notes and twenty-one modes on a single string. On hearing this King Prasenajit and a large body of the people were filled with intense wonder. Then the Exalted One also played the lute with the stick of cat’s-eye gems, such that he displayed several different notes and many kinds of modes on each string, yet making them appear empty.⁵⁶ And he showed that the body is like a lute, the notes like the sense-organs and the modes like the heart element. On hearing this Supriya the king of musicians was humbled, and leaving his lute in the perfumed chamber he went forth in the presence of the Exalted One. And by applying himself, striving and exerting, he understood that this fivefold wheel of rebirth is in constant motion. Having rejected all conditioned things as being characterised by decay, decline, destruction and ruin, through destroying all the defilements he achieved the state of arhatship. Having become an *arhat* he was free from passions in the threefold universe.⁵⁷ He considered mud and gold to be the same, thought the sky to be the same as the palm of his hand, and was indifferent alike to an axe or sandalwood.⁵⁸ Having attained knowledge (*vidyā*), supernormal knowledges (*abhijñā*) and special knowledges (*pratisamvid*), he turned away from the benefits of longing to attain worldly existence. He became worthy of honour, devotion and salutation for the gods including Indra and his younger brother.⁵⁹

Then the gods, *nāgas*, *yakṣas*, *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *kinaras* and *mahoraḡas* were converted and began to be protectors of the Exalted One’s teaching, and the five hundred musicians became happy and glad, and it occurred to them: “We are living in a low occupation and in a condition of suffering. What if, after asking the king, we were to invite the Exalted One together with his community of disciples into the city?” And accordingly those musicians gained permission and invited

⁵⁵ A *gandharva* is a celestial musician, and Pañcaśikha is famed for his musical ability. The term for musician that has been used throughout this story – *gāndharvika* – is derived from *gandharva*.

⁵⁶ Following Speyer’s conjecture (p.96 n. 2) and his emendation of *śūnyākāraṇaca* to *śūnyākāreṇaiva*. Feer is clearly puzzled since he reads ‘et cela à plusieurs reprises (?)’ (p. 77).

⁵⁷ In other words the *kāma*, *rūpa*, and *arūpa* realms that make up the whole of saṃsāric existence.

⁵⁸ *vāsi-candana-kalpa* - see Edgerton’s extensive note.

⁵⁹ *sendropendrāṇām*. Upendra is often used to refer to Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu. The presence of a plural rather than dual form is not unusual in Buddhist Sanskrit.

the Exalted One together with his community of disciples into the city, and the Exalted One accepted the invitation of those musicians through his silence. Then those musicians, along with the king, his courtiers, the citizens and countryfolk, removed the stones, pebbles and gravel from the whole city of Śrāvastī, sprinkled it with perfumed water, scattered various flowers, perfumed it with various scents, and decorated it with heaps of flowers. And then those musicians, each carrying his own lute, and with various drums, flutes and cymbals, approached and served the Exalted One and his community of disciples with excellent food.

Then the Exalted One smiled. Now according to the natural order of things, when Buddhas display a smile then blue, yellow, red and white rays issue from the mouth and some go to the lower region and some to the upper region. Those that go to the lower region, they go to the hells – Saṃjīva (Vivifying), Kālasūtra (Black Rope), Saṃghāta (Crushing), Raurava (Roaring), Mahāraurava (Great Roaring), Tapanā (Hot), Pratāpanā (Very Hot), Avīci (Unwavering), Arbuda (Swelling), Nirarbuda (Thoroughly Swelling), Aṭaṭa (Roaming), Hahava, Huhuva,⁶⁰ Utpala (Fleshless/Water Lily), Padma (Lotus), and Mahāpadma (Great Lotus).⁶¹ Those that descend into the hot hells become cool, and those that descend into the cold hells become warm, and they allay the various sufferings of the beings there such that it occurs to them, “Sirs, is it the case that we are leaving here and arising elsewhere?” Then in order to make them develop faith, the Exalted One emits an image of himself, and seeing this image they realise, “No, sirs, we are not leaving here nor arising elsewhere. There is this being, not seen before, by whose power our various sufferings are being allayed.” Their minds becoming faithful towards this image, they cast off the karma that caused their experience of hell, and take rebirth amongst gods and men, where they become vessels for the truths.

Those that go to the upper region, they go to the gods – the Four Great Kings, and the gods of Trāyastriṃśa (Thirty-Three), Yāma (End), Tuṣita (Delight), Nirmānarati (Delighting in Creation), Paranirmitavaśavartin (Delighting in the Creations of Others), Brahmakāyika (Brahmā’s Retinue), Brahmāpurohita (Brahmā’s Ministers), Mahābrahma (Great Brahmā), Parittābhā (Little Radiance), Apramāṇābhā (Immeasurable Radiance), Abhāsvara (Radiant), Parittaśubha (Little Purity), Apramāṇāśubha (Immeasurable Purity), Śubhakṛtsna (Entirely Pure), Anabhṛaka (Cloudless), Puṇyaprasava (Begetting Good), Bṛhatphala (Great Fruit), Abṛha (Not Vast), Atapa (Not Hot), Sudṛśa (Handsome), Sudarśana (Beautiful) and Akaniṣṭha (Highest).⁶² They shout out “Impermanent! Suffering! Empty! Not-Self!” and speak two verses:

⁶⁰ *hahava* and *huhuva* are both cold hells that take their names from expressions of distress, so their names might be translated as “Aargh” or similar.

⁶¹ Since the names of the hells have, in many cases, only approximate or speculative translations, I have decided to leave them in Sanskrit and provide English renderings alongside. For a more readable and descriptive, but considerably less literal, rendering see Collett 2006: 161.

⁶² Once again since the etymologies for several of the heaven names are uncertain, I have left the names in Sanskrit and added tentative translations alongside. For a more descriptive rendering see Collett 2006: 161.

“Go forth, take hold of and attach yourselves to the Buddha’s teaching!
This shakes the army of death like an elephant shakes a reed-hut.
He who will live mindfully according to this *dharma* and *vinaya*,
abandoning the life of *saṃsāra*, he will make an end to suffering.”

Then those rays of light, having roamed through the great thousand of the three-thousand world realms, enter the Exalted One one after another. If the Exalted One is desirous of explaining⁶³ past actions they disappear into the Exalted One’s back, if he wishes to explain future actions they vanish into his front. If he wishes to predict arising in a hell they disappear into the soles of his feet, while if he wants to predict arising as an animal they enter his heel, and if he wants to predict arising as a ghost they vanish into his big toe, and if he desires to predict arising as a human they disappear into his knee. If he wishes to predict rule as a powerful wheel-turning king⁶⁴ they enter the palm of his left hand, while if he wishes to predict rule as a wheel-turning king they disappear into the palm of his right hand. If he wishes to predict arising as a god they vanish into his navel. If he wishes to predict *śrāvaka-bodhi* they enter his mouth, while if he wants to predict pratyekabuddhahood they vanish into the circle of hair between his eyebrows, and if he wants to predict unsurpassed and perfect full buddhahood they disappear into his *uṣṇīṣa*.⁶⁵

On this occasion those rays of light circumambulated the Exalted One three times and disappeared into the circle of hair between the Exalted One’s eyebrows. Then Venerable Ānanda joined his hands in respect and asked the Exalted One:

“A collection of a thousand bright coloured rays of various kinds
is expelled from the inside the mouth,
completely illuminating the directions
as if from the rising of the sun.”

And he spoke these verses:

“Buddhas have cut off rebirth, abandoned affliction and enjoyment,
become the cause of what is best in the world;
Victors, their enemies conquered, do not exhibit a smile
– white as a conch-shell or lotus-fibre – without reason.

⁶³ There is a question here over how to translate *vyākāroti*, which in its most common meaning refers to explaining or elucidating, but in a specifically Buddhist meaning can refer to the predicting of future attainments such as buddhahood. Since this first example refers to *past* actions, it seems that the more general meaning is implied here. However, it is possible that in the later examples the Exalted One wishes to *predict* rather than *explain* arising in the various realms and so on, and I have translated accordingly. Given the broader context of the *Avadānaśataka*, in which stories of past actions and present results are told alongside those of present actions and future results, translating *vyākartum* as ‘to predict’ introduces a time-restriction that is perhaps unwarranted.

⁶⁴ See Edgerton’s discussion of *bala-cakravartin* in BHSD, in which he explains that it is an inferior form of *cakravartin*.

⁶⁵ This is a turban-shaped protuberance on the top of the head.

Victor, realising yourself through your intelligence that it is time,
Śramaṇa, Lord of Conquerors, for the hearers who wish it,
Bull of Sages, remove the doubt that has arisen,
with splendid, wise and superior speech.
It is not without reason that the courageous kings, rocks of the ocean,
perfect Buddhas, protectors, exhibit a smile.
A multitude of people yearn to hear
the reason why wise ones exhibit a smile.”

The Exalted One said, “This is so, Ānanda, this is so. It is not without cause or without reason, Ānanda, that *arhats* who are perfect and fully awakened display a smile. You see, Ānanda, that these musicians have paid me honour in this way. Thus, Venerable Ānanda, these musicians, because of the arising in their minds of this skilful root, and through renunciation and charity, when the time comes they will acquire *pratyekabodhi*, and become *pratyekabuddhas* called *Vaṇasvarā* in a future time, feeling compassion for the wretched and miserable, taking food, bed and seat in a lonely place, the only ones worthy of veneration in the world. This is the gift for those whose minds become faithful in my presence.”

The monks became doubtful and asked the Exalted Buddha, remover of all doubts, “Sir, what were the skilful roots planted by the Exalted One that produced this?” The Exalted One said, “O monks, actions that the Tathāgata performed and accumulated in other previous births have come together and their conditions have matured. Being inevitable they have approached like a river. These actions have been done and accumulated by me. Who else will experience their results? O monks, deeds done do not mature in the earth element, nor in the water element, nor in the fire element, nor in the wind element. Rather, deeds done, whether pure or impure, ripen in what is enumerated as the aggregates, the physical elements and the elements of sense experience.”

“Actions do not disappear even after a hundred aeons.

When they have reached completion and it is time, they fruit for living beings.”

“Formerly, monks, in a past time, a fully and perfectly awakened one named Prabodhana arose in the world – a *tathāgata*, *arhat*, fully and perfectly awakened, perfect in wisdom and conduct, well-farer, unsurpassed knower of the world, trainer of those ready to be trained, teacher of gods and men, awakened and exalted. He wandered on a journey through the countryside and reached a certain royal city. The king’s park was endowed with all that was suitable, so the Exalted One entered that park and in order to benefit the king he sat down near a certain tree. Having arranged his seat, he attained the fire-element meditation. Then the consecrated warrior king entered the park with women playing music on instruments, and walking through that park the king saw the Exalted One Prabodhana, the perfect Buddha who engenders faith⁶⁶ in those who would be faithful, calm of mind, endowed with the highest degree of calmness and control

⁶⁶ He is a *prāsādika*, or ‘agent of *prasāda*’ – see Rotman 2009 for a discussion of this term.

of the mind, like a pillar of gold, radiant and blazing. And having seen him faith then arose and the king with his harem woke⁶⁷ the Exalted One from his meditative state by playing various musical instruments, and served him with excellent food, and made an aspiration to complete and perfect buddhahood.”

“What do you think, monks? The person who at that time, on that occasion, was the king, that was me. I honoured the perfect Buddha Prabodhana, and as a result of that I have been praised in this way by the musicians. In this way, monks, one should train: ‘We will revere, pay respects to, honour and worship the teacher. And having revered, paid respects to, honoured and worshipped the teacher, we will live in reliance on him.’ In this way, monks, you should train.”

Thus spoke the Exalted One, and the monks were delighted and praised the Exalted One’s speech.

18. The Boon

The Buddha, the Exalted One, honoured by gods, *nāgas*, *yakṣas*, *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *kinnaras* and *mahoraḡas* – that is to say honoured, praised, respected and worshipped by kings, regents, the wealthy, the city-dwellers, bankers, caravan leaders, gods, *nāgas*, *yakṣas*, *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *kinnaras* and *mahoraḡas* – and who was knowing and of great merit, dwelled in Anāthapiṇḡada’s park, the Jeta Grove in Śrāvastī, with his community of disciples, provided with the requisite robes, almsbowls, beds, seats and medicines for the sick. In Śrāvastī a certain philanderer⁶⁸ lived in impure actions. Having been seized by the king’s men, he was brought before the king. The king declared him a criminal, and gave him the death sentence. He, with his neck ornamented by a garland of Oleander flowers,⁶⁹ was proclaimed a criminal on the roads and at crossroads and junctions by the king’s men, who were dressed in blue garments and holding their swords aloft, and then led through the southern gate of the city.

Now there is nothing that is not known, seen, understood and discerned by the Exalted Buddhas. Indeed, it is a rule that Exalted Buddhas – who are greatly compassionate, devoted to benefitting the world, the one protector, delighting in calm and insight, skilled in the threefold self control, who have overcome the four floods, established in the bases of conduct that are the four bases of supernormal power, having practised for a long time the four articles of attraction, lacking the five [bad] qualities, gone beyond the five realms, furnished with the six qualities [of equanimity], who have accomplished the six perfections, abounding in the flowers that are the seven factors of awakening, guides on the eightfold path, skilled in the nine successive attainments [of meditation], mighty with the ten powers, whose splendour pervades equally the ten directions, and who are more

⁶⁷ In what is presumably a pun on Buddha Prabodhana’s name, the verb is *prabodhayati*.

⁶⁸ A *pāradārika*, in other words somebody connected with the wives of others.

⁶⁹ This is said to be the sign of a condemned criminal.

distinguished than ten hundred rulers – survey the world with their Buddha-vision for three days and three nights, knowing and seeing the motion: “Who is abandoned? Who is cut off? Who has met with pain? Who is in danger? Who is afflicted? Who has met with pain, danger and affliction? Who is headed for a state of woe? Who is inclined towards an evil state? Who is bent on a bad destiny? I would raise them up from evil states and establish them in heaven or liberation! I would raise up with my hands the one who has sunk into the mire of sense pleasures. The one who is deprived of the honourable treasures I would establish in mastery over and excellence in the honourable treasures. For the one who has not planted skillful roots I would plant them, and for the one who has planted them I would bring them to maturity, and for the one who has them matured I would bring to liberation.” And it is said:

Though the ocean, abode of monsters, may pass over the shore,
a Buddha cannot pass over the opportunity of children in need of training.

In the morning the Exalted One dressed, and taking his bowl and robe he entered Śrāvastī for alms. That man saw the Exalted Buddha decorated with the thirty-two marks of a great man and the eighty minor marks, with excellent limbs and adorned with light that extended a fathom, radiance in excess of a thousand suns, handsome in his entirety like a living mountain of jewels. And having seen him he threw himself at the Exalted One’s feet and said this to the Exalted One: “I am worthy of a boon, Exalted One. Grant me my life, as I wish.” The Exalted One addressed Venerable Ānanda: “Ānanda, go to King Prasenajit and say, ‘Offer me this man, I will make him a monk.’” Venerable Ānanda approached King Prasenajit the Kośalan. Having approached he spoke the Exalted One’s words to King Prasenajit the Kośalan: “Grant that the Exalted One ordain this man.” Saying, “It appears suitable,” King Prasenajit the Kośalan consented, and he was received and ordained by the Exalted One. And by applying himself, striving and exerting, he understood that this fivefold wheel of rebirth is in constant motion. Having rejected all conditioned things as being characterised by decay, decline, destruction and ruin, through destroying all the defilements he achieved the state of arhatship. Having become an *arhat* he was free from passions in the threefold universe. He considered mud and gold to be the same, and thought the sky to be the same as the palm of his hand. He was indifferent alike to an axe or sandalwood. Having attained knowledge, supernormal knowledges and special knowledges, he turned away from the benefits of longing to attain worldly existence. He became worthy of honour, devotion and salutation for the gods including Indra and his younger brother.

The monks became doubtful and questioned the Exalted One, remover of all doubts, “It is a marvel, sir, that all intentions prosper through the Exalted One.” The Exalted One said, “O monks, actions that the Tathāgata performed and accumulated in other previous births have come together and their conditions have matured. Being inevitable they have approached like a river. These actions have been done and accumulated by me. Who else will experience their results? O

monks, deeds done do not mature in the earth element, nor in the water element, nor in the fire element, nor in the wind element. Rather, deeds done, whether pure or impure, ripen in what is enumerated as the aggregates, the physical elements and the elements of sense experience.”

“Actions do not disappear even after a hundred aeons.”

When they have reached completion and it is time, they fruit for living beings.

“Formerly, monks, in a past time, a fully and perfectly awakened one named Indradhvaja arose in the world – a *tathāgata*, *arhat*, fully and perfectly awakened, perfect in wisdom and conduct, well-farer, unsurpassed knower of the world, trainer of those ready to be trained, teacher of gods and men, awakened and exalted. He wandered on a journey through the countryside and reached a certain royal city. In that royal city a brahmin who had mastered the *Vedas* and the Vedic expositions⁷⁰ had a seat of honour with the king. In the morning, Indradhvaja the perfect Buddha dressed himself and, taking his bowl and robe, entered that royal city for alms. That brahmin saw Indradhvaja the perfect Buddha, decorated with the thirty-two marks of a great man and the eighty minor marks, with excellent limbs and adorned with light that extended a fathom, radiance in excess of a thousand suns, handsome in his entirety like a living mountain of jewels. And having seen him he was like a tree cut off at the roots, and throwing himself at the Exalted One’s feet he said, ‘I am worthy of a boon, Well-Farer. May the Exalted One sit on the seat of honour.’ Then the exalted and perfect Buddha Indradhvaja, wishing to benefit him, sat on the seat of honour. And the brahmin praised Indradhvaja the perfect Buddha, seated in that seat of honour, in a hundred verses,⁷¹ and served him with excellent food, and made an aspiration to perfect and full buddhahood. And because of this the king, courtiers and citizens were converted.”

“What do you think, monks? The one who was that brahmin on that occasion at that time, that was me. It was me that honoured the Tathāgata Indradhvaja, and because of this I have experienced boundless happiness in *saṃsāra*, and that wish, that aspiration, all came to fruition. In this way, monks, one should train: ‘We will revere, pay respects to, honour and worship the teacher. And having revered, paid respects to, honoured and worshipped the teacher, we will live in reliance on him.’ In this way, monks, you should train.”

Thus spoke the Exalted One, and the monks were delighted and praised the Exalted One’s speech.

19. The Cloth of Kāśī

The Buddha, the Exalted One, honoured by gods, *nāgas*, *yakṣas*, *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *kinnaras* and *mahoragas* – that is to say honoured, praised, respected and

⁷⁰ The *vedāṅgas*, usually said to be six in number, are classes of works that aid exposition of the *Vedas*, such as metrics and linguistics.

⁷¹ Strictly speaking one hundred *padas*, which are usually quarter-verses.

worshipped by kings, regents, the wealthy, the city-dwellers, bankers, caravan leaders, gods, *nāgas*, *yakṣas*, *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *kinnaras* and *mahoragas* – and who was knowing and of great merit, dwelled in Rājagṛha, in Kalandakanivāpa in the Veṇu Grove, with his community of disciples, provided with the requisite robes, almsbowls, beds, seats and medicines for the sick. When King Bimbisāra, along with many hundreds of thousands of beings, had comprehended the truths, then in order to display his gratitude, for the sake of promoting worship of the Buddha(s), in order to display the extent of his house, and in order to make known the value of the arising of a Buddha, he invited the Exalted One together with his community of monks to take a meal in the royal palace. And he commanded the citizens of Magadha, “At the entrance to the city the Exalted One is to be honoured with garlands, flowers, perfumes and ointments, and the whole city of Rājagṛha should be prepared by removing the stones, pebbles and gravel. Various flowers should be scattered and flags and banners raised up all the way from the Veṇu Grove to Rājagṛha, and the whole of the road in between should be covered with cloths.” And all this was arranged by the courtiers. Then King Bimbisāra himself held the hundred-ribbed parasol over the Exalted One’s head, and the remaining citizens did the same for the community of monks.

Now the Exalted One - restrained and surrounded by restrained people, peaceful and surrounded by the peaceful, freed and surrounded by the freed, calmed and surrounded by the calm, tamed and surrounded by the tamed, worthy (*arhan*) and surrounded by the worthy, dispassionate and surrounded by the dispassionate, an agent of faith (*prasādika*) and surrounded by agents of faith, like a bull amongst a herd of cattle, like an elephant amongst a group of young elephants, like a lion amongst a group of carnivores,⁷² like a goose amongst a flock of geese, like a *suparṇa* (divine bird) amongst a flock of birds, like a sage surrounded by a group of students, like a good horse amongst a herd of horses, like a hero amongst a group of warriors, like a guide amongst a band of travellers, like a caravan leader amongst a caravan of merchants, like a banker amongst a group of city-dwellers, like the ruler of a castle amongst a group of courtiers, like a wheel-turning monarch surrounded by his thousand sons, like the moon amongst the collection of stars, like the sun surrounded by its thousand rays, like Dhṛtarāṣṭra amongst a troop of *gandharvas*, like Virūḍa amongst a group of *kumbhaṇḍas*, like Virūpākṣa surrounded by a troop of *nāgas*, like Dhanada amongst a group of *yakṣas*, like Vemacitri surrounded by a group of *asuras*, like Śakra amongst the group of thirty gods, like Brahmā surrounded by Brahmā’s retinue, like the tranquil ocean, like a watery thundercloud, like the leader of the elephants free from intoxication – the Exalted One entered that city walking with proper steady deportment, with senses completely restrained, filled with the many special qualities of a Buddha.

And when the Exalted One’s foot was placed on the threshold, the great earth trembled in six ways, and when the Exalted One entered the city many

⁷² I follow Feer’s interpretation of *damṣṭri* ‘biter’ as denoting carnivorous animals.

other wonders of such a kind occurred. That is to say: small things became extensive, elephants called out, horses neighed, bulls bellowed, various musical instruments that were in the houses played by themselves, the blind recovered their sight, the deaf their hearing, mutes became able to speak, those who were deficient in the other sense organs had their senses completely restored, those who were despicable in their intoxication with drink became sober, those who had drunk poison were freed from it, those who were enemies with one another became friendly, pregnant women gave birth successfully, those bound in fetters were freed, the poor received riches, and the atmospheric (*āntarikṣa*) gods, *devas*, *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *kinnaras* and *mahoragas* let loose divine flowers.

Then the Exalted One began to enter the royal palace with supernormal power of this kind, and King Bimbisāra himself stood in the courtyard outside the door, took the foot-washing water fragranced with *gośīrṣa* sandalwood and washed the feet of the Exalted One and his community of monks. Having seen that the community of monks with the Buddha at their head were happily seated nearby, he presented them with food of a hundred flavours, and after they had eaten he clothed them in Kāśī cloths. And because of this the citizens of Magadha were converted.

Then the monks became doubtful and asked the Exalted Buddha, destroyer of all doubts, “Where was this skillful root of the Exalted One planted, on account of which the Exalted One and the community of monks has been honoured in such a fashion?” The Exalted One said, “O monks, actions that the Tathāgata performed and accumulated in other previous births have come together and their conditions have matured. Being inevitable they have approached like a river. These actions have been done and accumulated by me. Who else will experience their results? O monks, deeds done do not mature in the earth element, nor in the water element, nor in the fire element, nor in the wind element. Rather, deeds done, whether pure or impure, ripen in what is enumerated as the aggregates, the physical elements and the elements of sense experience.”

“Actions do not disappear even after a hundred aeons.

When they have reached completion and it is time, they fruit for living beings.”

“Formerly, monks, in a past time, a fully and perfectly awakened one named Kṣemaṃkara arose in the world – a *tathāgata*, *arhat*, fully and perfectly awakened, perfect in wisdom and conduct, well-farer, unsurpassed knower of the world, trainer of those ready to be trained, teacher of gods and men, awakened and exalted. He wandered on a journey through the countryside and reached a certain royal city. The consecrated warrior king heard, ‘Kṣemaṃkara the perfect Buddha, wandering on a journey through the countryside, has reached our royal city.’ And hearing this, with great royal power and great regal splendour he approached the place where Kṣemaṃkara the exalted and perfect Buddha was. Having arrived he honoured the perfect Buddha Kṣemaṃkara’s feet with his head and sat to one side. The perfect Buddha Kṣemaṃkara inspired that consecrated warrior king who was seated to one side with the *dharmas* that bring about

awakening. Then that king gained faith, and having invited the perfect Buddha Kṣemaṃkara to the royal palace he presented him with food of a hundred flavours and clothed him with a cloth worth a hundred thousand. And when he had attained complete awakening he had a *stūpa* constructed that was a *krośa* high and a *yojana* in every direction.”⁷³

“What do you think, monks? He who was at that time and on that occasion the king, that was me. It was me that paid the perfect Buddha Kṣemaṃkara honour in that way, and thus I have experienced boundless happiness in *samsāra*. And because of that now I receive honour of such a kind from King Bimbisāra. In this way, monks, one should train: ‘We will revere, pay respects to, honour and worship the teacher. And having revered, paid respects to, honoured and worshipped the teacher, we will live in reliance on him.’ In this way, monks, you should train.”

Thus spoke the Exalted One, and the monks were delighted and praised the Exalted One’s speech.

20. Divine Food

The Buddha, the Exalted One, honoured by gods, *nāgas*, *yakṣas*, *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *kinnaras* and *mahoragas* – that is to say honoured, praised, respected and worshipped by kings, regents, the wealthy, the city-dwellers, bankers, caravan leaders, gods, *nāgas*, *yakṣas*, *asuras*, *garuḍas*, *kinnaras* and *mahoragas* – and who was knowing and of great merit, dwelled in Rājagrha, in Kalandakanivāpa in the Veṇu Grove, with his community of disciples, provided with the requisite robes, almsbowls, beds, seats and medicines for the sick. There, a certain banker who was rich, of great wealth and property, whose possessions were broad and extensive, as lofty as Vaiśravaṇa’s wealth, rivalling Vaiśravaṇa’s wealth, was a follower of the heretics. He was converted to the [Buddhist] teaching by Venerable Mahāmaudgalyāyana and entered into a great faith in the Exalted One. And that householder, having a strong inclination towards generosity, said to Venerable Mahāmaudgalyāyana, “Be a friend to me. I wish to pay honour to the Exalted One.” Venerable Mahāmaudgalyāyana consented to that householder through his silence. Then Venerable Mahāmaudgalyāyana took the householder and went to where the Exalted One was. Having arrived he honoured the Exalted One’s feet with his head and sat to one side. Seated to one side, Venerable Mahāmaudgalyāyana said this to the Exalted One: “Sir, this householder wishes to feed the Exalted One together with his community of monks. So let the Exalted One, feeling compassion, consent to this.” The Exalted One consented to the householder through his silence. Then that householder, understanding that the Exalted One had consented through his silence, brought together food of a hundred flavours as well as ointments, garlands, perfumes and flowers. And

⁷³ A *yojana* is defined as the distance one can travel on a single yoke of an ox, while a *krośa* is the distance a cry can be heard, usually said to be one quarter of a *yojana*.

Venerable Mahāmaudgalyāyana requested of the king of gods Śakra, “This householder should be assisted.” So Śakra the king of gods magically made the Veṇu Grove into the Nandana Grove, and a thousand elephants resembling Airāvaṇa and Supraṭiṣṭhita ... fanned with a yak-tail fan.⁷⁴ Several thousand *gandharvas*, beginning with Supriya, Pañcaśikha and Tumburu, were brought near, played music on musical instruments of various kinds and prepared divine food and elixir. Then that householder, with the assistance of the demi-gods,⁷⁵ approached the Exalted One, threw his whole body at the Exalted One’s feet and made an aspiration: “By this skillful root, the arising of this thought and the practise of gift-giving and renunciation, may I become a Buddha in this dark world that is leaderless and without a guide. May I be a saviour for those beings who have not crossed over, a liberator for the unliberated, a consolation for the unconsolated, a fully extinguished one for those who have not attained full extinction.”

Then the Exalted One, understanding the succession of causes and the succession of actions of that householder,⁷⁶ displayed a smile. Now according to the natural order of things, when Buddhas display a smile then blue, yellow, red and white rays issue from the mouth and some go to the lower region and some to the upper region. Those that go to the lower region, they go to the hells – Saṃjīva (Vivifying), Kālasūtra (Black Rope), Saṃghāta (Crushing), Raurava (Roaring), Mahāraurava (Great Roaring), Tapanā (Hot), Pratāpanā (Very Hot), Avīci (Unwavering), Arbuda (Swelling), Nirarbuda (Thoroughly Swelling), Aṭaṭa (Roaming), Hahava, Huhuva, Utpala (Fleshless), Padma (Lotus), and Mahāpadma (Great Lotus). Those that descend into the hot hells become cool, and those that descend into the cold hells become warm, and they allay the various sufferings of the beings there such that it occurs to them, “Sirs, is it the case that we are leaving here and arising elsewhere?” Then in order to make them develop faith, the Exalted One emits an image of himself, and seeing this image they realise, “No, sirs, we are not leaving here nor arising elsewhere. There is this being, not seen before, by whose power our various sufferings are being allayed.” Their minds becoming faithful towards this image, they cast off the karma that caused their experience of hell, and take rebirth amongst gods and men, where they become vessels for the truths.

⁷⁴ There is a gap in the MS here, as recorded in Speyer and therefore Vaidya. Feer (p.87) fills the gaps from the Tibetan, and his French rendering of this may be translated as follows: ‘Several thousand elephants resembling Airāvaṇa and Supraṭiṣṭhita were brought and led in; they supported a canopy worth a hundred, which was raised above the Buddha and the community of monks; several thousand daughters of gods were also brought and led in, and they fanned (the Buddha and the community of monks) with a fan with a jewelled handle.’

⁷⁵ *divyamānuṣair* means ‘by the divine-men’, and presumably refers to the *gandharvas*, as opposed to Śakra and his fellow full divinities.

⁷⁶ *hetuparaṃparāṃ karmaparaṃparāṃ*. In other words the Buddha understands the man’s karmic state and thus his future capabilities.

Those that go to the upper region, they go to the gods – the Four Great Kings, and the gods of Trāyastriṃśa (Thirty-Three), Yāma (End), Tuṣita (Delight), Nirmāṇarati (Delighting in Creation), Paranirmitavaśavartin (Delighting in the Creations of Others), Brahmakāyika (Brahmā’s Retinue), Brahmapurohita (Brahmā’s Ministers), Mahābrahma (Great Brahmā), Parittābhā (Little Radiance), Apramāṇābhā (Immeasurable Radiance), Abhāsvara (Radiant), Parittaśubha (Little Purity), Apramāṇaśubha (Immeasurable Purity), Śubhakṛtsna (Entirely Pure), Anabhraka (Cloudless), Puṇyaprasava (Begetting Good), Bṛhatphala (Great Fruit), Abṛha (Not Vast), Atapa (Not Hot), Sudṛśa (Handsome), Sudarśana (Beautiful) and Akaniṣṭha (Highest). They shout out “Impermanent! Suffering! Empty! Not-Self!” and speak two verses:

“Go forth, take hold of and attach yourselves to the Buddha’s teaching!
This shakes the army of death like an elephant shakes a reed-hut.
He who will live mindfully according to this *dharma* and *vinaya*,
abandoning the life of *samsāra*, he will make an end to suffering.”

Then those rays of light, having roamed through the great thousand of the three-thousand world realms, enter the Exalted One one after another. If the Exalted One is desirous of explaining past actions they disappear into the Exalted One’s back, if he wishes to explain future actions they vanish into his front. If he wishes to predict arising in a hell they disappear into the soles of his feet, while if he wants to predict arising as an animal they enter his heel, and if he wants to predict arising as a ghost they vanish into his big toe, and if he desires to predict arising as a human they disappear into his knee. If he wishes to predict rule as a powerful wheel-turning king they enter the palm of his left hand, while if he wishes to predict rule as a wheel-turning king they disappear into the palm of his right hand. If he wishes to predict arising as a god they vanish into his navel. If he wishes to predict arhatship they enter his mouth, while if he wants to predict pratyekabuddhahood they vanish into the circle of hair between his eyebrows, and if he wants to predict unsurpassed and perfect full buddhahood they disappear into his *uṣṇīṣa*.

On this occasion those rays of light circumambulated the Exalted One three times and disappeared into the Exalted One’s *uṣṇīṣa*. Then Venerable Ānanda joined his hands in respect and asked the Exalted One:

“A collection of a thousand bright coloured rays of various kinds
is expelled from the inside the mouth,
completely illuminating the directions
as if from the rising of the sun.”

And he spoke these verses:

“Buddhas have cut off rebirth, abandoned affliction and enjoyment,
become the cause of what is best in the world;
Victors, their enemies conquered, do not exhibit a smile
– white as a conch-shell or lotus-fibre – without reason.
Victor, realising yourself through your intelligence that it is time,

Śramaṇa, Lord of Conquerors, for the hearers who wish it,
Bull of Sages, remove the doubt that has arisen,
with splendid, wise and superior speech.

It is not without reason that the courageous kings, rocks of the ocean,
perfect Buddhas, protectors, exhibit a smile.

A multitude of people yearn to hear
the reason why wise ones exhibit a smile.”

The Exalted One said, “This is so, Ānanda, this is so. It is not without cause or without reason, Ānanda, that *arhats* who are perfect and fully awakened display a smile. You see, Ānanda, that this householder has paid me honour in this way. Thus, Venerable Ānanda, this householder, because of this skillful root and the arising of this thought, and through renunciation and charity, after three incalculable aeons he will attain awakening, and having fulfilled the six perfections that are pervaded with great compassion he will become a full and perfect Buddha named Divyānnāda, with the ten powers, four confidences, three special applications of mentality⁷⁷ and great compassion. This is the gift for those whose minds become faithful in my presence.” And having heard this explanation, King Bimbisāra and his attendants the Magadhans were greatly astonished.

The monks became doubtful and asked the Exalted Buddha, destroyer of all doubt, “See, Exalted One, how this householder worshiped the Exalted One and his community of monks with the supernormal powers of the demi-gods.” The Exalted One said, “O monks, actions that the Tathāgata performed and accumulated in other previous births have come together and their conditions have matured. Being inevitable they have approached like a river. These actions have been done and accumulated by me. Who else will experience their results? O monks, deeds done do not mature in the earth element, nor in the water element, nor in the fire element, nor in the wind element. Rather, deeds done, whether pure or impure, ripen in what is enumerated as the aggregates, the physical elements and the elements of sense experience.”

“Actions do not disappear even after a hundred aeons.

When they have reached completion and it is time, they fruit for living beings.”

“Formerly, monks, in a past time, a fully and perfectly awakened one named Pūrṇa arose in the world – a *tathāgata*, *arhat*, fully and perfectly awakened, perfect in wisdom and conduct, well-farer, unsurpassed knower of the world, trainer of those ready to be trained, teacher of gods and men, awakened and exalted. Pūrṇa the full and perfect buddha wandered on a journey through the countryside and reached a certain royal city. The consecrated warrior king heard, ‘Pūrṇa the perfect Buddha, wandering on a journey through the countryside, has reached our royal city.’ And hearing this, with great royal power and great regal splendour he approached the place where Pūrṇa the perfect Buddha was. Having arrived he honoured the perfect Buddha Pūrṇa’s feet with his head and sat to one

⁷⁷ See Edgerton’s discussion in BHSD under *smṛty-upasthāna*.

side. The perfect Buddha Pūrṇa inspired that consecrated warrior king who was seated to one side with the *dharmas* that bring about awakening. Then that consecrated warrior king offered to provide the perfect Buddha Pūrṇa together with his community of monks with the requisite robes, almsbowls, beds, seats and medicines for the sick for three months. The perfect Buddha Pūrṇa consented to the king through his silence. Then the consecrated warrior king understood that the perfect Buddha Pūrṇa had consented through his silence and attended them with the requisite robes, almsbowls, beds, seats and medicines for the sick for three months. He had an image of the Exalted One made of jewels and carried out the Buddha-Joy [festival],⁷⁸ such that several hundred thousand beings attained great faith, and for that reason and cause they attained complete awakening.”

“What do you think, monks? The one who was the king at that time and on that occasion, that was me. It was me that honoured the perfect Buddha Pūrṇa in such a fashion, and thus I experienced boundless happiness in *saṃsāra*, and for that reason I was honoured as a Tathāgata in this way by the banker and by Śakra. In this way, monks, one should train: ‘We will revere, pay respects to, honour and worship the teacher. And having revered, paid respects to, honoured and worshipped the teacher, we will live in reliance on him.’ In this way, monks, you should train.”

Thus spoke the Exalted One, and the monks were delighted and praised the Exalted One’s speech.

Abbreviations

BHSD *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary*, see Edgerton 1970.

DP *Dictionary of Pāli*, see Cone 2001-2010.

MMW Monier Monier-Williams’ *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*.

PED *Pali-English Dictionary*, see Rhys-Davids and Stede 1921-1925.

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⁷⁸ *bhagavato ratnamayapratimāṃ kārayitvā buddhahaṛṣaṃ kāritavān*. I follow Speyer’s suggestion, in his index of rare forms, that *buddhahaṛṣa* is the name of a festival. The term does not appear in either BHSD or PED. Feer translates ‘il fit faire une image de Bhagavat en pierres précieuses, ce qui mit le Buddha dans le ravissement’ but this seems unlikely given the repetition of the verb.

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