

BUDDHISM AND SOCIETY IN THE INDIC NORTH AND NORTHWEST

2ND CENTURY BCE–3RD CENTURY CE

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MÜNCHEN, 2020

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INAUGURAL-DISSERTATION
ZUR ERLANGUNG DES DOKTORGRADES
DER PHILOSOPHIE AN DER LUDWIG-MAXIMILIANS-UNIVERSITÄT
MÜNCHEN

VORGELEGT VON

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Datum der mündlichen Prüfung: 11. Juli 2017

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The research and composition of this thesis was certainly a journey and its end-point would not have been realised without the support of colleagues, friends and teachers, to whom I would like to extend my warmest gratitude. First and foremost to my Doktorvater Jens-Uwe Hartmann, whose door was never closed, and from whose encyclopaedic knowledge I ever benefited. Second to my Doktormutter Jowita Kramer, whose insightful comments on my work were always helpful and whose readings in Yogācāra philosophy I treasured upon my arrival in München. My thanks also go to the members of the ‘Buddhist Manuscripts from Gandhāra’ project for allowing me to participate in their reading groups: to Stefan Baums, for introducing me to Gāndhārī and Kharoṣṭhī and for his keen linguistic insights, and to Andrea Schlosser and Gudrun Melzer for our readings of manuscripts and inscriptions. Other members of the Department für Asienstudien and Institut für Indologie und Tibetologie have played a central role in my development as a scholar during my time here. My thanks go to Johannes Schneider for his corrections and comments on my work, to Adelheid Mette for her classes in Ardhamāgadhī and the dinners and discussions we shared, to Martin Lehnert for his keen theoretical observations and for leading me through Buddhist Chinese, to Hiromi Habata for her readings in Buddhist narrative literature, and to Shono Masanori for his readings in Gilgit Manuscripts and Vinaya insights.

Finally I would like to thank Hildegard Töttcher for her patience with my German.

I would also like to thank the Graduate School Distant Worlds at the Müncher Zentrum für Antike Welten for funding me so generously for these three years of learning and travel, and for establishing an interdisciplinary academic forum from which I have grown as a person and scholar. In particular I am indebted to Olivier Dufault, Aaron Tugendhaft, and Paolo Visigalli for expanding my intellectual horizons: our discussions in theory, philosophy, sociology and many other pursuits were truly inspiring.

Finally to my dearest and wonderfully rare friends of München, Robert Arlt, Christoph Burghart, Karl-Stephan Bouthillette von Ostrowski, Seongho Choi, Sebastian Ebnet, Fabian Heil, Moritz Huber, Lauren Morris, Serena Operetto, Constanze Pabst von Ohain, Anna von Parseval, Josef Prackwieser, Jakob Stillmark, Zhao Wen and Chien Ju-En, whose collective laughter, love, music, patience, support, tears, engaging discussion and all else that life brings has made this time truly fulfilling.

Henry Albery, August 2020

ABBREVIATIONS

Abhidh ^G	<i>Abhidharma</i> (Gāndhārī).
Abhidh-k-bh	<i>Abhidharmakoṣabhāṣya</i>
Abhidh-k-v	<i>Abhidharmakoṣabhāṣyavyākhyā</i>
Abhidh-s	<i>Abhidharmasamuccaya</i>
Abhidh-s-bh	<i>Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya</i>
Adhik-v	<i>Adhikaraṇavastu</i>
AdSP ^{Gil}	<i>Aṣṭādaśasahāsrīkāprajñāpāramitā</i> (Gilgit)
AN	<i>Aṅgutturanikāya</i>
Anab ^A	Arrian's <i>Anabasis</i>
Anav ^L	<i>Anavataptaḡāthā</i> (British Library)
Anav ^S	<i>Anavataptaḡāthā</i> (Senior Collection)
Ap	<i>Apadāna</i>
ĀpDhs	<i>Āpastamba Dharmasūtra</i>
AŚ	<i>Arthaśāstra</i>
ASP	<i>Aṣṭasāhasrīkāprajñāpāramitā</i>
As-vy	<i>Ajitasenavyākaraṇa</i>
Atha-ve	<i>Atharvavedasaṃhitā</i>
Av ^{L1-7}	<i>Gandharan Avadānas</i> (British Library)
Aś-av	<i>Aśokāvadāna</i>
Avś	<i>Avadānaśataka</i>
B.	Bactrian
Bbh	<i>Bodhisattvabhūmi</i>
Bnd-p	<i>Brahmaṇḍamahāpurāṇa</i>

Bhk-s	<i>Bhadrakalpikasūtra</i>
BL	British Library
ChU	<i>Chandogyopaniṣad</i>
DDB	<i>Digital Dictionary of Buddhism</i> (Dingfubao 丁福保)
Dhp ^K	<i>Gāndhārī Dharmapada</i> (Khotan)
Dhp ^L	<i>Gāndhārī Dharmapada</i> (British Library)
Dv	<i>Dīpavaṃsa</i>
Divy	<i>Divyāvadāna</i>
DN	<i>Dīgha Nikāya</i>
EHS	Epigraphic Hybrid Sanskrit
EI	Epigraphia Indica
G	Gāndhārī
Geo ^S	Strabo's <i>Geography</i>
Gk.	Greek
His ^P	Polybius' <i>History</i>
Indic ^A	Arrian's <i>Indica</i>
Ir.	Iranian
Ja	<i>Jātaka</i>
Kaṭh-av	<i>Kaṭhināvadāna</i>
Kath-v	<i>Kathāvatthu</i>
Kd-av	<i>Kalpadrūmāvadānamālā</i>
Lalit	<i>Lalitavistara</i>
LL	Lüders' List of Brāhmī Inscriptions
MAV	<i>Mahāvadānasūtra</i>
Māṭṛ	<i>Māṭṛceṭa's Letter to Kanīṣka</i>
Mbh	<i>Mahābhārata</i>
MI.	Middle Indic
MN	<i>Majjhimanikāya</i>
Moral ^P	Plutarch's <i>Moralia</i>
MPV	<i>Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra</i>

MSū ^B	<i>Mahāyānasūtra</i> (Bajaur)
MSV	<i>Mūlasarvāstivādinaya</i>
Mv	<i>Mahāvamsa</i>
Mvu	<i>Mahāvastu</i>
Mvyut	<i>Mahāvyutpatti</i>
Natur ^P	Pliny's <i>Natural History</i>
Nidd	<i>Niddesa</i>
No.	Catalogue Number (Appendix One).
Ol.	Old Indic
P.	Pali
PSP	<i>Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā</i>
Peri	<i>Periplus</i>
Pkt.	Prakrit
PoVa(Mū)	<i>Poṣadhavastu</i> (<i>Mūlasarvāstivādinaya</i>)
Pp	<i>Puggalapaññatti</i>
Pras-p	<i>Prasannapadā</i>
Pravr-v	<i>Pravrajyavastu</i> (<i>Mūlasarvāstivādinaya</i>)
Pv	<i>Petavatthu</i>
Qu	Quintanilla, <i>History of Early Stone Sculpture at Mathura, Appendix I-II.</i>
Rp-pr	<i>Rāṣṭrapālapariṣcchāsūtra</i>
RS	Senior Collection
RV	<i>Ṛgveda</i>
Śay-v	<i>Śayanāsanavastu</i> (<i>Mūlasarvāstivādinaya</i>)
SBV	<i>Saṅghabhedavastu</i> (<i>Mūlasarvāstivādinaya</i>)
SC	Schøyen Collection
Sk	Skinner, <i>Marks of Empire</i>
Skt.	Sanskrit
Śk-av	<i>Śārdūlakārṇāvadāna</i>
Sh	Satya Shrava, <i>Dated Kushana Inscriptions</i>
SHT	Sanskrit Handschriften aus den Turfanfunden

Śikṣ	<i>Śikṣāsamuccaya</i>
SN	<i>Samyuttanikāya</i>
Sum-a	<i>Sumāghadhāvadāna</i>
Sp-s	<i>Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtra</i>
Sup-av	<i>Suvarṇaprabhāvadāna</i>
Suv-a	<i>Suvarṇāvadāna</i>
Svp	<i>Suvikrāntivikrāmapariṣcchāprajñāpāramitāsūtra</i>
Ug-pr	<i>Ugrapariṣcchā</i>
Up-a	<i>Upāsakajanālaṅkāra</i>
Var-v	<i>Varṣāvastu (Mūlasarvāstivādinaya)</i>
Vin	<i>Vinaya (Pali)</i>
Vsm	<i>Visuddhimagga</i>
§	<i>Lüder's Mathurā Inscriptions</i>

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INTRODUCTION

We know not precisely when and under which circumstances Buddhism first spread from its cradle in ‘Greater Magadha’¹ and instituted itself fully in the North (west of the confluence of the Ganges and Yamuna) and Northwest (eastern Afghanistan and Pakistan).² Since the 20th century, historians have tended to view the vicissitudes of this process through the lens of a history of empires. According to this model, two ‘golden ages’ are to be envisioned: a first phase of expansion facilitated by the royal patronage of the Mauryan Aśoka in the late 3rd century BCE and a second by the Kuṣāṇa Kaniṣka I in the mid 2nd century CE, by which time Buddhism, having incrementally taken root in the face of stark challenges precipitated by the successive invasions of the Śuṅgas, Indo-Greeks, Indo-Scythians, Indo-Parthians, and Kuṣāṇas between the 2nd century BCE and 2nd century CE, subsequently flourished under the renewed conditions of the empire.³ This account is modelled after the

¹ A cultural sphere defined as the regions lying east of the confluence of Ganges and Yamuna, which constituted, at the time of the Buddha (see Chapter One: Borderlands States), a number of tribal confederacies and monarchic city-states (*mahājanapada*), see Johannes Bronkhorst, *Greater Magadha. Studies in the Culture of Early India* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 3–4.

² See Fig. 1.1.

³ Cf. A. Foucher, *La vieille route de l’Inde de Bactres à Taxila*, vol. 2 (Paris: MDAFA, 1947), 269ff; Étienne Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism: From the Origins to the Śaka Era*, trans. Sara Boin-Webb (Paris: Institut Orientaliste de l’Université Catholique de Louvain, 1988), 215, 337, 351, 489–92.

contours of historical events traced in Buddhist literature, whose imperialist discourse does indeed elevate these two rulers' empires,¹ attributing moments of expansion and flourishing to their rule, and pessimistically remembers the interim period as one in which the very existence of the Dharma was under threat and the Buddhist institution in decline.² Whilst it is necessary to consider and take seriously Buddhist narrative in this regard, one must err on the side of caution so as to not inadvertently conflate political discourse with historical events *in toto*, for the material evidence upon which this scheme is grounded has been presented with some serious challenges.

More recently, scholars have pointed out that if Buddhism had indeed spread to the North and Northwest in the 3rd century BCE, then material evidence for it is marginal if not, as some have argued, entirely absent.³ Whilst it is indisputable that Aśoka was a patron of Buddhism, evidence for his direct support is limited it seems, as the location of his relevant edicts show, to sites on the Gangetic Plains where Buddhism was long established (e.g., Vaiśālī) or to areas in Central India (e.g., Sāñcī). Most would therefore now adopt a modified version of this history⁴ and measuredly contend that, if not due to direct imperial support, Buddhism's expansion west should be attributed to private

¹ See Chapter Two: Buddhism, Empires and Kingdoms

² See Chapter Two: Narratives of Decline

³ Elizabeth Errington, 'Numismatic Evidence for Dating the Buddhist Remains of Gandhāra', *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* 6 (2000 1999): 191–216.

⁴ Gérard Fussman, 'Upāya-kauśalya: L'implantation du bouddhisme au Gandhāra', in *Bouddhisme et cultures locales: quelques cas de réciproques adaptations*, ed. Fukui Fumimasa and Gérard Fussman (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1994), 18–20.

enterprise and trade enabled by the fortuitous economic and political conditions furnished by empire.¹

An initial phase of expansion in this period can therefore not be ruled out. But it is not until after the late 2nd century BCE that any notable degree of material evidence for Buddhist institutions can be found in these regions, from which time an unprecedented number of monasteries and stupas first arise along major trade routes and nearby urban centres.² Moreover, it is only from the mid 1st century BCE that the regions witness a far higher output of such architecture, in addition to relief art, sculpture, an early manuscript tradition, and a large number of Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī donative inscriptions, which together evince that Buddhism had only become a notable institutional force at this time.³

That this overt material success coincides not with the supposed confidence of empire and rather with the uncertain trepidations of invasions and political upheaval is itself curious, not least when contrasted with Buddhism's own dire record of events. Such evidence would perhaps lead one to question, on the one hand, the strict necessity of the co-incidence between Buddhism, trade, and empire, which at present stands as historians' hermeneutical triad bar none, and, on the other, to decouple the narrow view of Buddhist political discourse from broader historical events. It is of course entirely plausible that Buddhism was successfully instituted under politically unfavourable conditions and,

¹ See e.g., Jason Neelis, *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade Networks: Mobility and Exchange within and beyond the Northwestern Borderlands of South Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 91, 233–34.

² James Heitzmann, 'Early Buddhism, Trade and Empire', in *Studies in the Archaeology and Palaeoanthropology of South Asia*, ed. Kenneth A. R. Kennedy and Gregory L. Possehl (New Delhi: American Institute of Indian Studies, 1984), 124–31.

³ Fussman, 'Upāya-kaśālyā: L'implantation du bouddhisme au Gandhāra', 20, 26.

under this premise, the task of the historian would therefore be to consider how success was in fact achieved in such a context.

In grappling with these questions, however, scholars have not fully explored the possibilities offered by this avenue of inquiry. They have tended rather to argue away Buddhist narratives of decline and contend, on distinctly limited grounds, that any material prosperity is to be attributed directly to the patronage of the Indo-Greeks, Indo-Scythians, Indo-Parthians and Kuṣāṇas, who, whilst initially bellicose, ultimately became ardent Buddhist patrons.¹ Though nuancing some important aspects of the hitherto accepted history, Richard Salomon writes for instance:

...the great flowering of Gandhāran [i.e., Northwestern] Buddhism was not exclusively nor even primarily a phenomenon of the Kuṣāṇa period, particularly of the time of Kaniṣka, as it may have appeared in the past. Later Buddhist tradition itself, among other influences, has given us this impression through its enthusiastic celebration of Kaniṣka's patronage, and his generosity seems to have outshone that of his Indo-Scythian predecessors and in effect expunged them from Buddhist historical tradition.²

Despite representing an important shift from a discourse of ages, this form of analysis has yet to fully wrest itself from a history of empires. In particular, the attribution of an overarching role to such other imperial endeavours as the Indo-Scythians in tracing Buddhism's development

¹ See, e.g., Jan Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time. Studies in a Buddhist Prophecy of Decline*, Nanzan Studies in Asian Religions 1 (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1991), 155.

² Richard Salomon, *Ancient Buddhist Scrolls from Gandhāra: The British Library Kharoṣṭhī Fragments* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 180. Parentheses are my own.

has had the effect of obfuscating certain historical minutia. Conflated under this definition are local and distinct systems of governances, including satraps and district governors who commanded as the local potentates of imperial administrations, as well as, more problematically, two local dynasties reigning in the valleys to the north of Peshawar, the Apracarājas of Dir and Bajaur and the Odirājas of Swat. Left unconsidered, moreover, are other social institutions and individuals, who were no doubt of equal import to determining Buddhism's institution in these regions.

History is not purely formed of political undulations but is constituted of the froth and ripples created by manifold agents and discourses. Recognition of this does not reject the hermeneutical value of assessing history in terms of empires. Rather it seeks to uncover the determinants of the histories that run concurrently to and indeed partially constitute these political waves. But to realise this form of history is no small task. It demands, as the above discussion suggests, a re-evaluation of the relationship between Buddhism's own narrated history and other epigraphic and material sources from the regions. It moreover insists upon a form of analysis and methodology that effectively uncovers and contextualises the array of historical actors within these sources as well as the modes of praxis and discourses that inform their action.

Society in the Indic North and Northwest is comprised of institutions, individuals, and practices. Understanding that society requires a combined knowledge of each as they subsist dynamically within socio-historical context—indeed, nothing can be understood apart from context. Yet the study of Indic Buddhism (and more generally ancient South Asia) is largely bereft of that very desideratum. Although plentiful can and indeed has been said about the temporal and geographical spread of political and monastic institutions in these regions, and to a lesser extent the individuals that comprise these

institutions, there is no study to systematically consider the intersection between these former two elements of the social system with the contemporary tenets of Buddhist thought and practice. It is to this lacuna that the present study is addressed: it is concerned with examining the precise social and political impact of Buddhist institutions and their ideologies and practices.

The effort to reconstruct any context or historical moment (a task, needless to say, of impossible complexity) demands that one utilise all expressions of the knowledge and behaviour of that context and thereby, in the present case, juxtapose the respective archaeological, art-historical, epigraphic, numismatic, and textual sources. The only true (and truly available) context within which all coalesce is that of the donative ritual, normatively described in art and texts, signified by stupas, statues, and architecture, and engraved in donative inscriptions. At numerous sites across the Indic cultural sphere, these material and textual remains attest to the centrality of the ritual sphere as the social frame within which various institutions and individuals collectively participated. The degree of Buddhist institutions' influence is represented primarily in the frequency, diversity, and spread of the ritual media that assist in the cultivation of that power and the scale of other social and political institutions' participation in those media. The task this study sets itself is to conjunctionally consider the respective facets of each in order to assess the form and level of interaction between these institutions in Buddhist ritual contexts.

SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

In spite of being advocated some decades past, Gregory Schopen's call to study Indic Buddhism 'on the ground'¹—to turn away from an overreliance on textual sources and to begin using them alongside material remains—has gained little traction. But perhaps this is not without reason. Opportunities to affirm nexuses between the various archaeological, art-historical, epigraphic, numismatic, and textual authorities in historical contexts are quite simply scarce, and issues of provenance and dating often encumber the task.

Literature, on the one hand, is chief in terms of the wealth and richness of the cultural knowledge it retains. But the texts available to us are largely constituted either of late and fragmentary corpora of Pali and Sanskrit manuscripts, which are problematically used to date a much earlier and supposedly lengthy period of oral transmission² or are extant

¹ Gregory Schopen, 'Burial "Ad Sanctos" and the Physical Presence of the Buddha in Early Indian Buddhism', *Religion* 17, no. 3 (1987): 193.

² It is widely upheld that the Buddhist literary tradition was orally transmitted from the time Siddhārtha Gautama in the c. 5th–4th centuries BCE until around the turn of the Common Era but in some cases as late as the 5th century CE. Indeed, several internal features of compositions still extant in Indic languages bespeak this oral quality. These include features of content, such as an emphasis on oral recitation and practice and an almost total lack of references to writing, as well as stylistic tenets and mnemonic features, including metre in verse but also alliteration, assonance, and homoioteleuton (respectively denoting the occurrence of homophones at the beginning, middle, and end of words), waxing syllables (an increase in the number of a word's syllables within a compound or string of words), repetition of close synonyms, and pericopes (set formulas for narrative frames) in verse and prose. For a discussion of these linguistic aspects, see Mark Allon, *Style and Function: A Study of the Dominant Stylistic Features of the Prose Portions of the Pāli Canonical Sutta Texts and Their Mnemonic Function* (Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies of ICABS, 1997); Bhikkhu Anālayo, 'Oral Dimensions of Pāli Discourses: Pericopes, Other Mnemonic Techniques and

only in Chinese, Tibetan, Mongolian, etc., translation.¹ The history of Indic Buddhist thought is primarily established on the basis of early

the Oral Performance’, *Canadian Journal of Buddhist Studies* 3 (2007): 5–33; Alexander Wynne, ‘The Oral Transmission of the Early Buddhist Literature’, *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 27, no. 1 (2004): 97–128. In regards to the longevity of oral transmission, Daniel Boucher has demonstrated that many Chinese translation strategies were of a ‘fundamentally oral/aural nature’, meaning each translation group in China made translations on the basis of an oral text and devised their own renderings of Buddhist Indic vocabulary and structural solutions for translating Indic languages. Daniel Boucher, ‘Gāndhārī and the Early Chinese Buddhist Translations Reconsidered: The Case of the Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra’, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 118, no. 4 (1998): 471–506. For instance, Elsa Legittimo draws attention to the *Ekottarikāgama* 增一阿含經, which was likely translated by Zhu Fonian 竺佛念, in Chang’an 長安 in 384 CE, and produced on the basis of an oral recitation, conducted by Dharmanandin 曇摩難提. Elsa Legittimo, ‘Relics, Relic Worship and Stūpas in the Chinese Translation of the Ekottarika-Āgama’, *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies* 57, no. 3 (2009): 1199.

¹ Multilingualism was a feature already in South Asian contexts. Textual traditions, considered as discrete to monastic institutions (*nikāya*) employed different languages depending on the region and period in which they operated; the Dharmaguptakas and (Mūla)-Sarvāstivādins in the North and Northwest used Gāndhārī, Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit and later Sanskrit, and the Theravādins in Sri Lanka used Pali which too underwent influence from Sanskrit. On this matter, see Oskar von Hinüber, ‘Origin and Varieties of Buddhist Sanskrit’, in *Dialectes Dans Les Littératures Indo-Aryennes*, ed. Collette Caillat (Paris: Collège de France, 1989), 341–67. Thus witnesses of canonical works retained in Indic languages are also to be considered translations and this has had ramifications for how several terms in a Prakrit, say, were rendered in Sanskrit, which often had consequences for doctrinal formulations. On the linguistic features of Buddhist literature, see Franklin Edgerton, ‘The Prakrit Underlying Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 8, no. 2–3 (1936): 501–16; John Brough, ‘The Language of Buddhist Sanskrit Texts’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 16, no. 2 (1954): 351–75; Johannes Bronkhorst, ‘Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit: The Original Language’, in *Aspects of Buddhist*

Chinese translations, which begin to arise from the mid 2nd century CE and offer a *terminus post quem* for the development of doctrinal and social aspects of Buddhism before and up to the given point of translation.

Yet the utilities of these redactions are entirely thorny. Each undoubtedly offers a glimpse into a bygone age but they concurrently embody the biases of the translators and audiences of the time in which they were translated. These nodi are moreover hardened by the content of Buddhist literature itself: composers were largely male monastics,¹ whose visions of society and social norms often stand in contrast to what we glean from archaeological and epigraphic sources. Most texts, furthermore, have little concern with detailing readily discernible historical data pertaining to dates, places, and figures, and through the process of transmission have also failed to retain the nuances and specificities of the locales whence they arose and the details of the individuals and groups that produced them.

Sanskrit, ed. Nath Mishra Kameshwar (Sarnath, Varanasi: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 1993), 396–423.

¹ Needless to say, the category of ‘male monastic’ is not a unitary, but rather a multifaceted group in and of itself. From the perspective of gender, however, there are certain implications of male authorship that implicate the role of women in Buddhism. Buddhist literature varies in its relation to gender issues, reflective no doubt of the authorship and context in which a given text was current. On shifting gender discourses, see Alan Sponberg, ‘Attitudes toward Women and the Feminine in Early Buddhism’, in *Buddhism, Sexuality and Gender*, ed. José Ignacio Cabezón (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992), 3–36. On a history of approaches to gender in Buddhism and female-authored literature, see Alice Collett, ‘Buddhism and Gender: Reframing and Refocusing the Debate’, *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 22, no. 2 (2006): 55–84; Alice Collett, ‘Historio-Critical Hermeneutics in the Study of Women in Early Indian Buddhism’, *Numen* 56, no. 1 (2009): 91–117. We shall have cause to consider the role of women and gender discourse in the Northwest, see Chapter Fifteen: Soteriological Agency.

In pursuit of historical data, scholars have primarily turned to the source types considered in the fields of archaeology, epigraphy, and numismatics¹. In contrast to literature, these groups provide greater historical insight: material remains are excavated from specific locales (although many objects have a provenance of little to none due to the circumstances of colonialism and war in India, Pakistan and Afghanistan and a lucrative art market²) and inscriptions are often dated and hence more easily stratified. Such archaeological context necessitates in turn that the discursive aspects of the sources—the ideological representation of knowledge and society in art and epigraphy for instance—are more readily classified. Inscriptions, in particular, are noted for being the products of their donors, who constitute a variety of genders and social groupings and thence offer a view of Buddhism and society at a particular historical moment, untainted by the ideologies of monastic normativity.³ Notwithstanding these rather obvious benefits, the variety of scripts, languages, and content, unclear readings that are the product of rendering a script on metal or stone, in addition to difficulties in

¹ On the historical value of coins, see Joe Cribb, 'Dating India's Earliest Coins', in *South Asian Archaeology 1983. Papers from the Seventh International Conference of the Association of South Asian Archaeologists in Western Europe, Held in the Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels* (Naples: Istituto Italiano Per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1985), 535.

² For a collection of papers on this issue see Juliette van Krieken-Pieters, ed., *Art and Archaeology of Afghanistan* (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

³ On this methodological premise, inscriptions are hailed for evidencing the self-representation of women, see Kirit K. Shah, *The Problem of Identity: Women in Early Indian Inscriptions* (Oxford University Press, 2001); Garima Kaushik, *Women and Monastic Buddhism in Early South Asia. Rediscovering the Invisible Believers*, *Archaeology and Religion in South Asia* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016).

interpreting culturally couched language and discourse, still pose myriad problems.¹

Primarily due to these hindrances and a singular focus or overreliance on any one of these source groups, the study of Indic Buddhism has rarely moved beyond the levels of chronological, topographical and socio-historical analyses, garnered from archaeology, epigraphy, and numismatics, or the normative constructs gleaned from art and literature. Due to the perception of incommensurable disparities between the sources, their relation in some cases has been quite radically separated, and hence the question of the particular social significance of Buddhism is seldom fully examined in context.²

Reading into studies that consider the methodological worth of inscriptions and texts,³ one finds a single point upon which the voices of these authors are unanimous: epigraphy is good for history and literature is not.⁴ While this observation is not wholly false—there is simply very

¹ For some thoughts on this matter, see Oskar von Hinüber, ‘Mitteilungen aus einer vergangenen Welt. Frühe indische Buddhisten und ihre Inschriften’, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 164 (2014): 13–32.

² For a similar elaboration of this critique, see D. S. Ruegg, ‘Aspects of the Investigation of the (Earlier) Indian Mahāyāna’, *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 27, no. 1 (2004): 3–62.

³ Cf. John Faithful Fleet, *Indian Epigraphy: The Inscriptional Bases of Indian Historical Research* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1907); Richard Salomon, *Indian Epigraphy: A Guide to the Study of Inscriptions in Sanskrit, Prakrit and the Other Indo-Aryan Languages* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); D. C. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphy* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1965).

⁴ Fleet infamously observed: ‘...the Hindūs have not bequeathed to us any historical work which can be accepted as reliable for any early times. It is, indeed, very questionable whether the ancient Hindūs possessed the true historical sense, in the shape of the faculty of putting together genuine history on broad and critical lines.’ Fleet, *Indian Epigraphy: The Inscriptional Bases of Indian Historical Research*, 5. One need not further expose the rather uncomfortable colonial sentiments exuded by this passage; however, and

little in the way of the modern proclivity for history in ancient Indic literature, and certainly, the majority of our historical knowledge derives from inscriptions—they are perhaps falsely conceived to the extent they posit an apparently irresolvable methodological position that sets epigraphy against literature. But this will simply not do. All knowledge arises historically and the task is to uncover the context of its genesis or the circumstances of its application.

Rare, if not unique in this regard, the Indic North and Northwest offers one possibility of breaking the impasse, presenting a convergence of archaeological, art-historical, epigraphic, numismatic, and textual sources that pertain to the social field of Buddhist donative ritual. To consider these sources in conjunction, and to meet the lofty challenge outlined in the foregoing, the methodological premise this study proposes is simple. Having defined the context of analysis as the donative ritual, it seeks to concurrently examine the various sources related to that frame (this being the only context in which all sources coalesce) and in particular those of the epigraphic and textual corpora, by establishing behavioural, discursive, historical, linguistic and sociological nexuses. By this means, each source group may be brought into closer conversation. Considered alone, none provide a complete picture of the donative ritual, and consequently to understand its function and significance it is necessary to reconstruct the context from

leaving aside this particular attitude, herein lies the seed of a methodological position that continues to arise in one, albeit now tempered, form or another. For example, Salomon states: ‘The primary reason for the particular importance of epigraphy in the study of traditional India...is the extreme paucity, especially in the ancient period, of the historical data from literary sources, which is available for other major civilisations of the ancient and medieval world. This situation is a reflection of what might be called the “ahistorical” orientation of traditional Indian culture.’ Salomon, *Indian Epigraphy: A Guide to the Study of Inscriptions in Sanskrit, Prakrit and the Other Indo-Aryan Languages*, 3.

the fragments available. To this end, the respective advantages of individual source type can aid in resolving the hindrances particular to each.

The fundament for this study is a corpus of 572 Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī donative inscriptions from the Indic North and Northwest, dated to between the 2nd century BCE and 3rd century CE.¹ Editions of these inscriptions are found in several catalogues. In the case of those written in Kharoṣṭhī, we are today in the fortunate position that all have been assembled within the *Catalogue of Gāndhārī Texts* (cited with CKI), an online collection produced by Stefan Baums and Andrew Glass² which relies on several published editions found in other collections and a multitude of individual papers. In the case of Brāhmī inscriptions, there is currently no single source to turn to. Heinrich Lüders produced two monumental works: his so-called Lüder's List (cited with LL)³ and his *Mathurā Inscriptions* (cited with §).⁴ Sonya

¹ Excluded from this corpus are other objects not of a specifically donative nature, such as seals and pieces of jewelry, and those which, for reasons of illegibility, do not afford any utilisable sociological analysis.

² Stefan Baums and Andrew Glass, 'Catalog of Gāndhārī Texts', gandhari.org, 2019, https://gandhari.org/a_catalog.php.

³ Heinrich Lüders, 'Appendix - A List of Brahmi Inscriptions from the Earliest Times to about A.D. 400 with the Exception of Those of Asoka', in *Epigraphia Indica and Record of the Archaeological Survey of India*, ed. Sten Konow and V. Venkayya Rai Bahadur, Epigraphia Indica 10 (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, India, 1909).

⁴ Heinrich Lüders, *Mathurā Inscriptions: Unpublished Papers by Heinrich Lüders*, ed. Klaus Janert (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1961). Lüders had been preparing a manuscript on early Brāhmī inscriptions for *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* series, which was to include both his *Mathurā Inscriptions* as well as his equally momentous work Heinrich Lüders, *Bharhut Inscriptions, Revised by E. Waldschmidt*, ed. E. Waldschmidt and M. A. Mehendale, vol. Part 2, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum 2* (Ootacamund: Archaeological Survey of India, 1963). However, he was unable to finish it before his death in May 1943 and the manuscript was partly destroyed in post-

Rhie Quintanilla has assembled all pre-Kuṣāṇa inscriptions from the Indic North (cited with Qu)¹ and two catalogues collate inscriptions specifically from the Kuṣāṇa Period, including Satya Shrava's *Dated Kushana Inscriptions* (cited with Sh.),² although this has now been superseded by Michael Skinner's *Marks of Empire: Extracting a Narrative from the Corpus of Kuṣāṇa Inscriptions* (cited with Sk).³ The most comprehensive catalogue of specifically Buddhist inscriptions has been produced by Tsukamoto Keishō,⁴ who arranges and cites inscriptions by region, e.g., the first inscription cited from Mathura is labelled 'Math. 1'. Archaeological data, editions, and notes of a select number of inscriptions of particular import to this study are given in *Appendix One: Catalogue of Select Inscriptions*, where they are arranged, as far as possible, in chronological order and cited within this thesis by their 'No.'.

Inscriptions provide a set of data, including, [1] the time at which a donation made, stipulating the year of a dynastic or regnal era and the month, day and constellation (*nakṣatra*); [2] a named donation, ranging from pots and monastic items to relics and Bodhisattva and Buddha

war Berlin. In 1946 it came into the hands of Ernst Waldschmidt, who began work on the manuscript but later handed over a typed version to Klaus Janert in 1957/58, who then prepared and published the work several years later. Lüders, *Mathurā Inscriptions*, 5–6.

¹ Sonya Rhie Quintanilla, *History of Early Stone Sculpture at Mathura CA. 150 BCE-100 CE* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), Appendices I–II.

² Satya Shrava, *Dated Kushana Inscriptions* (New Delhi: Pravara Prakashan, 1993).

³ Michael Skinner, 'Marks of Empire: Extracting a Narrative from the Corpus of Kuṣāṇa Inscriptions' (Seattle, University of Washington, 2017).

⁴ Keishō Tsukamoto, *A Comprehensive Study of The Indian Buddhist Inscriptions Part I: Text, Notes and Japanese Translation*. (Kyoto: Keishō Tsukamoto, 1996). See also Keishō Tsukamoto, *A Comprehensive Study of The Indian Buddhist Inscriptions Part III: Inscriptions in Northern Areas, Pakistan* (Kyoto: Keishō Tsukamoto, 2003).

statues, [3] the names of donors, participants, and beneficiaries, along with titles identifying an individual relationally (e.g., in terms of kinship) or categorically (e.g., in term of social status or occupation); and [4] the purpose, or epigraphic aspiration, of the donation, stating the benefits that are to be experienced by a named individual. These four levels provide an insight into the historical, political, sociological, and doctrinal elements of Buddhist donative practice in the North and Northwest.

By virtue of this study's methodology—that is, in taking donative inscriptions as its basis and proceeding therefrom—I was perhaps unsurprisingly led to a principal group of textual sources that deal with donative practice. These include, primarily, narrative sources collected within compendia of *Avadānas* in Chinese, Gāndhārī, Pali, and Sanskrit or in the *Vinaya* of the Sarvāstivādins and Mūlasarvāstivādins. The bases upon which nexuses are established between texts and epigraphic and material remains vary, and include historical data, specific linguistic elements, as well as behavioural and discursive idiosyncrasies and sociological data concerning ritual donors and participants. Buddhist narratives (primarily in Chinese and Gāndhārī) to be associated with these regions are notable in this regard because they uniquely retain information of historical rulers known to coins and inscriptions, demanding that they are localised in a shared or close context.

Because coins, epigraphs, and material remains are decidedly historical (although normative in their own respective ways) and literature (although undoubtedly historical if not multi-layered in that regard) masks its historicity behind its normative form, one must examine the points at which these groups intersect. We must consider, for instance, how specific individuals, behaviours, and knowledge in an epigraph converge with an elaboration of these tenets within a text. To that extent an inscription, having context but being limited in content, can serve to contextualise texts, which are without context but

comparably rich in content. There are cases where specific linguistic features (e.g., doctrinal terminologies and formulas) are so rare in both epigraphic and textual composition that connections appear undeniable. But additionally one may further consider the discursive and sociological features that are present, such as how individual social groupings are normatively presented within inscriptions and represented in literature in terms of their relational (e.g., kinship) and categorical (e.g., gender, occupational or political title) attributes. This affords the possibility of assessing the degree to which a text functions in a specific context and of examining how a particular social grouping or ritual mode normatively elaborated in a text coincides with instantiations in historical sources. Archaeological and epigraphic sources thereby provide a definable context for literature, whereas this latter offers a broader discursive and ideological context for the limited details of the former.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

Part One: Buddhism, Empires and Kingdoms draws together the material and literary sources that afford insight into the relationship between Buddhist institutions and the political landscape of the Indic North and Northwest between the 2nd century BCE and 3rd century CE. *Chapter One: Historical Contexts* traces the background to this specific history, considering how the regions have been shaped culturally and politically. It examines, in particular, how they have been conceptualised in various strands of religious and historiographical literature, from the Vedic Period and through the Persian, Greek and Mauryan Empires between the 6th and 3rd centuries BCE. *Chapter Two: Buddhism, Empires and Kingdoms* turns to consider different layers of Buddhist political

discourse. It first deals with Buddhist imperialist discourse, centred on the Mauryan Aśoka and Kuṣāṇa Kaniṣka, and narratives of decline, set in between these empires during the reigns of the Indo-Greeks, Indo-Scythians, Indo-Parthians, and Kuṣāṇas. Seeking to shift from the narrative of a history of empires, it then examines a different type of Buddhist political propaganda that was directed towards local systems of governance, and specifically the Apracarājas and Oḍirājas, and takes a fresh look at the frequency of dated inscriptions that fall during the period from the Indo-Greeks to the Kuṣāṇas to assess the validity of treating the history of the region in such terms. *Chapters Three through Eight* constitute a political history of these various empires and kingdoms, established on the basis of coins, inscriptions, and historiographical literature, and assesses the role these groups served in relation to Buddhist institutions.

Part Two: Buddhist Institutions and Individuals is a sociological study of the Buddhist community in the Indic North and Northwest. *Chapter Nine: Monastic institutions* constitutes an analysis of the development of Buddhist monastic institutions (*nikāya*), including the Sarvāstivāda, Dharmaguptaka, Kāśyapīya, Sāṃmitīya, Mahīśāsaka, and Mahāsāṃghika. It considers the chronology and geography of all inscriptions to name these six institutions as well as certain Chinese sources that relate their existence to narratives of decline and seeks to contextualise their role within the broader political contexts of the two regions. *Chapter Ten: Individuals in Donative Inscriptions* focuses on the demographics of individual donors, participants, and beneficiaries to arise in donative inscriptions in order to assess patterns of patronage. Through a sociological analysis of these individuals and the manner in which they construct their identity, it seeks to detail the constitutive historical minutia of Buddhist institutions and society in the North and Northwest.

Part Three: Donative Practice turns to examine specific details of donative inscriptions in an effort to reconstruct the specific social contexts in which the institutions and individuals interacted as well as the manner of their interaction. *Chapter Eleven: Time and Practice* considers the ritual temporality of donative inscriptions. It examines the relationship between normative times of ritual practice given in Buddhist literature and epigraphy. Uncovering an entirely unexpected structure, it demonstrates that donative practice most commonly followed a civil rather than specifically Buddhist calendar. *Chapter Twelve: Donative Objects* looks at the range of inscribed donative objects and the terms for donations in inscriptions. It introduces references to inscriptions in donation formulae now preserved in certain *Vinayas* in Chinese, which shed light on the practice of recording a donation in the written word, and considers how these literary sources relate to inscribed monastic objects and utensils and the dedication of monasteries from Buddhist legal perspectives. *Chapter Thirteen: Narrative Donative Practices* is a study of the function of *Avadāna* literature in establishing normative systems of donative practice and their potential relations to donative inscriptions and broader ritual contexts. Examining these narratives from discursive, linguistic, philosophical, and sociological perspectives it establishes several nexus between certain *Avadānas* in Chinese, Gāndhārī, and Sanskrit and material and epigraphic remains from the Indic North and Northwest. *Chapter Fourteen: Epigraphic Aspirations* deals with the phenomenon of expressing a wish—the aspiration—of a donative act in *Avadāna* literature and donative inscriptions. It outlines the various types of aspirations one encounters in each source group and in particular focuses the goals of attaining Brahma-merit and soteriological ends, found in inscriptions concerning the dedications of relics and statues, the equally rare aspiration formulas used to express these goals, and the functioning of such aspirations in the historical contexts of the North

and Northwest. Finally, and drawing all elements of the foregoing chapters together, *Chapter Fifteen: Relics and Stupas* takes the practice of dedicating relics and establishing stupas as a case study. Tracing, briefly, the introduction of the different types of relics and stupas into the North and Northwest, it considers the political function of these objects and their ritual establishment for Buddhist institutions and rulers in the regions. Providing new evidence from certain *Vinayas* preserved in Chinese, it examines a tension regarding the destruction of stupas and the theft of relics, which were both prohibited and prescribed in these sources, and reflects on the role these regulations served in the specific historical circumstances of the North and Northwest at the turn of the Common Era.

PART ONE
BUDDHISM, EMPIRES, AND
KINGDOMS

CHAPTER ONE: HISTORICAL CONTEXTS

In modern geo-political terms, the North is defined as regions west of the confluence of the Ganges and Yamuna Rivers and the Northwest as eastern Afghanistan and Pakistan (Fig. 1.1). Although the distinction between the regions is primarily geographical and topographical—with the boundaries having a natural border in the Himalayan foothills—it is also discernible in the respective material and linguistic cultures and in the forms of documentation and discourse to concern the regions. In identifying the various grounds upon which the regions of the North and Northwest are to be differentiated, it transpires that their separation pervades a broad spectrum of discourse from Vedic literature until the modern *imaginaire*. Tracing these discourses reveals that both regions at different times and for different groups shifted between being a centre or a periphery. Ideological inclusion or exclusion of a given locale is revealing, of course, of the claims made upon it.

Considered from the perspective of the Persian, Greek and Mauryan Empires, whose political and cultural centres lay far afield, we find in various forms of documentation that the North and Northwest, in lying at the extremities of several of these administrations, were, to varying degrees and in distinct forms, treated at times as a periphery and other and at other times an integral component of an imperial totality. It is primarily through epigraphic and historiographical records pertaining to these empires that a glimpse into how the two regions were re-

conceptualised through the course of history is afforded. Whilst these sources enable the brushstrokes of political geographies and administrations to be broadly defined, an absence of official records from the region hinders the possibility of elucidating in full the various layers of what were undoubtedly complex and distinct political administrations in the regions. Several inscribed objects—coins, inscriptions, and seals—know several titles denotive of discrete positions in governmental hierarchies. These afford some glimpse into the fabric of local and imperial rulership and importantly how these two structural levels were configured within and across specific periods. But these sources also skew the data in such a way as to result in the unwanted effect of obscuring the influences local social institutions and political bodies exerted, which were no doubt equally instrumental in the regions' history, and of inscribing the geographical lines of the region as imperial peripheries and centres.

A social and religious history is perhaps still more problematic. Knowledge regarding religious institutions, discourses, and practice derives, initially, from normative literary sources composed in several Indic languages and Chinese translations, whose compositional dates and locations and discursive range are notoriously problematic to contextualise. And it is only after the c. 3rd century BCE that archaeological, art-historical, and epigraphic sources can be introduced more firmly into the discussion. Collectively these sources impart the shifting ideological trajectories of Buddhist, Brahmanical, Jain and other cults within individual locales. In Vedic literature, for instance, the Northwest is first a centre then a periphery and in Buddhist literature precisely the opposite is the case. A literary history of both traditions, broadly conceived, thus exposes what was ideologically and institutionally at stake in respect to a specific locale. It is notable that the

literature of both traditions,¹ but particularly of the Buddhists, at a certain stage would seek to unify the North and Northwest into something of a conceptual whole. This attempt, we shall argue, was an institutional demand likely enabled by the achievement of greater political integration by Indo-Scythians and foremost the Kuṣāṇas.

The manner in which these political and religious histories intersect is naturally a highly important question, which cannot be fully treated in these pages. Nevertheless, understanding the specific history of Buddhism is predicated on tracing these broader factors that shaped both its position in and impact upon the cultural spheres of the North and Northwest. The purpose of this chapter is therefore not to detail an entire history of the region; rather it shall point to some major trends thereof in its geo-political and religious dimensions before the 2nd century BCE. But forgive me if I offer an inexhaustive account of these broader circumstances, in brief.

¹ For a discussion of the *Mahābhārata* in this regard, see Tanni Moitra, 'Region through Text: Representation of Gandhāra in the Mahābhārata', in *Buddhism and Gandhara: An Archaeology of Museum Collections*, ed. Himanshu Prabha Ray, Archaeology and Religion in South Asia (Oxon: Routledge, 2018), 104–29.

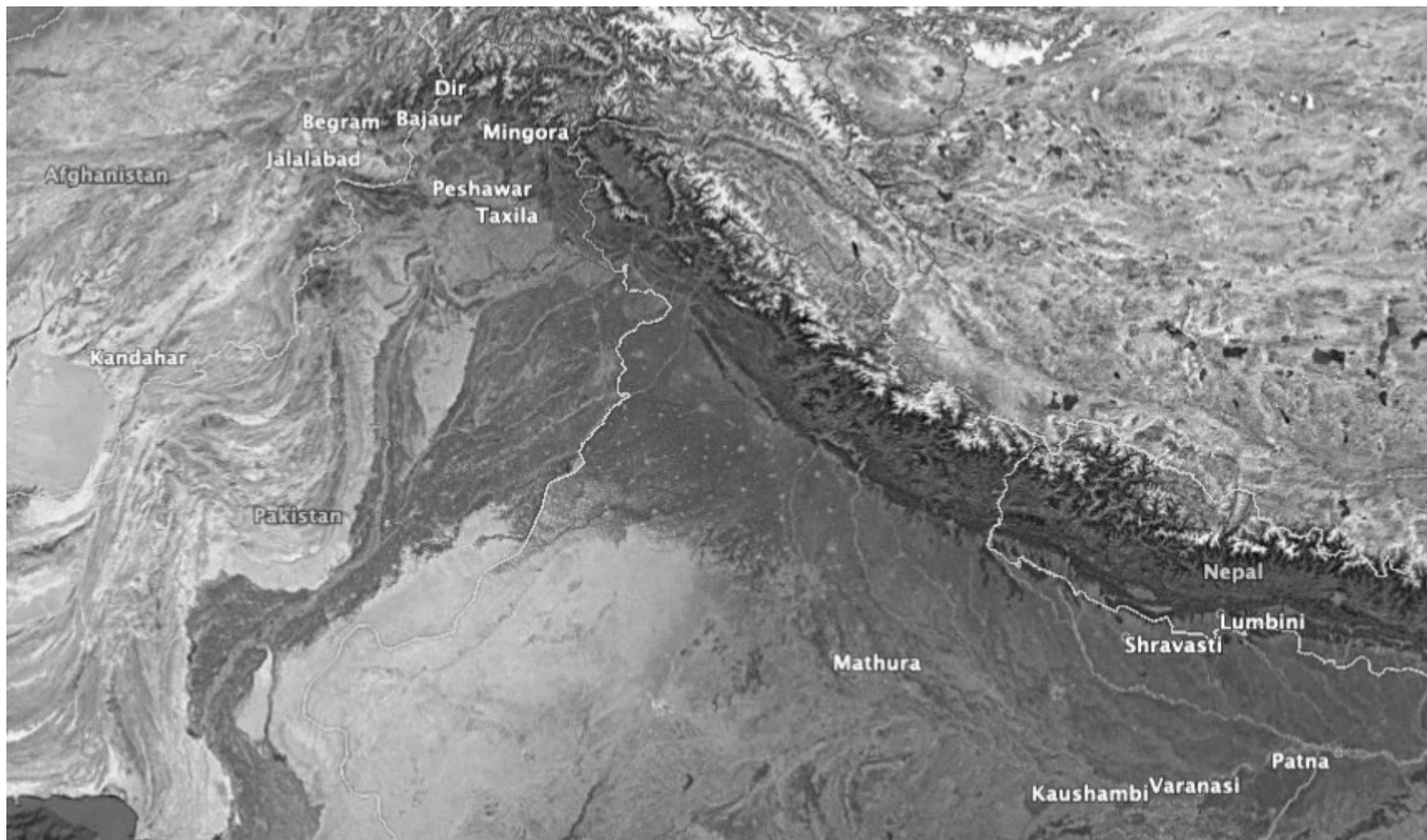


Fig. 1.1. Key Sites in the Indic North and Northwest

VEDIC HEARTLANDS

The earliest known literary references to the regions and peoples of the North and Northwest are to be found in the verses of Vedic literature, broadly dated to the late bronze and early iron ages of the 2nd millennium BCE.¹ Topographies in early strata of the *Ṛgveda* indicate that the geographical range of the semi-nomadic pastoralists, to whom the poetic compilations are attributed, was initially centred in eastern Afghanistan and Pakistan.² This can be deduced from references to certain peoples, such as the non-Aryan Gāndhārī,³ but more so from the several rivers named in the region.⁴ In particular, the world of the *Ṛgveda* was circumscribed by the symbolically numbered ‘seven rivers’ (*saptasindhu*),⁵ a non-standardised enumeration likely denoting the

¹ Archaeological evidence for the *Ṛgveda* is limited. However, the importance of horses to this text has been correlated with the appearance of horse bones and terracotta depictions in the material record of the Upper Indus during this period. Romila Thapar, *The Penguin History of Early India. From the Origins to AD 1300* (London: Penguin Books, 2002), 109.

² See Stephanie Jamison and John P. Brereton, trans., *The Rigveda: The Earliest Religious Poetry of India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 5–6.

³ This group are mentioned but once:

upopa me parā mṛśa mā me dabhrāṇi manyathāḥ.

sarvāhamasmi romaśā gandhārīṇāmivāvikā. RV 1. 126. 7.

(Saying) ‘Feel me up—keep going further. Don’t belittle my little things [=private parts].

I am entirely hairy like a little ewe of the Gandhārīs.’

Translation from Jamison and Brereton, *The Rigveda: The Earliest Religious Poetry of India*, 292.

⁴ See Bimala Churn Law, *Historical Geography of Ancient India* (Paris: Société Asiatique, 1954), 28ff.

⁵ RV 2. 12. 12; 10. 75.

Sindh (Indus), her five eastern tributaries in Punjab: the Śutudrī (Sutlej), the Vipāś (Beas),¹ Paruṣṇī (Ravi), the Asiknī (Chenab), and Vitastā (Jhelum), in addition perhaps to the western Kubhā (Kabul) and Suvastū (Swat).²

Later strata of Vedic literature name other rivers such as the Gaṅgā (Ganges) and Yamunā (Yamuna) further east, indicating that a subsequent expansion, or indeed shift of Vedic culture had occurred to the regions around Kurukṣetra in the North.³ The *Atharvaveda* already appears to locate itself here, derogatorily referring to the Gāndhārī and Mūjavan⁴ tribes to the northwest and Aṅgas and Magadhans to the east.⁵ And certainly, by the time the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* and *Baudhāyana Śrautasūtra* were composed, this once heartland region of seven rivers in the Northwest was regarded as wholly alien and inhospitable to Brahmanical culture.⁶ That is not to say it was absent from the regions, for later material and literary evidence prove this was not the case and indicate that the environment into which Buddhism was implanted was partially defined by this culture.

¹ RV 3. 33.

² RV 8. 19. 37.

³ For an enumeration of 19 rivers in regions of the North and Northwest, see RV 10. 75.

⁴ Most likely a people dwelling to the north of the Hindu Kush, see Michael Witzel, 'Aryan and Non-Aryan Names in Vedic India', in *Aryan and Non-Aryan in South Asia: Evidence, Interpretation and Ideology*, ed. Johannes Bronkhorst and Madhav M. Deshpande (New Delhi: Manohar, 2012), 344–45.

⁵ E.g., in the *Atharvaveda*:

gandhāribhyo mūjavadbhyo 'ṅgebhyo magadhebhyah.

praiṣyan janam iva śevadhīm takmānaṃ pari dadmasi. AV 5. 22.14.

We to Gandhāris, Mūjavans, to Angas and to Magadhas.

Hand over Fever as it were a servant and a thing of price. Ralph T. H. Griffith, trans., *Hymns of the Atharvaveda. Translated with a Popular Commentary. Vol I* (New Delhi: Munishram Manoharlal Publishers, 1985), 184.

⁶ Johannes Bronkhorst, *How the Brahmins Won. From Alexander to the Guptas* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 21–22.

THE PERSIAN EMPIRE AT ‘THE WORLD’S MOST EASTERN LIMIT’

Herodotus’s (484–425 BCE) *Persian Wars* describes the Indic Northwest as ‘the sunrise [...] of Asia’ and ‘world’s most eastern limit’, a little known place whence Persians travelling in the region imparted hearsay reports of cannibals, warrior tribes, and the famed ant-like creatures digging for gold¹. He relates that this border region was made known to the west during the reign of Cyrus (559–530 BCE), who is said to have been the first of the Persian Achaemenids to lead military campaigns in the regions of Arachosia (south-east Afghanistan), where he built a fortress at the region’s capital Kandahar, and later Gandhara (Peshawar, north-west Pakistan).² Excavations at Kandahar have indeed revealed coeval fortifications, pottery, and a cuneiform Elamite inscription that broadly corroborate this account.³ But Achaemenid governance is only firmly attested in the later charters of Darius I (522–486 BCE) and Xerxes (486–465 BCE) at Susa, Behistun, Persepolis, and Naqš-i-Rustam, wherein Arachosia, Gandhara, and Hindus (Indus, north Pakistan) are listed alongside many other regions and polities of the

¹ Per^H 3. 98–106. References to these enigmatic gold-digging ants are to be found repeated in the works of many historiographers subsequent to Herodotus. The ants are widely placed near the city Caspatyrus, now thought to be situated in the Thar Desert. P. H. L. Eggermont, *Alexander’s Campaigns in Sind and Baluchistan and the Siege of the Brahmin Town of Harmatelia*, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 3 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1975), 179–81. Neither the identity of these creatures nor the report’s source is known. It is interesting to note that mention of *pipīlika* (‘ant’) gold is also found in the *Mahābhārata* as a royal tribute. Mbh 2. 48.

² Per^H 4. 44.

³ Amélie Kuhrt, *The Persian Empire: A Corpus of Sources from the Achaemenid Period* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 814–15.

Persian Empire.¹ Roads linking the Northwest with Susa were established as lines of state communication² and trade, with raw ivory sourced from Arachosia and Indus as well as *yaka* wood from Gandhara. A visual rendering of this network is famously depicted on friezes on the staircase panels of the Apadana at Persepolis, likely fashioned during the reign of Xerxes, which show ‘delegations’ from Arachosia carrying tributes of vessels and skin along with a camel, from Gandhara bearing shields and pikes with a humped bull, and from Indus with axes and bags of spices or gold³ with an equine.⁴ Moreover, it seems that humans were also trafficked from the region; for instance, a likely contemporaneous cuneiform legal document from an archive of the Egibi family in Babylon also mentions a slave woman described as the ‘female inhabitant of Gandhara’ (*gandharājītu*).⁵

Persian political media thus positioned the Northwest firmly within its auspices, visualising a coherent and unified imperial polity. But little precise can be said as to the nature and extent of their governance, nor indeed how this was communicated and received in the Northwest itself. From the perspective of Persian identity, Amélie Kuhrt has shown that moral worth was centrifugally defined, with nobility regarded as worsening in peoples the further from the imperial centre, and that political power was thence restricted to the Persian elite and

¹ Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander. A History of the Persian Empire* (Indiana: Wiona Lake, 2002), 39–40; 173.

² Three Elamite tablets attest to ‘sealed documents’ being transferred on behalf of Darius I, see Kuhrt, *The Persian Empire: A Corpus of Sources from the Achaemenid Period*, 733–34.

³ Per^H 3. 102–105.

⁴ Briant, *Cyrus to Alexander*, 172–75.

⁵ Muhammad A. Dandamaev, *Slavery in Babylonia: From Nabopolassar to Alexander the Great, 626–331 B.C.*, ed. by Marvin A. Powell and David B. Weisberg, trans. by Victoria Powell (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1984), p. 108.

organised into regional satrapies.¹ Babylonian administrative records and tablets from Persepolis confirm that this form of governance was indeed instituted in the Northwest, providing the names of two satraps during the reign of Darius I: Irdabanuš of Arachosia in 522 BCE and Vivāna of Kandahar in 500 BCE. Herodotus also states that Darius I taxed the Sattagydae (central Afghanistan), Gandharii, Dadicae, and Aparytae peoples collectively as a seventh satrapy and India (Indus) as a twentieth satrapy.² Several of the ruler's circular or oblong coin issues, weighed according to the gold daric and silver siglos standard and depicting a ruler in the militaristic pose with bow and spear, were also found in regions from Kabul to Taxila; however, these coins are widely regarded in scholarship as exports from the more westerly regions of the Persian Empire rather than evidence of a local economic system.³

To my knowledge, the existence of the Persian Empire is simply unknown to Indic sources; and material evidence for any influence the Persians may or may not have exerted on culture is also limited. There are exceptions; the Kharoṣṭhī script,⁴ first attested in the Aśokan edicts of

¹ Amélie Kuhrt, 'The Persian Empire, c. 550–330 BC', in *Art & Civilisations de l'Orient Hellenisé* (Paris: sous la direction de P. Leriche, 2014), 51–60.

² Per^H 3. 91–94. For discussion, see Briant, *Cyrus to Alexander*, 390ff.

³ See Osmund Boppearachchi and Aman ur Rahman, *Pre-Kushana Coins in Pakistan* (Paris: Iftikhar Rasul IRM Associates, 1995), No. 14–16; Elizabeth Errington, Joe Cribb, and Marie Claringbull, eds., *The Crossroads of Asia. Transformation in Image and Symbol. An Exhibition at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, 6 October - 13 December 1992* (Cambridge: The Ancient India and Iran Trust, 1992), No. 7–9.

⁴ Kharoṣṭhī is a Semitic script, derived via Aramaic, which was likely developed in the Northwest at the time of Achaemenids (6th–4th centuries BCE). However, it is first attested in the Aśokan inscriptions and edicts of the 3rd century BCE in Pakistan. Kharoṣṭhī remained in use until c. 3rd century in eastern Afghanistan and Pakistan, and until the c. 7th century in areas along the northern and southern Silk Roads of Central Asia, including Kucha in Xinjiang and at sites such as Niya at the southern tip of the Tarim Basin. Andrew Glass, *A Preliminary Study of Kharoṣṭhī Manuscript Paleography* (Seattle: University

the 3rd century BCE, is sister to Aramaic, which was widely used by the Persians for administrative purposes. This is highly suggestive of a linguistic influence, which is corroborated by the presence of Old Indo-Iranian terms in Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī*.

The famed Sanskrit grammarian is said to have been born in Śalātura (near Peshawar, Pakistan) in Gandhara and it is argued that he lived either during Achaemenid rule in 6th–5th centuries BCE or at a time closer to the Mauryan Period. The former chronology is grounded principally upon a reference to a *lipikara*,¹ the earliest reference in Indic sources to a 'scribe'. Some argue that the precise script (*lipi*) of which Pāṇini was aware was in all likelihood Aramaic, making him contemporary to the Achaemenids. This conclusion, however, is dependent upon the interpretation of another term, *yavanānī*,² which, in Kātyāyana's (c. 3rd century BCE)³ later commentary is elucidated as being the Greek script (*yavanāl lipi*). Evidence of this script in Indic contexts derives from the Aśokan edicts at Kandahar and thus such a reference could well preclude a date for Pāṇini prior to Alexander in the 4th century BCE. Some therefore take the position that the 'script' to which Pāṇini refers is Kharoṣṭhī and that he was closer in date to the Mauryans.⁴ However, as Harry Falk points out, this is not certain, as

of Washington, 2000), 1ff. For a detailed discussion cf. Salomon, *Indian Epigraphy: A Guide to the Study of Inscriptions in Sanskrit, Prakrit and the Other Indo-Aryan Languages*, 42–55. It is mentioned as the second script (after Brāhmī) in a long list in the Lalitavistara. Lalit 10. 924. S. Lefmann, ed., *Lalita Vistara. Erster Teil: Text* (Halle: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1902).

¹ Pāṇ 3.2.21.

² Pāṇ 4.1.49.

³ Klaus Karttunen, *Yonas and Yavanas in Indian Literature* (Helsinki: Finnish Oriental Society, 2015), 327.

⁴ Oskar von Hinüber, *Der Beginn der Schrift und frühe Schriftlichkeit in Indien* (Mainz: Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, 1990), 57.

yavanānī arises in a row of terms of married women indicating that he had knowledge of the Greek peoples rather than their script specifically.¹

A later date may nonetheless appear more favourable as the political world Pāṇini pictures does not obviously resemble that of a satrapy system. He refers to *kṣatriya* rulers (*rāja*) of smaller states or chiefdoms (*janapada*) in the Northwest, including those of the Gāndhārī and Kamboja.² This discrepancy has led some to argue the Achaemenid satrapies were merely nominal and that political power was administered locally in such chiefdoms.³ A second possibility is that Pāṇini lived at a time in which the power of the Persian Empire in this eastern province was either diminishing or had already come to a firm close. A series of circular, oblong, and bent-bar punch-marked silver coins that were unearthed across the Northwest may support the existence of this form of governance. Diverging from the Persian siglos standard, these florally decorated coins⁴ were issued under regional weights, perhaps considered as *kārṣāpaṇa*, and could be attributed to local governing factions minted independently of, or, as most argue, at a time posterior to Achaemenid governance.⁵

¹ Harry Falk, *Schrift im alten Indien: ein Forschungsbericht mit Anmerkungen* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1993), 257–59.

² Pāṇ 4. 1. 167–175.

³ Michael Witzel, ‘Brahmanical Reactions to Foreign Influences and to Social and Religious Change’, in *Between the Empires. Society in India between 300 BCE and 400 CE*, ed. Patrick Olivelle (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 458.

⁴ Bopearachchi and ur Rahman, *Pre-Kushana Coins in Pakistan*, 74–79, No. 17-50.

⁵ Bopearachchi and ur Rahman, *Pre-Kushana Coins in Pakistan*, 23–24.

‘BORDERLAND STATES’

During the 6th–4th centuries BCE the Gangetic Plains underwent a period of urbanisation, which led to the formation of new political structures organised into kingdoms of tribal confederacies and monarchic city-states (*mahājanapada*). These urban environs served as administrative, economic, and political centres and for developments in post-Vedic religion. The form of society articulated in the early *Upaniṣads* corresponds to the early phases of urbanisation¹ and Buddhism arose (c. late 5th century BCE to mid 4th century BCE)² as one of the many

¹ Patrick Olivelle, trans., *Upaniṣads*, Oxford World Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 7.

² The precise dates of the historical Buddha remains an open question, and the various scholarly estimations for his death range from 2420 BCE to 261 BCE, although the majority thereof fall between 486 BCE and 290 BCE. There are two main chronologies the Buddhist traditions provide, both of which depend upon the date of the Mauryan Aśoka’s coronation in c. 269 CE (see below). First, the so-called ‘long chronology’ of the Theravāda tradition, found in the *Dīpavaṃsa* and *Mahāvāṃsa*, proposes, though not without internal contradictions, that the Buddha’s *parinibbāna* occurred in 544/543 BCE, 218 years prior to Aśoka’s coronation—this produces a date for Aśoka of 326/325 BCE. These dates have been widely rejected on the basis of Greek sources since in the year 326 BCE Alexander was still in the Northwest and the Mauryan Candragupta had yet to take power. Thus many scholars adopt variations of a second ‘corrected long chronology’ dating the Buddha’s death to 486–477 BCE, corresponding to the date of Aśoka’s coronation. It is argued this latter is corroborated by the occurrence of an eclipse, supposedly recorded in the *Aśokāvadāna*, see Aś-av 55–56; Divy 26. 380–27. This eclipse has been fixed through the astronomic calculation to 249 BCE, which corresponds to the twentieth year of Aśoka’s reign in which he established the Pillar Edict at Lumbini, marking the place of Śākyamuni’s birth. P. H. L. Eggermont, ‘The Year of Buddha’s Mahāparinirvāṇa’, in *The Dating of the Historical Buddha. Part I.*, ed. Heinz Bechert (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), 238. Other manuscripts of the *Dīpavaṃsa* state that the third council was held 100, 118, 218, or 236 after *parinibbāna*, the latter being the tradition’s accepted date

flourishing *śramaṇa* ('renunciant') movements in an already established urban environment.¹ Topographical references in these sources indicate the purview of these traditions was limited. Gandhara, for instance, is only mentioned once in the *Chāndogyopaniṣad*, albeit in such a way as to suggest the region was familiar enough to be left undefined by those transmitting this work.² Early Buddhist literature locates itself mostly in

for the first council. The first calculation of 100 years also arises elsewhere in Theravāda sources, and this is regarded by many as the earliest such reckoning in the textual transmission as it corresponds to the 'short chronology' of Mūlasarvāstivādin sources which all state this as the number of years between the *parinirvāṇa* and the reign of Aśoka. Presuming that Aśoka governed in the early to mid 3rd century BCE, this would bring the date of the Buddha up to the mid 4th century. See H. Matsumura, 'Bibliographical Survey of Information on the Dates of the Buddha in Some Ancient Sanskrit Buddhist Sources and Their Translations', in *The Dating of the Historical Buddha. Part 3*, ed. Heinz Bechert (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), 19–40.

In his assessment of the various positions, Heinz Bechert cites Herbert Härtel's study in particular, which makes clear there is no archaeological evidence for Buddhism before the c. 4th century BCE. Many of the identified urban sites associated with the Buddha (e.g., Kauśāmbī, Rājagṛha, Sarnath, Śrāvastī, Vaiśālī) are all to be dated no earlier than this time. Inhabitation at Rājagṛha, for instance, has been carbon dated to 245±105, 260±100 or 265±105. Bechert subsequently concludes that the date of Buddha must have been marginally before Alexander, i.e., c. 400–350 BCE. Heinz Bechert, 'The Date of the Buddha - an Open Question of Ancient Indian History', in *The Dating of the Historical Buddha. Part 1*, ed. Heinz Bechert (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991); Herbert Härtel, 'Archaeological Research on Ancient Buddhist Sites', in *The Dating of the Historical Buddha. Part 1*, ed. Bechert Heinz (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), 61–89.

¹ For discussion of the social and cultural circumstances within which Buddhism arose cf. Greg Bailey and Ian Mabbett, *The Sociology of Early Buddhism*, First Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Bronkhorst, *Greater Magadha*; Georg von Simson, 'Der zeitgeschichtliche Hintergrund der Entstehung des Buddhismus', in *The Dating of the Historical Buddha. Part 1*, ed. Heinz Bechert (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), 90–99.

² See ChU 6.14.1–2.

the Gangetic Plains and reveals that Buddhism's scope too did not truly extend beyond the cultural sphere of 'Greater Magadha'¹ or reach even as far eastwards as Mathura until the Nanda Period in the 4th century BCE.² But early Buddhist accounts are more precise in their defining sixteen *mahājanapadas*, including those of the Aṅgas, Magadhans, Kāsis, Kosalans, Vajjis, Mallas, Cetis, Vaṅgas, Kurus, Pañcalas, Macchas, Sūrasenas, Assakas, Avantis, and the Gandhārans and Kambojans.³ The 'borderland states' (*paccantimesu janapadesu*) of the Northwest, in particular, were, in the very few instances in which the region finds mention, marked for being other, for being a remote region inappropriate for women to visit⁴ and as a source of magic not in keeping with Buddhist norms.⁵

THE CONQUESTS OF ALEXANDER

In the 4th century BCE, Alexander of Macedonia militarily engaged the remnants of the Persian Empire under Darius III and in the years 330–325 BCE he successfully conquered the regions of Bactria, Sogdia, and the Paropamisadae, whose borders lay between the Hindu Kush (what

¹ Bronkhorst, *Greater Magadha*. On the political landscape of the Gangetic Plains during this period, see Wilhelm Geiger, trans., *The Mahāvamsa or The Great Chronicle of Ceylon* (London: Pāli Text Society, 1912), xviiiff.

² See B. G. Gokhale, 'Early Buddhism and the Urban Revolution', *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 5, no. 2 (1982): 7–22; P. S. Jaini, 'Political and Cultural Data in References to Mathurā in the Buddhist Literature', in *Mathurā: The Cultural Heritage*, ed. D. M. Srinivasan (New Delhi: American Institute of Indian Studies, 1989), 214–22.

³ E.g., AN 1. 212–213.

⁴ See the description of Kamboja at AN 2. 83.

⁵ *Gandhāra* gives its name to a dangerous charm that enables monks to multiply themselves; an act specifically banned by the Buddha, see DN 1. 23.

Greek historiographies call the Caucasus) and the Indus to the east.¹ He established two cities after his name, Alexandria-among-the-arachosians (present day Kandahar) and Alexandria-under-the-Caucasus, near present-day Bagram, both in Afghanistan² (as was the common practice), and there installed local hyparchs as subordinate to the regional satraps. In 327 BCE he crossed the Hindu Kush from Bactria for a second time and installed a new satrap, Tyriespis, over the Paropamisadae, which included all regions as far eastwards as the Kabul River.³

In regions still further east, historiographies record several 'Indian' rulers and peoples that Alexander encountered: [1] Taxilas, a certain ruler of the 'great and prosperous city' Taxila, is described by Arrian as a hyparch who welcomingly received Alexander,⁴ indicating his inclusion into the Greek imperial system; [2] Abisares (Skt. Abhisāra), the 'king of the Indians of the Hills'; [3] Doxares, a nomarch, perhaps governing the plain of Chhachh (G. Cukhsa)⁵ located between Taxila and the Indus River, who is described as having immediately capitulated to Alexander, who 'appointed a certain Philip son of Machatas satrap of the Indians of this region'; and finally, [4] Porus (Skt. Puru), whose provinces lay between the Hydaspes River (Jhelum) and Acesines River (Chenab), whom Alexander engaged in battle with a host of soldiers garnered from among the conquered groups of the region,

¹ Geogr^S 15. 9.

² Pliny situates this latter city 50 miles from Kabul, and 236 miles westwards along the Kabul River from 'the Indian town Peucolatis [Puṣkalāvātī]'. Natur^P 6. 62.

³ For a discussion on this complicated matter, see A. B Bosworth, 'The Indian Satrapies under Alexander the Great', *Antichthon* 17 (1983): 37–46.

⁴ Cf. Geogr 15. 28.

⁵ Eggermont, *Alexander's Campaigns in Sind and Baluchistan and the Siege of the Brahmin Town of Harmatelia*, 9 fn. 48. For epigraphic references to Cukhsa and Indo-Scythian satraps, see Chapter Four: Satraps in the North and Northwest.

including a cohort of soldiers from Taxila, Arachosia, and the Paropamisadae.

We are told that it was in the battle with Porus that Alexander was wounded and his horse Bucephalos killed.¹ But eventually, Porus also capitulated and was given governance as hyparch.² After quelling several uprisings and defeating other groups beyond the Acesines River, in southern Punjab, including another ruler named Porus, the Majjis (Skt. Malavas), amongst others, Alexander and his army reached the Hyphasis River (Beas). But his men refused to go any further, thereby bringing an end to the conquest.³

Alexander's colonial endeavours ensured an increasing knowledge of the Northwest among the Greeks and an attempt to conceptualise key topographies in terms of their own mythologies. Arrian defines 'Nysa' and 'Mount Meru' as geographical memorials for the mythical conqueror of India Dionysos' expedition as well as the attire and habits of certain Indians as akin to the god's Bacchanals. Heracles' skin robes were also seen to be the same as those worn by one Indian tribe, the Sibae, who are

¹ Arrian states that Alexander established a town Bucephala named after his horse. Led by this account, early colonial archaeologists Mountstuart Elphinstone (1779–1859), of the East India Company, and the Italian Rubino Ventura (1794–1858), working in the employ of the Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Punjab, first identified the Manikyala stupa as a monument to the place where Bucephalos died and the city by the same name. Elizabeth Errington, 'Exploring Gandhara', in *From Persepolis to the Punjab. Exploring Ancient Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan*, ed. Elizabeth Errington (London: British Museum Press, 2007), 211. Tarn later identified the city with Śākala (Sialkot), the attested birthplace of the Indo-Greek ruler Menander. William Woodthorpe Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938), 249f. The historiographies also state that Alexander established a second city Nicaea ('victory'). Cf. *Anab*^A 5. 18; *Geogr*^S 15. 29. This city is also mentioned in the Silver Scroll of Urasaka (No. 40) in the late 1st century CE.

² *Anab*^A 5. 8–19. According to Plutarch's *Moralia*, Alexander defeated Taxiles in battle but returned control over his kingdom. *Moralia*^P 181. 24.

³ *Anab*^A 5. 26. See also *Indica*^A 1. 4.

understood to be the remnants of a people left after Heracles' invasion. The Paropamisadae were named after the Caucasus and one mountain cave was also associated with the place of Prometheus the Titan's hanging. The presence of these figures was further envisaged as a civilising activity:

The Indians, he says, were originally nomads, like the non-agricultural Scythians, who wander in their waggons and move from one part of Scythia to another, not dwelling in cities and not reverencing shrines of the gods. Just so the Indians had no cities and built no temples, but were clothed with the skins of wild animals they would kill, and ate the bark of trees; these trees were called in the Indian tongue Tala, and what looks like clews of wool grew on them, just as on the tops of palm trees. They also fed on what game they had captured, eating it raw, at least until Dionysos reached India. But when he arrived and became master of India he founded cities, gave them laws, bestowed wine on the Indians as on the Greeks, and taught them to sow their land, giving them seed.¹

Alexander is painted as the inheritor of this mythic colonialism. For example, he is glorified as have taken the Aornus rock militarily, a feat, we are told, not achieved even by Heracles.²

¹ Indica^A 2. 325–26.

² Indica^A 2. 309ff.

THE SELEUCID AND MAURYAN EMPIRES

Seleucus Nicator (327–303 BCE), whence the Seleucid Empire derives its name, succeeded Alexander as ruler over Bactria and the Northwest. However, Seleucid governance over the latter region would be short lived. Greek historiographies record that the first Mauryan ruler Candragupta (c. 324–297 BCE), who had overthrown Dhanananda, the last ruler of the Nanda Dynasty, and thereupon assumed control of Magadha in the North, brokered a treaty with Seleucus Nicator that enabled him to expand the Mauryan Empire from its home in the Gangetic Plains to Gandhara, Arachosia, and the Paropamisadae. This treaty is said to have included the exchange of five hundred elephants¹ and the marriage of a Seleucid princess to the Mauryans. Precisely who is not known, but some speculate it was Bindusāra (c. 297–272 BCE).

Relations between the Seleucids and the Mauryans continued and two ambassadors are recorded as having been sent to Pāṭaliputra (Gk. Palimbothra): Megasthenes, during the reign of Candragupta (Gk. Sandracottus; Androcottus), and Deïmachus, during the time of Bindusāra (Gk. Allitrochades).² The former took detailed travelogues whilst in India, of which only fragments and quotations in later historiographies remain. One record relates two groups, Brahmins and *śramaṇas*, and there has been some debate as to whether the latter denotes Buddhists—indeed, those who reject such an attribution, for instance, Johannes Bronkhorst, who assimilates the two types of *śramaṇa* with non-Vedic ascetics described in the *Āpastambadharmasūtra*,³ suggest there is a lack of any firm reference to

¹ Geogr^S 15. 9. Some contend this motif was adopted from the story of Heracles, in which in India he gives his daughter Pandaie a gift of five hundred elephants, see Indica^A 1. 8.

² Cf. Geogr^S 1. 9; Indica^A 5; Anab^A 5. 6.

³ Bronkhorst, *Greater Magadha*, 92–93.

Buddhists.¹ Early Buddhist literature, however, does know Greek society and refers specifically to its alterity: ‘Among the Greeks, Kambojans and other borderland states there are but two social classes, master and slave’.²

Under the governance of Aśoka (c. 269–232 BCE) the Mauryans reached their zenith, with an empire that encompassed most of India proper.³ It is often argued that the circumstances of political centralisation enabled greater commercial, cultural, and political connections to be configured between the extra-Indic regions of Central Asia, the northwesterly extremities of the Mauryan Empire, and the cultural and political heartland in Magadha. Vast infrastructural changes were undertaken, such as the development of fixed trade routes; most notably, Eratosthenes of Cyrene (c. 276–194 BCE) records a ‘royal road’ moving west to east from the Indus to Palimbothra (Skt. Pāṭalīputra).⁴ The

¹ That the term *śramaṇa* was much later used in this manner is revealed in a comment of Clemens Alexandrius around the beginning of the 3rd century CE, who relates that the *śramaṇas* ‘practise truth, make predictions about futurity, and worship a kind of pyramid beneath which they think the bones of some divinity lie buried’—a clear reference to Buddhists. John W. McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described in Classical Literature* (St. Leonards: Ad Orientem Ltd, 1971), 183.

² *yonakambojesu aññesu ca paccantimesu janapadesu dveva vaṇṇā ayyo c’eva dāso ca*. MN 2. 149. The precise Yonas to whom the text refers is a matter of debate. On the basis that the same phrasing occurs in the fifth Aśokan edict, the broad consensus is that the passage of the *sutta* should pertain to the Seleucid Period of Arachosia, where the Greeks and Kambojans lived together. Karttunen, *Yonas and Yavanas in Indian Literature*, 329; Bronkhorst, *Greater Magadha*, 209. Bhikkhu Anālayo diverges, arguing the reference could derive from the time of the Buddha on the basis the OIA *yauna* of Darius I’s inscriptions is faithfully transcribed as *yonā* in Pali. Bhikkhu Anālayo, *A Comparative Study of the Majjhima-Nikāya, Volume 2* (Taipei: Dharma Drum Publishing Corporation, 2011), 552fn116.

³ For an elaboration of this complicated history, see Romila Thapar, *Aśoka and the Decline of the Mauryas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961).

⁴ Indica^A 1. 3

Mauryans utilised these networks of established farming and urban communities along the major overland routes of the North and Northwest to spread their military and political power as well as technology and commerce rapidly from and into regions far afield.¹

Despite greater unification, the Northwest was still conceptualised as the other during this period. In his edicts, written in Aramaic,² Greek, and Gāndhārī in the Northwest and Brāhmī³ in the North, Aśoka sought to accommodate his political expression to local milieu whilst envisioning them as part of an integral whole. However, he describes the regions belonging to the Yonas (Seleucids), Kambojas, Gandhārans, Raṭhikas, and Pitinikas as western border (*aparaṃta*) regions in the Northwest.⁴

¹ Heitzmann, 'Early Buddhism, Trade and Empire', 124.

² The earliest is likely to be an inscribed white marble pillar from Sirkap, Taxila, which mentions a governor Priyadarśi, i.e., Aśoka, when he served as governor of Nāggārūdā (lit. 'carpentry' = *takṣan* 'carpenter' + *śīla* 'nature'(?)), under his father Bindusāra. John Marshall, *Taxila. An Illustrated Account of Archaeological Excavations Carried out at Taxila under the Orders of the Government in India between the Years 1913 and 1934: Vol. I: Structural Remains* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), 164–65.

³ Brāhmī is an Indic script, first attested in the Aśokan inscriptions of the 3rd century BCE, which was used throughout the North and Northwest. Its origins are murky and theories in that regard remain largely speculation, with some scholars favouring a Semitic origin (cf. Kharoṣṭhī above) and others a purely Indic origin, finding a proto-type in the Indus Valley Script. For a detailed discussion, see Salomon, *Indian Epigraphy: A Guide to the Study of Inscriptions in Sanskrit, Prakrit and the Other Indo-Aryan Languages*, 17–41.

⁴ Shāh 5. 12; Mān 5. 22, E. Hultzsch, *Inscriptions of Aśoka* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1925).

THE GRAECO-BACTRIANS

The 3rd century BCE brought sweeping changes to the political landscape in Central and South Asia. The fall of the Mauryan Empire led to a decentralisation of political power across North and Northwest. Several independent urban states arose in the North, for example at Mathurā and Kauśāmbī, whilst slightly further south the Śuṅga Empire was established (c. 185–75 BCE).¹ In Bactria, the satrap Diodotus I (c. 250–230 BCE) initiated a revolt against the Seleucids Antiochus II (c. 261–246 BCE) and Seleucus II (c. 246–226 BCE), thereby establishing an independent kingdom of Graeco-Bactria.² According to Strabo (64 BCE–24 CE) his ascension also forced Arsaces (248–211 BCE) to flee eastwards towards the Euphrates and to Parthia, rebelling against Seleucid hegemony there and ultimately forming the Parthian Empire.³ Diodotus I was succeeded by a son of the same name,⁴ but governance would soon pass to Euthydemus I (c. 230–200 BCE), whom Polybius (c. 200–118 BCE) records as being confronted in Bactria around 208 BCE by the army of the Seleucid Antiochus III (c. 241–187 BCE) and besieged at the capital Zariaspa (Bactra). Eventually, Euthydemus I sent his son,

¹ B. D. Chattopadhyaya, ‘Mathurā from the Śuṅga to the Kuṣāṇa Period: An Historical Outline’, in *Mathurā: The Cultural Heritage*, ed. Doris Meth Srinivasan (New Delhi: American Institute of Indian Studies, 1989), 19–28. See below for further discussion.

² The process by which he instituted independent rule has been discerned in modifications Diodotus I made to coinage. Initially, the satrap issued coins in the name of Antiochus II—ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ (‘Of King Antiochus [II]’)—whilst replacing the suzerain’s portrait with his own, and later he supplied his own name and title—ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΔΙΟΔΟΤΟΥ (‘Of King Diodotus’), see Boppearachchi and ur Rahman, *Pre-Kushana Coins in Pakistan*, 92–98; Michael Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage* (London: Hawkins Publications, 1976) Typ. 63–83.

³ Geogr^s 275.

⁴ See Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, 36.

Demetrius I, to ratify a peace treaty with the Seleucids, and Antiochus III agreed to allow Euthydemus I to adopt the title ‘King’¹, thereby establishing the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom.

Polybius states that Antiochus III thereafter crossed the Hindu Kush (Caucus) into ‘India’ and renewed the treaty, first arranged between Seleucus Nicator and Candragupta, with the current Mauryan ruler Sophagasenus.² An abundance of coinage indicates that Euthydemus I and Demetrius I’s collective reigns in Bactria were lengthy and prosperous. According to the famous passage from Strabo’s *Geography*, they were enabled by virtue of their capital to advance southwards from Bactria over the Hindu Kush into South Asia, conquering tribes in the mountainous regions of the Northwest and establishing themselves in the lower regions of the Indus delta, initiating the period of Indo-Greek ruler in the Northwest.

FROM PERIPHERIES TO CENTRES

From the 2nd century BCE the Indic North and Northwest would succumb to several invasions and imperial endeavours, beginning with the Indo-Greeks and followed by the Indo-Scythians, Indo-Parthians, and Kuṣāṇas. Under these regimes, certain structural changes would occur that appear to have incrementally given rise to greater unity

¹ This is corroborated by Euthydemus I’s coins, which follow the pattern of his predecessors and depict the ruler’s portrait on the obverse, in addition to the typical motif of a seated Hercules with a club or a prancing horse along with the legend ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΕΥΘΥΔΗΜΟΥ (‘Of King Euthydemus’) on the reverse, thereupon formally marking the existence of a Greco-Bactrian state under his governance. See Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, Typ. 84–99.

² Hist^P 10. 49; 11. 34.

between the two regions. In turn, these changes would have major implications for Buddhist institutions also, enabling them to conceive of a broader region, outside their home in Greater Magadha, as being embosomed by the Dharma. The historical and discursive dimensions of this process are treated in the following chapters.

CHAPTER TWO: BUDDHISM, EMPIRES, AND KINGDOMS

Buddhism's political ideology is purely monarchic if not outright imperialist. It widely gives precedence to rulers (*kṣatriya*) over Brahmins, as in its famously reversed enumeration of the class (*varṇa*) system, but more principally posits, as the epitome of its ideal, the figure of the wheel-turning ruler (*cakravartin*), whose unique form of statecraft serves to uphold and propagate the Dharma throughout the four cardinal directions. In particular, two historical figures were elevated above all others as rulers to have neared this ideal: the Mauryan Aśoka of the 3rd century BCE and the Kuṣāṇa Kaniṣka I of the 2nd century CE, both of whom can be credited with the formation of notably expansive empires. The concern of the present chapter is the period of North and Northwest Indic Buddhism that lies betwixt these two empires, a space between two imagined utopias, and a period when the Dharma, in the full sense of the term, was regarded as evanescent.

BUDDHIST POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

The ideology of the wheel-turning ruler was both early and widespread among Buddhist traditions. Exactly how early, however, is a matter of debate. Many scholars would cite the widely disseminated *Agāṇṇasutta*¹ as evidence of it, whose representation of politics and society is foreshadowed in this case by the single ruling monarch Mahāsaṃmata, elected by the populace to rule in exchange for taxation in what many term a 'social contract'.² Whereas others (as this Mahāsaṃmata is not

¹ DN 3. 80–98. No fewer than 16 parallels have been identified in Chinese, Sanskrit, Tibetan.

² S. J. Tambiah, *World Conqueror & World Renouncer: A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand against a Historical Background* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 13–16.

named wheel-turner) employ the same text to argue rather that this single monarch is but a ‘narrative device’ and that early Buddhist political ideology assumes a plurality of ‘oligarchs’ (*khattiya-maṇḍala*), a state regarded as descriptive of the political conditions of the urban city-states (*janapada*) of a pre-Mauryan period.¹

It is possible, of course, to accept both of these positions, the one being ideological and the other historically descriptive. The notion of the wheel-turning ruler is sufficiently widespread in early sources² to be considered a central component of a Buddhist political ideology and the status, as far as I am aware, was never wholly endowed upon any historical ruler and was rather reserved for figures of the mythic past and future. Where historical rulers are concerned, Buddhist literature offers descriptions that naturally diverge from this ideal and rulers are rarely presented as exclusively Buddhist. To warrant being labelled a Buddhist, it seems, required little more than a ruler not being overtly hostile.³

The only ruler to come close to acquiring the status of a wheel-turning ruler was Aśoka and this suggests the possibility that Buddhism’s specific imperialist notion was a later addition to their political ideology, attributable, in this case, to the influence this ruler had in being the first to build an expansive empire in South Asia. Still others may argue that it was Buddhism’s ideology itself that provided Aśoka with a model of governance alternative to the Brahmanical ‘coercive staff of command’ (*daṇḍa*), as outlined in the *Arthaśāstra*, which, as his edicts show, he clearly did not appear to favour ideologically.⁴ What is clear is that monarchism, in the *Agaññasutta* and elsewhere, is presented as being wed to monasticism, to the extent the righteousness of a ruler’s polity, its subjects, and indeed the entire cosmos, is dependent upon their dual existence. As Stanley Tambiah has elucidated, this envisions governance through Dharma as a dual force, the wheel-turning ruler as ‘world conqueror’, who is second only to the Dharma,⁵ and the Buddha as ‘world renouncer’, whose relation is

¹ Steven Collins, ‘The Discourse on What Is Primary (Agañña-Sutta). An Annotated Translation’, *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 21 (1993): 306–9.

² See e.g., *Cakkavattisihanādasutta*. DN 3. 58–79.

³ Fussman, ‘Upāya-kauśalya: L’implantation du bouddhisme au Gandhāra’, 26.

⁴ Giovanni Verardi, *Hardships and Downfall of Buddhism in India* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2011), 80–83.

⁵ E.g., in the *Dhammarājasutta*: *Evam vutte aññataro bhikkhu Bhagavantam avoca ‘ko pana bhante rañño cakkavattissa dhammikassa dhammarañño rājā’*

expressed somatically in their sharing the 32 characteristics of a great man (*mahāpurusalakkhaṇa*) and funerally in their receiving the same exequies.¹

AŚOKA

Buddhist textual sources widely attribute Buddhim's expansion to the North and Northwest to the patronage of Aśoka. Unlike the majority of other rulers of South Asia, he received a dedicated narrative cycle, represented in art, epigraph and text, which was designed to express the roles he served for Buddhist institutions.

In post-5th century Theravāda *Vamsa* literature, we are informed that following the conclusions of the Third Buddhist Council, in which Aśoka served a prominent role, monastic 'missionaries' were sent from Pāṭaliputra to the extremities of the Mauryan Empire, including such locales as Gandhara.² In the (Mūla)-Sarvāstivādin *Aśokāvadāna*³ a similar account is given, although here he is further presented as having undergone pilgrimage to key sites associated with the Buddha's life⁴ and to have taken the Buddha's relics from eight Droṇa stupas, establishing them anew in Dharmarājikā stupas throughout his empire, thereby demarcating both Buddhism and his righteous governance through a specifically Buddhist medium.⁵ It is for these reasons that Aśoka is the only historical ruler in Buddhist discourse to have enjoyed a status near to that of the wheel-turning ruler. Specifically in Sarvāstivāda discourse

ti. 'Dhammo, bhikkhū' ti bhagavā avoca. AN 3. 149. 'Thus, another monk asked the Fortunate One: 'But what, sir, is the ruler of the wheel-turning ruler who is righteous and rules by the dharma?' 'The Dhamma, monk.' The Fortunate One replied.

¹ See Tambiah, *World Conqueror & World Renouncer: A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand against a Historical Background*, 48–51.

² For a detailed study, see E. Frauwallner, *The Earliest Vinaya and the Beginnings of Buddhist Literature*, Serie Orientale Roma 8 (Rome, 1956), 12ff.

³ A synopsis and comparative analysis of the major witnesses can be found at Jean Przyluski, *La Légende de l'Empereur Açoka (Açoka-Avadāna) dans les textes Indiens et Chinois*, Annales du Musée Guimet: Bibliothèque d'Études, tome XXXII (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1923). For a study and translation of the Skt., see John Strong, *The Legend of King Aśoka. A Study and Translation of the Aśokāvadāna* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).

⁴ The *Aśokāvadāna* narrates that Aśoka was guided by the monastic Upagupta to thirty-two such sites (*pradeśa*), establishing a *caitya* at each. Aś-av 83ff. For further discussion, see Strong, *The Legend of King Aśoka. A Study and Translation of the Aśokāvadāna*, 119ff.

⁵ See Chapter Fifteen: Relics and Stupas

he is named a ‘quarter wheel-turning ruler’ (*caturbhāgacakravartin*),¹ denoting the lesser of four wheel-turning types who governs a single continent as opposed to four, an ‘iron-wheel-turning ruler’ (鐵輪王),² and, by association, an ‘armed wheel-turning ruler’ (*balacakravartin*).³

However, these discourses are not strictly in accordance with epigraphic and material remains. Although Aśoka expresses his relation to Buddhist institutions in several of his edicts⁴—acting as a mediator of institutional schisms (*saṃghabheda*) that had occurred among the monastics at Kauśāmbī, Sārnāth and Sāñcī,⁵ communicating his adherence to Buddhism as a *budhasaka* (‘Śākya of the Buddha’)⁶ and an *upāsaka*,⁷ advocating the recitation of specific ‘discourses in Dharma’ (*dhammapaliyāya*, Skt. *dharmaparyāya*),⁸ engaging in such activities as visiting the sites of the Buddha’s life,⁹ and expanding the Konakamuni stupa at Nigali Sagar,¹⁰ near Lumbini, Nepal—scholars generally

¹ Aś-av 24; SC 2379/44a1.

² T 2043. 132a12–19. In Sarvāstivādin scholastic literature, the wheel-turning ruler is assorted into four by an associated metal: gold-, silver-, copper-, and iron-wheel-turning types (*suvarṇarūpyatāmrāyaścakriṇaḥ*), who respectively govern four, three, two and one continents, see Abhidh-k-bh 3. 95–96; T 1558. 64b21–c12. Aśoka was therefore regarded as the lowest (*adhama*) of the four.

³ This title is found appended to several rulers in Sarvāstivādin narrative literature. It could well be connected to the former notion of an iron-wheel turning ruler on the basis of a scholastic definition that the ‘one whose [wheel] is made of iron goes to the vicinity of [another ruler]; they brandish swords at one another and thereafter bow. All cakravartins, however, are innocuous.’ *yasya śāstramayaṃ, sa teṣāṃ antikaṃ gacchati anyonyaṃ śāstrāny āvahanti paścān namanti. sarve tu cakravartinaḥ avadhāḥ*. Abhidh-k-bh 3. 96d. See also T 1558. 65b3. For further discussion, see Strong, *The Legend of King Aśoka. A Study and Translation of the Aśokāvadāna*, 49–56.

⁴ These inscriptions are discussed in detail by Heinz Bechert, ‘Aśokas “Schismenedikt” und der Begriff Saṃghabheda’, *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens und Archiv für indische Philosophie* 5 (1961): 18–52; K. R. Norman, ‘Aśoka and Saṃghabheda’, in *Studies in Original Buddhism and Mahāyāna Buddhism in Commemoration of the Late Professor Dr. Fumimaro Watanabe*, ed. Egaku Mayeda (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshodo, 1993), 89–29; Hermann Tieten, ‘Aśoka and the Buddhist “Saṃgha”’: A Study of Aśoka’s Schism Edict and Minor Rock Edict 1’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 63, no. 1 (2000): 1–30.

⁵ Sār 7, Hultsch, pp. 161–63.

⁶ Rūp 1, Hultsch, pp. 166–69.

⁷ Sah 1, Bair 2, Brah 2, Śidd 5, Hultsch, p. 169ff.

⁸ Calc 4, Hultsch, pp. 172–74.

⁹ Rum 2, Hultsch, pp. 164–65.

¹⁰ Nig 2. Hultsch, *Inscriptions of Aśoka*, 165. Stupas of Buddha Kanakamuni are mentioned twice in Chinese travelogues: [1] Faxian 法顯 records that a

contend it is unlikely his intention was to employ only Buddhism as state-craft, and that these more Buddhist oriented declarations formed but part of a focused effort at consolidating power across the spectrum of his populace.¹ Moreover, these locations are well within the range of where Buddhism was already established. Whilst there is archaeological evidence for Buddhism outside of Greater Magadaha, such as the stupa in Sāñcī, Madhya Pradesh², looking to the regions of the North and Northwest, very little substantiates the claim that Buddhism had spread to these regions, let alone with the support of Aśoka.³

Literary sources that attempt to localise Buddhism in these regions during the reign of Aśoka were composed much later than the period to which they refer and are products most likely of the early Common Era.⁴ It should also be pointed out that several Dharmarājikā stupas attributed to Aśoka are mentioned in inscriptions and manuscripts of the same period⁵ and that he also appears in relief art from the

stupa was erected at Kanakamuni's birthplace, located 1 *li* to the north of a town called Nabhiga, itself thirteen *li* to the south of Śrāvastī, T 2085. 861a20-22; translated in Legge, James, trans., *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms; Being an Account by the Chinese Monk Fâ-Hien of His Travels in India and Ceylon, A.D. 399-414, in Search of the Buddhist Books of Discipline. Translated and Annotated with a Korean Recension of the Chinese Text* (New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp. & Dover Publications, Inc, 1965), 64. Similarly, Xuanzang 玄奘 records a stupa, also at the Buddha's birthplace, thirty *li* to the northeast of a town named after another past Buddha, Krakucchanda, itself situated fifty *li* south of Kapilavastu, in the vicinity of which he also found an inscribed pillar, established by Aśoka, that recorded the circumstances of Konakamuni's *nirvāna*. T 2087. 901b17-22; translated in Samuel Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World. Translated from the Chinese of Hiuen Tsiang (A.D: 629). Vol. II* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1884), 19.

¹ Thapar, *Aśoka and the Decline of the Mauryas*, 3.

² Julia Shaw, 'Stūpas, Monasteries, and Relics in the Landscape: Typological, Spatial, and Temporal Patterns in the Sanchi Area', in *Buddhist Stūpas in South Asia: Recent Archaeological, Art-Historical, and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Jason Hawkes and Akira Shimada (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009), 114-45.

³ For further discussion of archaeological data, see Chapter Fifteen: Relics and Stupas in the North and Northwest.

⁴ See Max Deeg, 'Aśoka—Model Ruler without Name?', in Patrick Olivelle, Janice Leoschko, and Himanshu Prabha Ray (eds), *Reimagining Aśoka: Memory and History*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 362-79 (p. 359ff); Deeg, 'From the Iron Wheel to Bodhisatvahood', pp. 13-14.

⁵ These include six Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions associated with the stupas at Taxila and Butkara I, see No. 40, CKI 60, 218, 256 465, 556. One Kharoṣṭhī manuscript also mentions a Dharmarājikā, see Timothy Lenz, 'Ephemeral Dharma; Magical Hope', *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 23 (2009): 138. And one

region.¹ Collectively, such evidence indicates that Aśoka's constructed landscape of the however imagined past was very much an institutional reality for Buddhists of that present. If not to be treated historically, the *Aśokāvadāna* cycle is therefore quite revealing as piece of discourse in the early Common Era of the North and Northwest, the implications of which shall be considered later. Furthermore, his presentation as the ideal ruler is contrasted within several witnesses of this narrative cycle with the Indo-Greek, Indo-Scythian, Indo-Parthian and Kuṣāṇa rulers to follow him.

NARRATIVES OF DECLINE

Various witnesses of the *Aśokāvadāna* remember the post-Mauryan condition as one of decline, an age in which the very lives of Buddhist monastics and institutions were at risk and the Dharma itself in danger of disappearing.² Chinese and Sanskrit witnesses of the narrative cycle inform us that the Śuṅga Puṣyamitra (c. 187–151 BCE), named in the latter as the last Mauryan ruler,³ upon taking control of the empire, persecuted Buddhism by destroying stupas and murdering monks as far as the cities of Śākala (Sialkot, Punjab)⁴ and Sthūlakoṣṭhaka (Swat)⁵ in

Brāhmī inscription dated 34 Huviṣka (161/162 CE), names another in Mathura, see Harry Falk, 'A Dedicatory Inscription from the Time of Huviṣka in the Mathura Museum', *Berliner Indologische Studien* 11/12 (1998): 13.

¹ Mahmood ul-Hasan, 'Depiction of Asoka Raja in the Buddhist Art of Gandhara', *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan* 54, no. 2 (2017): 155–62.

² There are various accounts found throughout Buddhist literature to deal with the disappearance of the Dharma. The majority say the Dharma would have lasted for one-thousand years, had not the Buddha allowed women to take ordination, after which the time of its disappearance was reduced to five-hundred years after the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*. Some accounts maintain that after five-hundred years a counterfeit Dharma (*pratirūpakadharmā*) shall remain for the remaining five-hundred years, whilst others offer entirely different time-frames, for example of five-thousand years, see Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, 192ff; Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time*, 27ff.

³ Aś-av 135.

⁴ Ch. 舍竭國. The Sangala of Arrian and the Euthydemia of Ptolemy.

⁵ Ch. 偷羅厥吒. This city is widely associated with Mingora, Swat, see Przulski, *La Légende de l'Empereur Açoka (Açoka-Avadāna) dans les textes Indiens et Chinois*, 305; Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, 389; K.T.S Sarao, 'On the Question of Animosity of the Brāhmaṇas and Persecution by

the Northwest.¹ Though it is clear he installed Brahmanism as a state religion, and conducted the *aśvamedha* ('horse sacrifice') to demarcate his rule,² many scholars do not regard this narrative of state-organised destruction as having any veracity. It does not appear that the Śūngas governed as far north even as Mathura³ and it is often cited that several rulers are attested as patrons of Buddhism, such as Dhānabhūti Vāchīputa at Bharhut,⁴ and that other Buddhist stupa sites, such as at Sāñcī, Satdhāra, and Sonāri underwent massive reconstructive phases due to the collective patronage of devotees in the 2nd century BCE;⁵ although this is of course indicative of a lack of political patronage. That said, there are very few inscriptions in the North and Northwest attesting to Buddhist donative activity and contemporaneous Mitra rulers of Mathura were also Brahmanical in their persuasions.⁶

Other sources retained in Chinese,⁷ Khotanese, Tibetan and Mongolian,⁸ which Jan Nattier collectively terms the 'Kauśāmbī Story',⁹ similarly state that the Indo-Greeks, Indo-Scythians, Indo-Parthians and Kuṣāṇas enacted such forms of oppression. The story informs us that it was due to the invasions of these forces that the Dharma became evanescent. In response, a certain Buddhist king of Kauśāmbī assembled all monastics in order to produce merit in defence from the invasions. However, bringing all the monastics together inadvertently led to infighting, the dominicide of the monastic communities' leaders, and ultimately the disappearance of the Dharma.

Brāhmaṇical Kings Leading to the Decline of Buddhism in India', *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 10 (2006): 271.

¹ See Aś-av 133–135; T 2042. 111b8–26.

² See Verardi, *Hardships and Downfall of Buddhism in India*, 99ff.

³ See Chapter Four: Indo-Greeks and Mitras in the North.

⁴ Akira Hirakawa, *A History of Indian Buddhism*, trans. Paul Groner (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), 223.

⁵ The phenomenon of 'collective patronage' is discussed in detail by Julia Shaw, 'Archaeologies of Buddhist Propagation in Ancient India: "Ritual" and "Practical" Models of Religious Change', *World Archaeology* 45, no. 1 (2013): 83–108.

⁶ See Chapter Four: Buddhism during the Indo-Greek Period.

⁷ Several accounts have been summarised and partially translated in Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, 198ff.

⁸ Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time*, 145ff; Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, 198ff. Cf. Timothy Lenz, *A New Version of the Gāndhārī Dharmapada and a Collection of Previous-Birth Stories: British Library Kharoṣṭhī Fragments 16 + 25* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 185–86.

⁹ Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time*, 3–4.

Nattier classifies these stories into several groups, found respectively in the *Mahāvibhāṣā*,¹ *Aśokāvadāna*,² the ‘*Kaṭyāyana Prophecy*’ in verse³ and prose,⁴ the *Mahāmāyāsūtra*,⁵ *Candragarbhasūtra*,⁶ and ‘Late Khotanese Adaptations’.⁷ The contents and development of these individual versions are highly complicated affairs and treated extensively by Nattier, the details of which shall not be reproduced here. Of particular relevance to our present discussion are the Chinese translations belonging to the *Aśokāvadāna* group.

The prophecy in the *Aśokāvadāna* 阿育王傳 records that a thousand years after the Buddha’s *parinirvāṇa*, three bad kings—

¹ Lamotte regarded the witness in the 7th century Chinese translation of the Sarvāstivādin *Mahāvibhāṣā* as the earliest, due to its more ‘sober’, non-mythical recount, in which there are only two kings, left unnamed. This position was later questioned by Nattier, who attributed the relative simplicity of the *Mahāvibhāṣā* version to the refined style of Abhidharma literature. T 1545. 918a. Cf. Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, 198–99; Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time*, 148–49.

² This group comprises three witnesses, all attributed to the Sarvāstivādin tradition. [1] The *Aśokarājāvadāna* 阿育王經 of the *Samyuktāgama* 雜阿含經, translated in 436–43 CE by Guṇabhadra 求那跋陀羅, T 99. 177b12–180c5. [2] The *Aśokāvadāna* 阿育王傳, dated to 306 CE and attributed to Anfaqin 安法欽, T 2042. 126c23–128b4. Antonello Palumbo dates the text to the 5th century CE on the basis of internal evidence, Antonello Palumbo, *An Early Chinese Commentary on the Ekottarika-āgama: The Fenbie Gongde Lun 分別功德論 and the History of the Translation of the Zengyi Ahan Jing 增一阿含經*, Dharma Drum Buddhist College Research Series 7 (Taipei: Dharma Drum Publishing Corporation, 2013), 235. [3] The *La gyar tham pa*, the 8th century Tibetan translation of the *Karmaśataka*, Peking. 1007; Derge. 340. See Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time*, 150ff.

³ This is the earliest extant version, dated to the 3rd–4th century CE. The three kings are given the names Rome, Iran and Parthia, suggesting perhaps this is an amended Bactrian version of the narrative, Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time*, 157ff.

⁴ This text has a likely Chinese origin for its employing the term ‘son of heaven’ 天子 instead of king 王 in reference to the three kings and for its containing reference to a recitation of 250 *Vinaya* rules, a number which only occurs in the **Dharmaguptakavinaya*, Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time*, 165ff.

⁵ Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time*, 168ff.

⁶ This group is comparatively later and was very popular in Central Asia, China and East Asia and Tibet. It is preserved in three loosely related versions: [1] a Chinese version belonging to the *Mahāsaṃnipātasūtra*, T 397. 374c–381c; [2] the Khotanese *Book of Zambasta*; [3] the *Candragarbhapariṣcchāsūtra*, preserved in Tibetan, Peking 125; Derge. 356. See Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time*, 170ff.

⁷ Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time*, 188ff.

Yavana 閻無那¹ in the north, Saka 釋拘 in the south and Pahlava 鉢羅擾 in the west, to which the *Aśokarājavadāna* 阿育王經 adds a fourth king, Tokharia 兜沙羅王 (i.e., the Kuṣāṇas)—shall invade and destroy the Buddha’s teachings, relics, stupas, and monasteries and kill Buddhist devotees, ultimately precipitating an annihilation of the Buddha’s Dharma (毀滅佛法) within twelve years. Eventually the three kings are extirpated by Nankekanshi 難可看視,² son of the king of Kauśāmbī named Mahāsenā 大軍王.³ In order to counter the impending disappearance of the Dharma, he organises a quinquennial festival (般遮于瑟, Skt. *pañcavārṣika*), and assembles the entire monastic community.⁴ However, this is to no avail and due to a disagreement between the Bearer of the Three Baskets (*trepitaka*) Śiṣyaka and the last Noble One Sūrata over the recitation of the Dharma, the monastics are killed and the Dharma disappears.

On the basis of their historical evidence and the period of translation, Nattier dates these witnesses to the 2nd–4th century CE, namely, a period near to the end of these events.⁵ However, she notes a discrepancy:

A peculiar element in this account, from the point of view of the Buddhist history of the region, is the portrayal of the Greeks, Sakas, and Parthians (and the Kushans as well, in the *Samyuktāgama* account) as ‘enemies of the Dharma’. The Indo-Greek ruler Menander (Pali Milinda) is renowned as a friendly inquirer into, and perhaps even a convert to, the Buddhist religion, and the Kushan ruler Kanishka is widely treated in Buddhist literature as an outstanding patron of the Dharma. From Chinese sources we know that the Parthians were among the earliest Buddhist missionaries in China, and from epigraphical evidence we know that many (perhaps even a majority) of the Sakas in northwest and north-central

¹ The transcription, *yanwuna* 閻無那, presupposes a Skt. *yavana*, as opposed to the Pkt. *yona*, *yona*, more commonly found in Buddhist epigraphy and literature of the North and Northwest.

² Also Nankanwang 難看王.

³ Also Mahendrasena 摩醯因陀羅斯那, T 99. 177c25

⁴ T 2042. 126c.

⁵ Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time*, 152–53.

India were devoted Buddhists. Why should these foreign powers, then, be treated as enemies of the faith?¹

Her solution is two-fold: either the story of this group preserves a ‘negative initial impression’ of the rulers’ ‘incursions into Indian territory’ at a time when ‘none, presumably, were Buddhists’, or, that by the 2nd century CE, this trio of rulers had become a ‘standard *topos* for ‘non-brahmanical rulers’’.²

Certainly the latter cannot be ruled out; the destructive actions of these non-Buddhist rulers clearly serve to contrast with those of Aśoka in the progression of the narrative and historical inconsistencies across the Kauśāmbī stories within this and other groups indicate the motif-like quality of the rulers’ enumeration. Yet the former solution does lack a degree of historical accuracy and nuance. These problems are treated in detail in the following chapters, but suffice now to say there is simply very little evidence—numismatic, epigraphic or otherwise—to suggest that any Indo-Greek, Indo-Scythian, or Indo-Parthian suzerain was a patron of Buddhism. The only exception to this rule is to be found with later Kuṣāṇa rulers, including Kaniṣka I and his son Huviṣka. Where political patronage is found, it is rather enacted at local systems of governance, for instance, by local satraps who realised independent power at the decline of the Indo-Scythians, or by the Apracarājas and Oḍirājas, who are often erroneously classified as Indo-Scythian.

Such accounts are also not limited to these stories and many associate Kuṣāṇa rulers and Kaniṣka I with such acts of destruction. Several relate that a ruler of the Xiao Yuezhi 小月氏 named Caṇḍakaniṣka 吒王³ invaded and laid siege to a city in Madhyadeśa, stealing the Buddha’s alms-bowl, a ‘secondary relic’ or item of use (*pāribhogika*), and kidnapping Aśvaghosa, in order that both may be appropriated for his kingdom in Gandhara.⁴ Faxian 法顯 also also retains

¹ Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time*, 155.

² Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time*, 155–56.

³ Abbreviation of 屬膩吒王 meaning ‘fierce Kaniṣka’. Parallel to Caṇḍāśoka (‘Fierce Aśoka’) in the *Aśokāvadāna* prior to his establishing the Dharmarājikās. On this term, see Deeg, ‘Aśoka—Model Ruler without Name?’, p. 362. This appellation for Kaniṣka in several sources, see the **Kalpanāmaṇḍitikā* 大莊嚴論經, T 201. 272a18–c16.

⁴ See the *Maming pusa zhuan* 馬鳴菩薩傳, T 2046. 183c17–184a; and *Fufazang yinyuan zhuan* 付法藏因緣傳, T 2058. 315b10–11. For a discussion and translation of the relevant passages, see Shoshin Kuwayama, *Across the*

a story of a Yuezhi 月氏 king, perhaps referring to Kujula Kadphises, who invaded the country of Puruṣapura 弗樓沙國, here located four days south of Gandhara 捷陀國, and attempted to make away with the Buddha's alms-bowl but, unable to do so, instead built a stupa and monastic complex.¹

Furthermore, comparable narratives regarding these invasions of the Indo-Greeks, Indo-Scythians, Indo-Scythians and Kuṣāṇas are to be located in Jain² and Brahmanical literature also. Indeed, the Brahmins too were highly concerned with events taking shape in the Northwest and the impact these had on their Middle Region (*madhyadeśa*). An elaboration of these events in the *Yugapurāṇa* section of the *Gārgīyajyotiṣa*³ states, in the form of a prophecy, that at the end of the Kali-age the battle-hardened Yavanas and Śakas invade Sāketa and go on to destroy Pāṭaliputra, which leads to disorder (*ākula*) throughout the realms and to a reversal in the social order and the ritual roles of Brahmins and serfs (*śūdras*).⁴ In his *Mahābhāṣya*, Patañjali (c. 1st century BCE) also gives brief reference to the *Yavanas* and *Śakas* overcoming Sāketa and Madhyamikā.⁵ And a chronologically later passage in the *Āraṇyakaparvan* of the *Mahābharata*⁶ appends still more barbarian rulers (*mleccharājan*) to the list, to include, amongst others,

Hindukush of the First Millenium. A Collection of the Papers, Kyoto: Institute for Research in Humanities, Kyoto University, 2002, pp. 32–33.

¹ T. 2085. 858b22–27; translated in Legge, James, *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms; Being an Account by the Chinese Monk Fā-Hien of His Travels in India and Ceylon, A.D. 399–414, in Search of the Buddhist Books of Discipline. Translated and Annotated with a Korean Recension of the Chinese Text*, 34–35. See also T. 2058. 313b.

² On Jain sources, see Chattopadhyaya, 'Mathurā from the Śuṅga to the Kuṣāṇa Period', 21.

³ For various reasons this work, in its present form, is dated to earlier than the mid 3rd century CE and perhaps as early as the mid 1st century BCE, see Michael Mitchiner, ed., *The Yuga Purāṇa* (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1986), 5.

⁴ YP 47–58, 62–64.

⁵ I give a very brief summary; for more lengthy and alternative treatments, cf. Bronkhorst, *How the Brahmins Won*, 10ff; Sucendra Ghosh, 'Understanding Transitions at the Crossroads of Asia: C. Mid Second Century BCE to c. Third Century CE', *Studies in History* 23, no. 2 (2007): 291; A. K. Narain, *The Indo-Greeks* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1957), 174–79; Tarn, *The Greeks*, 452ff.

⁶ Although the core of the chapter is regarded as contemporaneous to the *Yugapurāṇa*, that it names certain rulers and groups demands that the form in which we have it be dated no earlier than the mid 2nd century CE, see Bronkhorst, *How the Brahmins Won*, 12.

the Pahlavas (Indo-Parthians) and Tocharians (Kuṣāṇas).¹ An important elaboration of the events states:

[...] Serfs will propound the laws; and the brahmins, their servants, will become their pupils and abide by their authority. This world will be totally upside down: people will abandon the Gods and worship charnel houses [*eḍūkān* i.e., stupas],² and the serfs will refuse to serve the twice-born at the collapse of an aeon. In the hermitages of the great seers, in the settlements of brahmins, at the temples and sanctuaries, in the lairs of the Snakes, the earth will be marked by charnel houses, not adorned by the houses of the gods, when the Eon expires and that shall be the end of the Eon.³

Whether *eḍūka* refers to Buddhist stupas is a matter of debate. Monika Zin has recently drawn attention to evidence of such structures among Brahmanical communities, as depicted in Buddhist relief art, though admits there is an entire lack of corresponding archaeological evidence.⁴ The text implies, however, that we are not dealing with a practice to originate within Brahmanical circles and rather with the force of an entirely distinct source. It states, ‘the earth will be marked [or perhaps dotted (*cihna*)] by charnel houses’; these structures therefore were everywhere, appropriating the institutional and ritual sites of the Brahmins and local cults and compelling others to engage in this heterodox ritual form. In this respect, the only culprits could be the Buddhists, because it is precisely in this period that they initiated an unprecedented degree of stupa construction activity (spurring the Jains into building stupas of their own) and it is attested also that this involved the active appropriation of former Brahmanical or local cultic sites.⁵

¹ See Mbh 3. 48. 20c; 186. 29a–30c.

² See A. L. Basham, ‘The Evolution of the Concept of the Bodhisattva’, in *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhism*, ed. Leslie S. Kawamura (Ontario: Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion, 1981), 58fn72.

³ Mbh 3. 188.63a–66c. Translation from J. A. B. van Buitenen, trans., *The Mahābhārata. Book 2 The Book of the Assembly Hall. Book 3 The Book of the Forest* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1975), 596. Parentheses are my own.

⁴ For a synopsis of the arguments on the issue of *eḍūka*, see Monika Zin, ‘Brahmanische Asketengräber’, in *From Turfan to Ajanta, Festschrift for Dieter Schlingloff on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday*, ed. E. Franco and M. Zin (Lumbini: Lumbini International Research Institute, 2012), 1901–2.

⁵ See the case of Jamalpur, Mathura in Chapter Eight: Huvīṣka.

For Brahmin, Buddhist and Jain history, therefore, the period between the 2nd century BCE and 2nd century CE was pessimistically recalled as one of social upheaval and moral challenge. However, as the *Mahābhārata* implies, the Buddhists ultimately flourished during this period and this is indeed what is to be observed in material remains. Even though this not to be attributed to political figures of the aforementioned groups, the curious contrast between these unpropitious environs and Buddhism's institutional success does beg the question as to how this was achieved.

Kharoṣṭhī manuscripts from the turn of Common Era potentially shed led on the issue. On the one hand, they confirm the picture presented in the *Aśokāvadāna* that the Dharma's existence was indeed thought to be under threat. On the other, they further represent tools, as narrative propoaganda, by means of which such peril may be avoided. This outlook is neither limited to a single collection of manuscripts nor to a single genre. It is found in the so-named *Mahāyānasūtra* from the Bajaur Collection, in which 84,000 deities (*devaputra*) request of the Buddha that they are trained as bodhisattvas and make the following wish:

And the 84,000 gods said: “We, Venerable Lord, are directing our mind to the Highest Perfect Enlightenment, for the non-destruction and non-disappearance of the gift of this teaching, for the welfare of many people, for the happiness of many people, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, the welfare and the happiness of gods and men, for the non-interruption of the Buddhas' lineage, for the benefit of all beings, for the happiness of all beings, out of compassion for the world, for the non-disappearance, the development (and) increase, the non-confusion of the Tathāgata's teaching, for the completion of meditation. To the Highest Perfect Enlightenment (we are directing our mind). We, Venerable, want to be trained in the Bodhisattvaśikṣā, as it is announced (*yathāprajñāpta*-?).”¹

¹ *vae bhate bhagava · eda[ṣa dha]ma[ṣa daṇaṣa] aṣamochedae aṇatarahaṇae ca · bahajāṇahidae bahaja[ṇa](*suha)[e loa]ṇuapae arthae hidae suhae. deva-manuṣaṇa budhanetriaṇuchedae sarvasatvahidae sarvasatvasuhae loaṇapae tasagadaśaṣa-(*ṇasa) aṇatara[ha]ṇae · vurdhie vehulae · aṣamoṣae · bhavaṇa-paripurie · aṇutarae samasabosae · cito upadema. MSū^B 7r9–11. Edition and*

A discourse of decline is of course common to Mahāyāna literature and it perhaps may not strike one as remarkably unusual to encounter it here. However, the very same concern arises in the *Avadāna* narratives of the British Library Collection, which seek, moreover, to situate themselves within broader historical events. Thus, in several narratives we read that the good-Dharma (*sadharmo*)¹ or noble-Dharma (*aryadharmo*)² had disappeared (*antarahido*), or that its duration (*dharma ṭhidaga*)³ is at stake. No precise time frame is given to the longevity of the Dharma, nor is the nature of its perturbation made plain. However, its duration is attached specifically to the roles of certain Indo-Scythian satraps and Apraca figures, thereby embedding the issue directly within the political circumstance of the Northwest.

BUDDHIST POLITICAL PROPAGANDA

The **Zadamitrāvadana*⁴ details events in the life of a certain Zadamitra, a politically connected individual whose name is ethno-linguistically Iranian. Having engaged in meditation (*dhyāna*), he later speaks to a monk who ‘relates the true-Dharma has disappeared’: *matredi atarahido sadharma*. Zadamitra replies, ‘if the true-Dharma had disappeared, I would have attained *pratyekabodhi*’: *yadi sa[dhamra] atarahide hakṣa[di] ? aha pracageboṣ(*i) [pra]ūni[śa]*.⁵ This implies that

translation from Ingo Strauch, ‘More Missing Pieces of Early Pure Land Buddhism: New Evidence for Akṣobhya and Abhirati in an Early Mahayana Sutra from Gandhāra’, *The Eastern Buddhist* 41, no. 1 (2010): 28–29.

¹ Av^{L1} 182.

² Av^{L6} 53–54.

³ Av^{L7} 9v.

⁴ Av^{L1} 172–184.

⁵ Av^{L1} 182–183. Lenz translates, ‘If the true law had disappeared, I would have attained individual enlightenment’. Timothy Lenz, *Gandhāran Avadānas: British Library Kharoṣṭhī Fragments 1–3 and 21 and Supplementary Fragments A–C* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010), 82. Lenz takes *hakṣa[di]* as a conditional Skt. *abhaviṣyat* and *[pra]ūni[śa]* as Skt. *aprāpsyam*, which suggests that the Dharma has not yet disappeared and thus there was no need for Zadamitra’s presumable aspiration (*prañidhāna*) for *pratyekabodhi* to come to fruition. Lenz conjectures the aspiration may occur in abridged form in the lines immediately following, which reads, ‘a teacher...an arhat, great being. Expansion should be according to the model’: *[śathu] ? /// + + [ra]haddo mahatvo vi[stare] yasayupamano siya[di]*. Lenz, *Gandhāran Avadānas*, 84. These qualities, supposing they are the desired goal of the aspiration, would be

Zadamitra was in a higher existential position than the monk to be able to state the Dharma had indeed not disappeared, even though the monk thought it had.

In a second *Zadamitrāvada*¹, the protagonist is further connected to the Apraca General Aśpavarma, an early 1st century CE historical figure of the Apracarāja dynasty who is known from coinage, seals, and Buddhist donative epigraphy.² In this narrative both figures appear in connection with the donative activity of constructing a monsoon retreat (~~vaṣagṛo kara~~),³ indicating that their monastic contemporaries were directly relating Buddhism’s institutional success to local rulers.

To this example of political propaganda, the **Jihoṇikāvadāna* may also be added. Here, the ‘great satrap’ (*mahākṣatrapa*) Jihoṇika, who is also known from numismatic and epigraphic sources,⁴ arises in the locale of Gandhara and in connection with the activity of transporting something widely: *ve[stra]gena bahadi*. Lenz takes *vestragena* as Skt. *vaistārikena* (‘extensive’) and notes the collocation between this term and the Buddha’s Dharma or relics found in other sources.⁵ Thus, along with the G. *bahadi* = Skt. *vahati* (‘he transports’) the text ‘could imply the diffusion of relics or Buddhist doctrine (“transporting relics/the Dharma widely”), perhaps within Gandhāra.’⁶ Both solutions would correspond quite adequately with material remains in the region.

unusual in the context of an aspiration for *pratyekabodhi*, as the aspirations and predictions of *pratyekabuddhas* in other sources never detail such goals. For further discussion, see Chapter Fourteen: Epigraphic Aspirations.

¹ The title reads: *Zadamitrasa cevo bidige avadana*, Av^{L1} 185–204.

² See Chapter Six: The Apracarājas.

³ P. *vassika*, *vassagga*; Skt. *varṣaka* (‘rain residence’). Salomon draws on a similar expression from the *Avadānaśataka* to clarify the potential meaning: *bhikṣuṇīvarṣakaḥ kāritaḥ*, Avś 1. 269; see Salomon, *Ancient Buddhist Scrolls from Gandhāra: The British Library Kharoṣṭhī Fragments*, 147. The full expression—‘And he made a monsoon residence for the venerables’: *śano sē eo bhadato vaṣagṛo kara ?*—was deleted (up to but not including *kara*) by the scribe using a thin black line. Lenz observes that this passage was evidently viewed by the scribe as incorrect and thus doubts Salomon’s interpretation. Lenz, *Gandhāran Avadānas*, 92–93. Regardless of whether the scribe ultimately decided not to include the passage in the narrative, simply by virtue of the fact he composed it suggests that there was a conceptual possibility that Zadamitra or Aśpavarma engaged or could engage in such activity.

⁴ See Chapter Four: Satraps in the North and Northwest.

⁵ See Chapter Fifteen: Relics and Stupas.

⁶ Lenz, *Gandhāran Avadānas*, 98.

Pūrvayoga 5¹ concerns an unnamed Indo-Scythian (*Saka*) figure connected to Taxila (Takṣaīle), again at a time when the Dharma had disappeared. Similarly, the fragmentary nature of the text hinders any clear interpretation of the narrative's logic, but it appears to depict this individual in conversation with a monk and unusually giving a discourse of the Dharma to him, thus showing, in a fashion akin to Zadamitra, an atypical intimacy with Buddhist knowledge and pedagogic role for a non-monastic.

All of these examples are generally equivocal and the presentation of the local figures in a positive light dubitable. But I broadly agree with Timothy Lenz when he writes:

Presumably, the flattering portrayal of the Indo-Scythian rulers by our author was due to the fact that these were the men in power when he was writing, and thus he had incentive to paint them in a favourable light.²

Jason Neelis concurs and observes that these individuals' appearance in narrative 'was likely intended to acknowledge their religious patronage and to appeal to a regional audience.'³ We may, however, define the import of these narratives more precisely as being regionally specific instances of political propaganda, directed towards representatives of the Apracarājas and Indo-Scythian satraps ruling at the echelons of local governance. Later, we shall note the influences of other cases of Buddhist propaganda upon the inscriptions of these rulers concerning the theft of relics and their rededication in new locations.⁴

That Buddhists had focused their attention on regional powers during this period is further attested by the Oḍirājas also having a dedicated narrative cycle.⁵ These instances of localised propaganda are to be directly contrasted to such works as the *Aśokāvadāna*, whose discourse is contrarily imperial. It should be observed that only one ruler of the Indo-Greeks, Menander⁶, is found in Buddhist literature—and his representation is decidedly ambivalent—and that no Indo-Scythian or Indo-Parthian suzerains are ever encountered. Constrastingly, such

¹ Av^{L6} 45–55.

² Lenz, *A New Version of the Gāndhārī Dharmapada*, 185.

³ Neelis, *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade*, 255.

⁴ See Chapter Fourteen: Eschatology and Brahma-merit and Chapter Fifteen: Stupa Destruction and Relic Theft.

⁵ See Chapter Seven: The Oḍirājas.

⁶ See Chapter Three: Buddhism during the Indo-Greek Period.

Kuṣāṇa rulers as Kaniṣka I¹ are far more commonly represented. This discursive shift is to be attributed to political changes that occurred in the North and Northwest. Kaniṣka I, as his own inscriptions reveal,² was the first ruler realise the formation of an empire that unified the two regions in a way that had hitherto not been achieved. Later, it shall be argued that this possibility of conceptualising the regions of the North and Northwest as a whole is also found in Buddhist discourse, and specifically in the Mūlasarvāstivādin narrative concerning the Buddha's journey along the Northern Route from Mathura to Swat, which seeks to conceive of the two regions as part of a single Buddhist domain.³

To better understand these narrative discourses of decline and associated political propaganda, it is important that they be situated in historical context. This is achieved primarily on the basis of donative inscriptions, which afford insight into a political history of the Indo-Greek, Indo-Scythian, Indo-Parthian and Kuṣāṇa empires, as well as nuancing the relationship between Buddhism and empire and other distinct power structures in the regions, represented by autonomous satraps and the Apracarājas and Oḍirājas. What inscriptions reveal are diachronic and geographical patterns of patronage, which, in turn, can in some case be contextualised within broader historical contexts.

AN EPIGRAPHIC HISTORY OF BUDDHISM

Analysis of the total corpus of inscriptions reveals that donative activity was determined by regional patterns of religious affiliation. Of the 588 inscriptions, those connected to Buddhism represent the overwhelming majority at 389 (66%), 143 of which derive from the North and 241 from the Northwest. Next highest in frequency are those related to Jainism; these number 94 (16%) and derive almost exclusively from Mathura in the North. Those associated with Brahmins represent a minority at 18 (3%), 13 of which stem from the North and 5 from the Northwest, and a near equal number of 17 inscriptions are to be ascribed to other cults, including Iranian deities, *yakṣas* and *nāgas*, 13 of which stem from the North and 4 from the Northwest. These data would appear to suggest certain regionally based matrices of donative activity.

¹ See Chapter Eight: Kaniṣka I

² See Chapter Eight: The Kuṣāṇas.

³ See Chapter Nine: Sarvāstivādins.

However we must be cautious not to overgeneralise and remember that we have at hand documentation of but one form of donative practice contingent specifically on the act of writing. Therefore instances of other non-written forms of giving (no doubt constituting the shadowy bulk of such activity) are simply not attested. With this caveat in mind, we may thence draw the following tentative conclusions.

Buddhists were both the most ardent in recording their patronage and the most widely represented across both regions. Due to there being only a small number of Brahmanical and other cult inscriptions, it would appear that Buddhists were nearly alone in the Northwest. We know from other sources this was not entirely the case, though it must be concluded that Buddhists were the most salient of the religious institutions in this region's society, at least from the 1st century BCE. In consideration of the North, a quite different picture materialises. Jains were the Buddhists near equal in the extent of donative practice and, although still limited in number, Brahmins and devotees of other cults are represented in sufficient number to render a far more dynamic image of patronage. These findings, however, can be given further nuance when analysed diachronically.

Many inscriptions retain a date formula specifying the era of a ruler or a dynasty, on which basis they can be given a modern dating. Such information is essential, as it serves as the primary means (besides coinage) for establishing a political history of Buddhism, empires, and kingdoms. The vast majority of records, however, do not retain a date and are only classifiable in this regard in light of palaeographic, art-historical, or archaeological analyses. Scholars have indeed dated many inscriptions on these bases; however, the inexactness of the art precludes any certainty and a far greater number of objects have yet to be systematically considered. This affects the manner in which we can deal with the corpus of inscriptions from chronological perspectives.

Beyond their obvious utility in establishing chronologies, the very presence of eras is also, as averted to above, indicative of a political discourse—they were both a means of political distinction and demarcation as well as a temporal norm enforced on ritual behaviour. The imposition of regnal eras highlights the centrality of the donative ritual in society, it being a primary communicative method for rulers to mark and express their governance. For a ruler the calendar was therefore essential to the project of establishing power and was a strategy employed by all suzerains in the North and Northwest, from the

Indo-Greeks to the Kuṣāṇas. In the case of the Apracarājas and Oḍirājas, it was also arguably a central tool for their formation of a locally defined political identity in the face of the imperial regimes governing over them; their decision to inaugurate an era of their own should thus be taken as a deliberate attempt at political demarcation.

Inscriptions also regularly state a month, day, and constellation, marking the ritual time at which a donation was made. Analysis of this data reveals a rhythm to ritual practice that corresponds to known patterns in textual sources. However, this study shall show that normative ritual times, as defined in Buddhist literature, were not the most commonly applied and that such behaviour was governed by broader behavioural patterns associated with civil calendars determining social and economic behaviour.¹

Between the 2nd century BCE and 3rd century CE, several dynastic and regnal eras were in usage. The Indo-Greeks, Indo-Scythians, Indo-Parthians and Kuṣāṇas all inaugurated eras, as did satraps in some cases and the Apracarājas and Oḍirājas (Fig. 2.1). Since the 20th century, several attempts have been made at fixing a modern date to these eras, which shall not be recapitulated here.² But it was not until more recently that firmer conclusions have been reached due to the numismatic insights of Joe Cribb and the equally discerning textual and epigraphic analyses of Harry Falk.

THE ERA OF THE INDO-GREEKS

In inscriptions, the era of the Indo-Greeks is termed Pkt. *yoṇa* or Skt. *yavana*.³ Dates in this era range from the year 116 (59/58 BCE)⁴ up until year 384 (209/210 CE)⁵, and thus, despite being used by several other

¹ See Chapter Eleven: Ritual Rhythms in Donative Inscriptions.

² For a summary of early scholarship, see Sten Konow, *Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions: With the Exception of Those of Aśoka*, Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum (Calcutta: Government of India: General Publication Branch, 1929), lxxxii–civ.

³ For an etymology and historical analysis of this term, see Karttunen, *Yonas and Yavanas in Indian Literature*, 325ff.

⁴ This inscription is written in Brāhmī and stems from Mathura. However, there is some debate as to whether this refers to the Indo-Greek Era or to the era of an Indo-Scythian ruler such as Maues or Azes I. Cf. Quintanilla, *History of Early Stone Sculpture at Mathura CA. 150 BCE-100 CE*, 254–55; Elizabeth Errington and Vesta Sarkhos Curtis, 'Part 2: Constructing the Past', in *From Persepolis to the Punjab. Exploring Ancient Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan*, ed. Elizabeth Errington (London: The British Museum, 2007), 54ff.

⁵ CKI 124.

rulers and individuals across the North and Northwest, there are no obvious instances in which the date was used during the Indo-Greek Period itself. For this reason it is rather difficult to assess the political norms it may or may not have conveyed at that time.

Early epigraphers to encounter these high year numerals in date formulas recognised they could not correspond to any other known era, even though the inscriptions themselves were, from palaeographic analysis, to be considered as coeval. By way of solution, an Old Śaka Era was proposed, which received several calculations, all of which were essentially the product of intelligent guesswork.¹ It was not until Richard Salomon published an edition of the Reliquary Inscription of Rukhuṇa (No. 17) that a modern date could be more precisely defined. This is due to the inscription stipulating a date in terms of three eras: 27 Vijayamitra, 73 Azes I and 201 Yoṇa. Applying the then convention that the era of the Indo-Scythian Azes I is to be equated with the Vikrama Era of 58/57 BCE, Salomon thus calculated that the Indo-Greek Era was inaugurated in 186/185 BCE, which, he argued, was marked the final downfall of the Mauryans at the hands of the Indo-Greek ruler Demetrius I.² This solution was entirely plausible, although numismatists suggest alternative rulers, with whose coin issues this inaugural date would be a better fit.³

Nonetheless, the association between the Azes I and Vikrama eras could never be fully accepted. In Sanskrit literature, King Vikrama of Mālava is said to have established his era in commemoration of his

¹ For a brief summary of the propositions and difficulties surrounding the Old Śaka era, see Salomon, *Indian Epigraphy: A Guide to the Study of Inscriptions in Sanskrit, Prakrit and the Other Indo-Aryan Languages*, 181ff.

² Richard Salomon, 'The Indo-Greek Era of 186/5 B.C. in a Buddhist Reliquary Inscription', in *Afghanistan : ancien carrefour entre l'Est et l'Ouest : actes du colloque international organisé par Christian Landes & Osmund Bopearachchi au Musée archéologique Henri-Prades-Lattes du 5 au 7 mai 2003*, ed. O. Bopearachchi and M. F. Boussac (Brepols: Turnhout, 2005), 359–401.

³ Numismatists argue this date falls within the approximate reigns of Agathocles (c. 190–180 BCE) and Eucratides I (c. 174–145 BCE). The name of this latter ruler in particular arises alongside an unknown era in an inscription from Ai Khanum, which is dated to the year 24. However, if associated with the Indo-Greek Era of 185/184, 24 Yoṇa (162/162 BCE) produced a date too early for Eucratides I's reign. Errington and Curtis, 'Constructing the Past', 52–55.

defeating the Śakas (Indo-Scythians) at Ujjain,¹ which would appear to preclude any association with Azes I. Indeed, A. D. H. Bivar has argued that the profile of Vikrama corresponds more to that of the Gupta ruler Candragupta II (376–414 CE), who entitled himself *vikramāditya* in coinage and who overthrew the Western Kṣatrapas at their capital Ujjain in c. 388–409 CE. Candragupta II therefore may well have anachronistically established the Vikrama Era in response to the Śaka Era of 78 CE.² However, the era itself first appears historically as the Mālava Era in the late 5th century CE and the association with Vikrama does not arise until the 12th century CE.³

On numismatic grounds, Cribb suggested the era be reckoned ten years later to 174 BCE, thereby aligning it with the dates of the Parthian ruler Mithradates I (171–138 BCE), Eucratides I (175–174 BCE), and correlating its three hundredth year with Kaniṣka I's era of 127 CE.⁴ This hypothesis has since been substantiated in the modern datings now given to the era of Azes I.

THE ERA OF AZES I

Questioning the association between the Vikrama and Azes I eras, Harry Falk and Chris Bennett have proposed to shift the latter by a decade to 48/47 BCE. This suggestion is made the basis of the date formulae of two inscriptions, both of which are found upon the Reliquary Inscription

¹ Vikrama arises as a figure of legend in a number of late textual sources, such as the popular *Vikramacarita*, which is found in a number of Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jain recensions in Sanskrit, other modern Indic languages, and Mongolian. Franklin Edgerton, 'A Hindu Book of Tales: The Vikramacarita', *The American Journal of Philology* 33, no. 3 (1912): 249–84.

² A. D. H. Bivar, 'The Azes Era and the Indravarma Casket', in *South Asian Archaeology. Papers from the Fifth International Conference on the Association of South Asian Archaeologists in Western Europe Held in the Museum für Indische Kunst der staatlichen Museen preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin*, ed. Herbert Härtel (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1979), 370.

³ Franz Kielhorn found the so-named Vikrama Era does arise until 1198 CE and that it likely came to be named as such, since it originally began in autumn, a time traditionally considered as appropriate for war—i.e., *vikramakāla* ('war time'). Franz Kielhorn, 'Examination of the questions connected with the Vikrama era', in *Kleine Schriften mit einer Auswahl der epigraphischen Aufsätze*, ed. Wilhelm Rau (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1969), 513–612.

⁴ Joe Cribb, 'The Greek Kingdom of Bactria, its Coinage and its Collapse', in *Afghanistan, ancien carrefour entre l'est et l'ouest: actes du colloque international au Musée archéologique Henri-Prades-Lattes du 5 au 7 mai 2003*, ed. O. Bopearachchi and M. F. Boussac (Brepols: Turnhout, 2005), 214; 221–22. The Kaniṣka I Era is treated below.

of Saṭaṣaka (No. 41). The earlier of the two, on the lid, is dated to the year 156, day 23 of the Babylonian month Airu: [1] *saṃvatsaraye ṣapaṃcaīṣaśadama maṣe Ire d(*i)asa 20 1 1 1*. And the latter, on the body, is dated just under two decades thereafter, it seems, to the year 172, day eight of the intercalary month Gorpiaos: [5] *duasataṭiśadama Gurpiya yaṃbulima maṣa saste 4 4*.

The usage of an intercalary month (*yaṃbulima*, Gk. ἐμβόλιμος) here suggested to the authors that a variation of an autumn-based, Macedonian calendar, first created during the Parthian Empire, was current in the Northwest. This calendar is modelled on the Babylonian 19-year Metonic cycle—the time it takes for the moon to return to the same house on the same day of the year—which intercalated a lunar month every seven years, six of which followed the month Dystros (B. Addaru), and the seventh Gorpiaos (B. Ullulu). Day eight of the intercalary Gorpiaos in this inscription approximately coincides with the autumn equinox and year 172 is exactly nine cycles after year one of the ‘Parthian Macedonian Calendar’. The authors found that if this inscription is dated to the Azes Era and considered as equivalent to the Vikrama Era of 58/57 BCE, then the dates do not add up. However, if a start date of 48/47 BCE in an autumn based calendar is applied, then 172 Azes corresponds to one of only two intercalary months that occurred in the mid 1st century BCE, the other being 67/66 BCE, which was considered too early. Thereby the Azes I Era was shown to be a likely continuation of the Arsacid Era of 248/247 BCE (1 Azes I = 201 Arsacid),¹ only dropping the one hundred numerals².

Thus, returning to consider the Reliquary Inscription of Rukhuṇa (No. 17), Falk and Bennet argued that the corresponding dates of 73 Azes I and 201 Yoṇa produce an inaugural year of 175/174 BCE for the latter.³ These findings remain inconclusive, primarily because of the inexactness of historical astronomical calculation methods and that modern calendric reckonings made on the basis of ancient calendars are

¹ The Arsacid Era is named after the Parthian ruler Arsaces (c. 238–211 BCE), inaugurated to mark independence from the Seleucids in Parthia. Errington and Curtis, ‘Constructing the Past’, 43.

² On this phenomenon of dropping the one hundreds, see below.

³ Harry Falk and Chris Bennett, ‘Macedonian Intercalary Months and the Era of Azes’, *Acta Orientalia* 7 (2009): 197–216.

fraught with difficulties.¹ Yet provisionally they represent the best solutions forwarded thus far and hence are adopted in this study.

THE ERA OF MAUES

Another Indo-Scythian ruler before Azes I also established an era. However there is only one incontrovertible inscription to mention this era, the Copper Plate Inscription of Patika (No. 12), which is dated 78 Maues, and thus long after the reign of the suzerain. On such thin grounds, the era cannot be determined with any degree of certainty and a number of possibilities have been suggested.² John Marshall originally proposed that Maues began his era in c. 75 BCE, some decades before Azes I, and for archaeological reasons arrived at a date of 17 BCE for this inscription.³ Many scholars subsequently adopted close versions of this proposition.⁴ Alred Foucher also suggested it is a continuation of the

¹ Several critiques of Falk's solution to the eras of Kaniṣka I (see below) and Azes I have been forward by Karl-Heinz Golzio, who finds inconsistencies in Falk's astronomical calculations. However correct Golzio's own calculations may be, unfortunately his studies neither deal with the epigraphic sources correctly, often citing older editions, nor do they correctly understand Falk's line of argument in some instances. These errors would be too lengthy to elucidate here, cf. Karl-Heinz Golzio, 'Zur Datierung des Kuṣāṇa-Königs Kaniṣka I', in *Bauddhasāhityastabakāvalī: Essays and Studies on Buddhist Sanskrit Literature Dedicated to Claus Vogel by Colleagues, Students and Friends*, ed. Dragomir Dimitrov, Michael Hahn, and Roland Steiner (Marburg: Indica et Tibetica Verlag, 2008), 79–92; Karl-Heinz Golzio, 'The Calendar Systems of Ancient India and Their Spread to South-East Asia', in *Figurations of Time in Asia*, ed. Dietrich Boschung and Corinna Wessels-Mevissen (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2012), 205–25; Karl-Heinz Golzio, 'Zu in Gandhāra und Baktrien verwendeten Ären', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 162, no. 1 (2012): 141–50. To gain a sense of the difficulties in accurately calculating an epigraphic date, consider Jacobi's masterful presentation. Hermann Jacobi, 'The Computation of Hindu Dates in Inscriptions', *Epigraphia Indica* 1 (1892): 403–60.

² W. W. Tarn first proposed the aforementioned Old Śaka Era, which he dated to 155 BCE. Tarn, *The Greeks*, 500–502. Gérard Fussmann dated the inscription to a hypothetical Eucratides I Era of 172 BCE. Gérard Fussman, 'Inscriptions kharoṣṭhī du Musée de Caboul', *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 57 (1970): 35ff. Richard Salomon equated it with the Indo-Greek Era he reckoned to 186/185 BCE. Salomon, 'Indo-Greek Era', 371–73.

³ John Marshall, 'The Date of Kaniṣka', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1914, 986.

⁴ Errington and Curtis, 'Constructing the Past', 59; Harry Falk, 'Frühe Zeitrechnung in Indien', in *Vom Herrscher zur Dynastie. Zum Wesen kontinuierlicher Zeitrechnung in Antike und Gegenwart*, ed. Harry Falk (Bremen: Hempen Verlag, 2002), 87–88.

Arsacid Era of 248/247 BCE with dropped one-hundreds, and this was taken up by Falk who, adjusting his former view,¹ argues that the Maues and Azes era of 48/47 BCE are identical, thus producing a date of 30/31 CE for 78 Maues.² To Falk, this phenomenon suggests that shared era was in principle available to all who wished to adopt it.

However, in assimilating the two eras significant issues are created for the chronologies of certain Indo-Scythian satraps, including Patika, which demand that the Maues Era predates that of Azes I. The details of this shall be considered later in full,³ where I argue that the era should be dated to 75 BCE. Marshall originally estimated this date on the basis of archaeological data and there is now one further means to substantiate this position in light of the practice of dropping one hundreds, for an inaugural year in 75 BCE is precisely a century after the date proposed for the Indo-Greek Era on epigraphic and numismatic grounds (i.e. 1 Maues = 101 Yoṇa). This argument finds footing in the joint issues of Maues and the Indo-Greek queen Machene, who had married and thus formed a Graeco-Scythian alliance.⁴ On this basis perhaps a continuation of the Indo-Greek Era in the name of Maues would not be at all unexpected.

THE ERA OF THE APRACARĀJA VIJAYAMITRA

Again on the basis of the aforementioned Rukhuṇa Reliquary (No. 17), dated to 27 Vijayamitra, it is also possible to date the inauguration of the more provincial era of the Apracarāja Vijayamitra to 2/1 BCE. This era finds first attestation in the Reliquary Inscription of Vijayamitra (No. 11), dated to the fifth year of his reign (3/4 CE) and is used again on two other occasions, including Rukhuṇa's dedication in year 27 (25/26 CE) and the Reliquary Inscription of Prahodi (No. 24), dated to the year 32 (30/31 CE), which is the final inscription to mention Vijayamitra and likely indicates the end of his reign.

More widely, Apracarāja inscriptions utilise a mixture of the Indo-Greek and Azes I Eras. In respect to the latter, several are unique in stating that Azes I was 'deceased' (Skt. *atīta* 'one who gone

¹ See reference in fn. above.

² Harry Falk, 'Ancient Indian Eras: An Overview', *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 21 (2007): 137. For a discussion of Foucher's calculation, see Tarn, *The Greeks*, 494. Tarn, *The Greeks*, 494.

³ See Chapter Four: Satraps in the North and Northwest.

⁴ See Chapter Four: Indo-Scythian Suzerains.

beyond', *vṛttakāla* 'one whose time has passed'). Dates to employ this formula begin from 63 Azes (15/16 CE) and continue until 121 Azes (74/75 CE), although it is generally maintained among numismatists that Azes I's ended already at the turn of the Common Era. The Apracarājas first arise in the historical record at the decline of Indo-Scythian Empire¹ and, I shall argue, both their emergence as political actors and the inauguration of a regnal era by Vijayamitra were possibilities afforded by this decline and the concomitant redistribution of power to local systems of governance. Indeed, the era of Vijayamitra must be understood as a concerted attempt at political differentiation, identity and independence. This view, however, is against common scholarly convictions that the Apracarājas were themselves Indo-Scythians—a point that will be systematically rejected below.

THE ERA OF GONDOPHARES

Following the practice of his Indo-Greek, Indo-Scythian and Apracarāja predecessors, the Indo-Parthian ruler also established his own era. Only one instance thereof is encountered epigraphically on a inscribed stone from the Buddhist monastic complex at Takht-i-Bahi, Peshawar. This inscription is dated to 103 Azes and 26 Gondophares (55/56 CE) and thus the Indo-Parthian ruler must have established his era in 29/30 CE, a decade after numismatists argue he began issuing coinage.²

THE ERA OF THE ODIRĀJAS

At the cusp of the Indo-Parthian and Kuṣāṇa Period another group of local rulers, the Odirājas of Swat (Skt. Uḍḍiyāna) also established an era. However, this cannot be given a certain modern dating, because it never arises in correlation with another era. There exist a total of three inscriptions, each of which occurs within the reigns an Odirāja—Ajidasena, Varmasena and Senavarma—dated respectively to the years four (No. 34), five (No. 35) and fourteen (No. 36) of either a continuous dynastic or regnal era. The latter date occurs in the Gold Scroll of Senavarma, which also mentions the first Kuṣāṇa ruler Kujula Kadphises, who, for reasons that will be discussed below,³ must have

¹ See The Decline of the Indo-Scythians in Chapter Four and Chapter Six: The Apracarājas.

² See Chapter Five: The Indo-Parthians.

³ See Chapter Eight: The Kuṣāṇas.

conquered the Oḍirājas domain in Swat after aforementioned dedication, dated 26 Gondophares (55/56 CE), in which he potentially arises as a prince, and likely before 136 Azes (88/89 CE), where he is given, as is the case with Senavarma's inscription, a full set of titles: Great King, Supreme King of Kings, Son of Gods (*mahārāja rājātirāja devaputra*). Taking the Oḍi era as continuous rather than successional, the three Oḍirājas therefore must have governed across fourteen years in the latter half of the first century CE and in quick succession, which, I shall later argue more fully, likely indicates military struggle with the Kuṣāṇas. In a fashion akin to the Apracarājas these rulers too are classified, on limited grounds, as Indo-Scythian. But again their establishment of an era can be understood as an attempt at articulating a discrete political identity.¹

THE ERA OF KANIṢKA I

Scholarship of the 20th century equated the era of Kaniṣka I with the Śaka Era of 78 CE, which is attributed to a certain ruler known as Śālivāhana, who appears as a rival of Vikrama in the aforementioned *Vikramacarita*.² The Śaka Era found popular usage throughout the Indic sphere and was used in the contemporaneous inscriptions of the Western Kṣatrapas at Ujjain (where the era was likely developed), as well as widely in specialist fields, such as astronomy (*jyotiṣa*). However the attachment of the name to the era is again posthumous and is first attested from the 6th century CE. Several alternatives were suggested also. In particular, W. E. van Wijk attempted to correlate data provided by *Siddhānta* works on astronomy with Kuṣāṇa inscriptions. Using the coordinates of certain inscriptions that mention a year, month, day and a constellation, he arrived at a date of 128/129 CE as the inaugural year of

¹ See Chapter Seven: The Oḍirājas.

² Edgerton, 'A Hindu Book of Tales: The Vikramacarita', 261. John Fleet suggested that the battle between Vikrama and the Indo-Scythians (Śaka) is a figurative representation of the conflict between the Jains (Vikrama) and the Śakas (Buddhists) in the early centuries of the Common Era. According to him, this assimilation of the Śaka era with the Buddhists apparently arose from a confusion between the various forms of Śaka and Saka, as a name of the Scythian peoples and the Prakrit forms for the Śākya tribal confederacy, to which the Buddha was born (e.g., Sakiya, Śaka, Saka, Sakka), which was used to denote the Buddhists after the 3rd century CE. John Faithful Fleet, 'Note on a Jain Inscription at Mathurā', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1905, 634ff.

the Kaniṣka I Era.¹ Sten Konow quickly adopted this reckoning and maintained this stance, despite the convention of equating this era with the Śaka Era.²

By coincidence, Harry Falk, arrived at a similar date of 127 CE. However, his arguments are far more persuasive than the foregoing. He arrives at this date on the basis of an astral event recorded in Sphujidhvaja's *Yavanajātaka*, dated to 191 Śaka (269 CE). Sphujidhvaja proposes a cycle (*yuga*) of 165 years, starting from a rare astral occurrence in the *śuklapakṣa* ('bright fortnight') of the month Caitra in which the sun and the moon conjunctionally enter the sign of Aries (0°) at sunrise (*meṣasaṃkrānti*).³ This event can be accurately dated to the 21st March 22 CE, which thus served as a fixed marker. Sphujidhvaja provides two formulas: the first to calculate the date of his *yuga* in relation to the Śaka Era, the second to calculate the Kuṣāṇa Era in relation to the Śaka Era. The former reads as follows:

*gate saḍagre 'rdhaśate samānāṃ kālakriyāntatvam idaṃ
sakānām,
ravir yuge sūryadine prapede kramāt tad abdādi
yugādibhānoḥ.*

When 56 years (of the *yuga*) have gone, this (i.e., the following) is the (upper) limit of the reckoning of time for the Śakas.

On a Sunday in the *yuga* of the Sun, the Sun moved progressively; the beginning of that year is the beginning of the *yuga* of the Sun.⁴

¹ See Konow, Sten and Wijk, W.E. van, 'The Eras of the Indian Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions', *Acta Orientalia* 3 (1924): 52–91; Wijk, W. E. van, 'On Dates in the Kaniṣka Era', *Acta Orientalia* 5 (1927): 168–70.

² See Konow, *Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions: With the Exception of Those of Aśoka*, xciii–xciv; Sten Konow, 'Mathura Brahmi Inscription of the Year 28', *Epigraphia Indica* 21 (32 1931): 56–57.

³ Harry Falk, 'The Yuga of Sphujidhvaja and the Era of the Kuṣāṇas', *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* 7 (2001): 121–36.

⁴ Bill M. Mak, 'The Date and Nature of Sphujidhvaja's *Yavanajātaka* Reconsidered in the Light of Some Newly Discovered Materials', *History of Science in South Asia* 1 (2013): 10. Mak's reading differs from Pingree's, who reads:

gate ṣaḍeke 'rdhaśate samānāṃ kālakriyātattvam idaṃ sakānām.

Using this formula Falk works out the *Yavanajātaka*'s date of composition as follows: take 191 Śaka years, add 56 to get 247 *yuga* year and add this to the marker 22 CE to get 269 CE.¹

The second formula Sphujidhvaja details, calculates the relation between the Śaka and Kuṣāṇa Era. Falk amends the manuscript from David Pingree's initial transliteration as follows:

*gatena sādhyardhaśatena yuktyā vyekena koṣāṇa-
gatābdasamkhyā
kālah śakānām pariśodhya tasmād atītam anyad yuga-
varṣayātyāḥ*

The elapsed years of the Kuṣāṇas in combination with 149 (change into) the time of the Śakas.

Subtracting from this (Śaka time [plus 56]) the elapsed (*yuga*, e.g. 165 years) (produces) the elapsed years of the second *yuga*.²

He takes the first Kuṣāṇa year in which zero years have elapsed (*gata*), adds 149 to get the Śaka Era, to which 56 is augmented from the previous equation to produce the time of the *yuga*. Taking 22 CE as his marker, he then adds 205 (149+56) to arrive at 227 CE. Noting that this is much too late for Kaniṣka I, Falk argues that this date relates to the era of Kaniṣka II and, following the theory of dropped one hundreds, thereby subtracts one-hundred years and arrives at a date of 127 CE. Of course these findings are questionable in many respects;³ for one it presumes that elapsed years were employed in inscriptions and thus rulers would inaugurate a year 0. Although undoubtedly functional to mathematics and astronomy, this seems logically untoward in a civil

When 66 years of the Sakas have elapsed, that is the truth (i.e., foundation) of the calculation of time. At dawn on Sunday begin that year and the *yuga* of the Sun'

It also differs from Falk's:

gate ṣaḍagre 'rdhaśate samānām kālakriyātattvam idaṃ sakānām.

When 56 years (of the *yuga*) have gone, this is the state (of the sky leading to) the epoch of the Śakas.

Both of these two editions are quoted in Falk, 'The Yuga of Sphujidhvaja and the Era of the Kuṣāṇas', 24.

¹ To get 1 Śaka, take 22 CE and add 56 to get 78 CE.

² Falk, 'The Yuga of Sphujidhvaja and the Era of the Kuṣāṇas', 127.

³ For one of the few systematic critiques of Falk in this regard, see Golzio, 'Zur Datierung des Kuṣāṇa-Königs Kaniṣka I'.

calendar, which would more sensibly commence with year 1. Moreover, the necessity to subtract 100 years from the equation is not without its issues.

However, this latter point does find support elsewhere. The well-known theory of dropped one hundreds was first proposed by J. E. van Lohuizen-de-Leeuw, who noticed certain stylistic and palaeographic discrepancies in the art-historical and epigraphic feature of sculptures from Mathura, despite their being dated to the reign of a ruler named Kaniṣka. She concluded that there were two rulers bearing the name Kaniṣka: Kaniṣka I, who inaugurated the era, and a Kaniṣka II, who, after precisely one hundred years, dropped the 100 numeral.¹ Naturally not all accepted this proposition. Gérard Fussman quite reasonably remarked:

I always believed it was a funny idea to suppose that suddenly, at year 100 or 101 of Kaniṣka every scribe everywhere in India, from Bihar, or even Bengal, to Afghanistan chose to write dates expressed in the Kaniṣka era with omitted hundreds, and do it only for the Kaniṣka era and never for the other eras still current at that time, and do it without any exception. Nor can we be asked to believe that they were complying with a royal order: no Indian—or even Greek—king ever gave such an order, nor had the possibility to have it obeyed by scribes writing sometimes in far off districts inscriptions which mainly record gifts from individuals and often were not meant to be ever seen by any official. But funny ideas are hard to die.²

Fussman slightly misrepresents the data. The earliest inscription proposed as corresponding to the era of Kaniṣka II is dated to year 4 and thus there was sufficient time for the new calendar to be disseminated.³

¹ J. E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, 'The Second Century of the Kaniska Era', *South Asian Studies* 2, no. 1 (1986): 1–9.

² Gérard Fussman, 'Numismatic and Epigraphic Evidence for the Chronology of Early Gandharan Art', in *Investigating Indian Art. Proceedings of a Symposium on the Development of Early Buddhist and Hindu Iconography Held at the Museum of Indian Art, Berlin in May 1986.*, ed. Marianne Yaldiz and Wibke Lobo (Berlin: Museum für indische Kunst. Staatlicher Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, 1987), 72.

³ This occurs on a squatting Jina statue, for an edition, see Sh 15. Satya Shrava dates this to the era of Kaniṣka I, but Michael Skinner has since corrected this

His assumption that no ruler gave the order to date records in terms of their era is also clearly not the case. Below it shall be observed that during the Kuṣāṇa Period, and particularly under Kaniṣka I and his successors, the establishment of various inscribed objects were conducted with a high degree of imperial coordination that covered a large geographical range.¹ Moreover, it was observed above that the eras of Maues and Azes I also dropped the one hundreds of already existing Indo-Greek and Arsacid Eras respectively. Kaniṣka I was also dropping the one hundreds himself, for 1 Kaniṣka I (126/127 CE) is simply a continuation of the Indo-Greek Era, 301 years after 1 Yoṇa (175/174 BCE)—it seems the practice was highly common among rulers.

Indeed, Fussman will never see the death of this idea, for it has been quite incontrovertibly confirmed by several other inscriptions of the Kuṣāṇa Period. One Kharoṣṭhī inscription to record the donation of a well is dated to 41 Kaniṣka II, during the reign of the Great King, Supreme King among Kings, Son of the Gods, Caesar, and son of Vasiṣka, Kaniṣka III: [1] *maharajasa rajatirajasa devaputrasa kaiśarasa* [2] *Vazeṣkaputrasa Kaniṣkasa sambatśarae ekacapari*[3] *śae saṃ 20 20 1*.² Furthermore, Falk subsequently demonstrated in a later publication that the Kaniṣka I era was continued even by the Guptas, following the same system of dropped one hundreds. This is attested in no less than three dated inscriptions from Mathura: [1] a pillar dated to year 61 of Candragupta II, [2] a *yakṣa* image dated to the year 112 of Kumarāgupta; and a Buddhist pedestal dated to 121 of a Gupta Era. Whilst giving specific Gupta dates, these epigraphs also state another dating system ‘in the year of a continuing time’ (*kālānuvartamāna-saṃvatsare*), which is taken as a clear reference to the Kuṣāṇa Era, this being the only era to precede that of the Guptas in recent history. Taking the *yakṣa* image by way of example, this inscription records a donation in the year 112 of the Gupta reckoning and in year 5 of the *kālānuvartamāna*. Adding 112 years to the beginning of the Gupta Era (320 CE) produces a date of 432 CE. This date is said to be year 5 of the other continuing era and thus subtracting five years one arrives at a date

on art-historical grounds to the era of Kaniṣka II. Cf. Shrava, *Dated Kushana Inscriptions*, 14–15; Skinner, ‘Marks of Empire’, 317.

¹ See Chapter Eight Kaniṣka I.

² For further discussion, see Skinner, ‘Marks of Empire’, 7, 334.

of 427 CE, which corresponds to the first year of the Kuṣāṇa era in 127 CE, only three centuries later.¹

¹ Harry Falk, 'The Kaniṣka Era in Gupta Records', *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* 10 (2004): 167–76.

Fig. 2.1 Regnal and Dynastic Eras in the North and Northwest

<i>Name</i>	<i>Start of era</i>	<i>Months</i>	<i>Earliest Occurrence</i>	<i>Latest Occurrence</i>	<i>Relation to other eras</i>
Arsacid (Ar.)	248/247 BCE	–	–	–	–
Yona (Y.)	[1] 186/185 BCE [2] 175/174 BCE	Indic	116 (59/58 BCE)	384 (208/209 BCE)	–
Mauves	[1] 75/74 BCE [2] 57/56 BCE [3] 48/47 BCE	Indic Greek	78 (3/4 CE)	78 (3/4 CE)	[1] 1 = Y 101 [3] 1 = Ar 201
Vikrama	57/56 BCE	–	–	–	–
Azes (A.)	[1] 57/56 BCE [2] 48/47 BCE	Indic Iranian Greek	9 (39/38 BCE)	177 (129/130 CE)	[2] 1 = Ar 201
Vijayamitra (Apraca)	[1] 12/11 BCE [2] 2/1 BCE	Indic	5 (3/4 CE)	32 (30/31 CE)	[2] 1 = A 46
Gondophares	[1] 29/30 CE	Indic	26 (55/56 CE)	26 (55/56 CE)	
Oḍi	(55/56≥88/89CE)	Indic	4	14	–
Śaka	78 CE	Indic	–	–	–
Kaniṣka I	[1] 78 CE [2] 126/127 CE	Indic Greek	2 (129 CE)	41 Kaniṣka III (67/268 CE)	[2] 1 = Y 301

An issue arises in several inscriptions dated to a Kuṣāṇa Era, for it is difficult to differentiate between the respective eras of Kaniṣka I and Kaniṣka II. The ability to do so is afforded only in consideration of certain other evidences, which in turn are dependent on the type of object under consideration. In the case of objects from an excavated stupa or monastery, the archaeological context and associated numismatic or other finds can aid in dating inscriptions. In the absence of such context, additional typological frameworks can be applied to the discursive, linguistic and palaeographic tenets of the inscription itself or the art-historical features of the object upon which it is inscribed. The best scenario is that a constellation of all these points can be made to converge; needless to say this is rare and therefore many questions remain regarding the chronology of the corpora.

Michael Skinner employed an admixture of these methodologies to better determine dated inscriptions of the eras of Kaniṣka I and Kaniṣka II.¹ To do so, he considers the followings factors: [1] palaeographic typologies in Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī, [2] the linguistic principle that Sanskritisation indicates a later date, [3] the complexity of the inscription, and [4] the art-historical typologies forwarded by J. E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw in her *The Scythian Period*² regarding Buddhist and Jain sculpture from the Indic North. Skinner's study is the first systematic attempt at this form of stratification and thus represents an important development in defining the vicissitudes of the rulers' history. I provisionally adopt many of the new dates he provides for these inscriptions, particularly in those cases where art-historical typologies are included, as such skills lie beyond my reach. However, there are several instances in which the new assignments do not quite stack up

¹ Skinner, 'Marks of Empire', 13–16.

² J. E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, *The Scythian Period: An Approach to the History, Art, Epigraphy and Palaeography of North India from the 1st Century B.C. to the 3rd Century A.D.* (Leiden: Brill, 1949), 241–50.

and these cases in turn bring into question certain central premises of the aforementioned methodologies. In the following I consider three examples, two relic dedications and one Bodhisattva statue:

Reliquary Inscription of Lala (No. 54)

[1] *saṃ 10 4 4 [Kartiyasa maze divase 20] e[tra] purvae maharajasa Kaṇe[2]ṣkasa Guṣaṇavaśasaṃvardhaka Lala [3] daḍaṇayago Veśpaśisa kṣatrapasa [4] horamurt[o] sa tasa apanage vihāra [5] horamurto etra ṇaṇabhagava-budhaz[a]va [6] p[r]atistavayati...*

Year 18, day 20 of the month Kārttika. On this former day General Lala, promoter of the Kuṣāṇa lineage of the Great King Kaniṣka and Gift-Master of Satrap Veśpaśi, dedicates, as Gift-Master, several relics of the Fortunate One, the Buddha, in his own monastery...

Skinner dates this inscription to the era and reign of Kaniṣka II, producing a date of 244/245 CE. He does so primarily on two bases: [1] palaeographic affinities with the Well Donation of Samadavhara, dated to year 41 [Kaniṣka II] (267/268 CE) during the reign of Kaniṣka III¹ and [2] the degree of Sanskritisation.² Although he does not example the grounds for either of his palaeographic or linguistic arguments, an instance of the latter would be the verb *pratistavayati*, cited in the portion above, or *bhavatu* later in line 10 of the same inscription, which can be compared, for instance, with the respective equivalents in *praitaveti* and *hotu* of the earlier Reliquary Inscription of Candrabhi (No. 39), dated 134 Azes (86/87 CE). Nonetheless, these arguments must be reconsidered in light of the inscription's archaeological context, which

¹ CKI 158.

² Skinner, 'Marks of Empire', 187.

contrarily demands the inscription be dated to the era of Kaniška I, or 144/145 CE.

The inscription is engraved upon a stone relic-chamber slab that was excavated by General Claude August Court (1793–1880), whilst in the employ of the Mahārāja Ranjit Singh (1801–1839), from a smaller stupa (later to be termed ‘Court’s Stupa’ by Alexander Cunningham¹) at the Manikyala, Pakistan. It was found along with copper, silver and gold urns enclosing one another as well as some worn Roman denarii (c. 96–41 BCE), and coins of the Kuṣāṇas Kujula Kadphises (c. 70–90 CE), Vima Kadphises (c. 110–126 CE) and Kaniška I (127–151 CE), all of which were found in the stratum *above* the inscribed slab.² It is therefore highly unlikely that the level whence the inscribed slab derives is later than the time of the latest coins and without the presence of others from subsequent Kuṣāṇa rulers, a date in the era of Kaniška II appears rather implausible. In turn this demonstrates the inherent inadequacies of dating inscriptions on palaeographic and linguistic grounds (i.e., for reasons of Sanskritisation).

Reliquary Inscription of Śveḍvarma (No. 54)

[1] *[saṃ 20 masa]sa Avadunakasa di 20 iś[e] kṣunaṃmi
Śveḍavarma Yaśaputra tanu[v]akaṃmi raṃṇāṃmi (*Nava-
viha)raṃmi acaryana Sarvastivadana pari[grahaṃ]mi
thubaṃmi bhagavatasa Śakyamunisa [2] śarira pradīḥavedi*

¹ Alexander Cunningham, *Four Reports Made During the Years 1862-63-64-65* (Simla: Archaeological Survey of India, 1871), 153, 161ff.

² See e.g., David MacDowall, ‘The Chronological Evidence of Coins in Stūpa Deposits’, in *South Asian Archaeology 1987. Proceedings of the Ninth International Conference of the Association of South Asian Archaeologists in Western Europe, Held in the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Island of San Giorgio, Venice. Part 2.*, ed. Maurizio Taddei and Pierfrancesco Callieri, Serie Orientale Roma 66, 2 (Roma: Istituto Italiano Per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1990), 729.

Year 20, day 20 of the month Audunaios. At this moment, Śveḍavarma, son of Yaśa, dedicates a relic of the Fortunate One Śākyamuni within a stupa into the possession of the Sarvāstivāda teachers at the Navavihāra in his personal monastic complex...

Skinner here too assumes a date in the era of Kaniṣka II and therefore would date the inscription to 246/247 CE. However, we should note the inscription does not meet his linguistic criteria, for example the verb *pradiṭhavedi* evidences little in the way of Sanskritisation. Nonetheless, as an additional justification for this later date he also cites the fact that the inscription contains an enumeration of the dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*) formula (in lines 2–4), in which regard he writes:

The inclusion of this fully articulated Buddhist teaching might indicate that this inscription was composed in year (one hundred) twenty rather than twenty. However, this dating is not definitive and a comparison of its paleographic features to other presumably second Kuṣāṇa century Gāndhārī texts in conjunction with Andrew Glass' (2000) study of Kharoṣṭhī manuscript paleography is required to properly date these objects.¹

Whilst understandably tentative in his reasoning, Skinner nonetheless opts for a later date, despite the lack of palaeographic analysis he himself regards as requisite. But the presence of a Buddhist teaching in such a form seems to me insufficient as grounds to date an inscription. True, it is not common to encounter such a lengthy doctrinal citation, although other examples are known already from the middle of the 1st century CE.² Unfortunately in this case there is no archaeological

¹ Skinner, 'Marks of Empire', 188.

² See The Gold Scroll of Seṇavarma (No. 36).

context¹ by means of which a date in the era of Kaniṣka I or Kaniṣka II can be conclusively determined.

Bodhisattva Statue of Bh[...] (No. 52).

[1] *[siddham] mah[ā]rājasya kaṇ[iṣkas]ya saṃ 4 he 2 d[i] 1*
etasyaṃ purrvāyaṃ bhikṣor=dha[r]mmanand[is]ya dha[r]-
mma[kathi]kasya sādhyavihārisya [bh.] /// [2]
pratiṣṭhāpayati mahādaṇḍan[ā]yaka hummiyaka vedyāṃ
<sa>kkavihāre anenaṃ deyadharmmaparityāgena māta-
pitṛināṃ āca ///

Success! Year 4 of the Great King Kaniṣka, month 2 of winter [Pauṣa], day one. On this former day, Bh[...], the co-resident of the Dharma Teacher Dharmmanandi, establishes [a Bodhisattva] in the Sakkavihāra on the platform of the Great General Hummiyaka. By means of this total relinquishing of a gift-worthy object [may there be]...of [his] mother and father [and] the teachers.

This object presents certain difficulties. Skinner argued the inscription should be dated to 4 Kaniṣka II (230/31 CE) on the basis of epigraphic Sanskritisation, as seen in such terms as *bhikṣoḥ*—as opposed to *bhikṣusya* in other inscriptions—and *pratiṣṭhāpayati*, as well as on palaeographic grounds, in that the *ha* is written in a form characteristic of the Gupta Period.² Other terms are not Sanskritised, such as *sādhyavihārisya*, and since the principle of Sanskritisation has been shown to be insufficient, this brings a later date into question. Art-

¹ For a description of the circumstances in which it came to light, see Pandit V. Natesa Aiyar, 'An Inscribed Relic Casket from Kurram', *Epigraphia Indica* 18 (1926): 16–20.

² Skinner, 'Marks of Empire', 184.

historically the image is classified as a Bodhisattva. Although this appellation is missing from the inscription, if the attribution is correct one could argue for date in the era of Kaniska I (130/31) on the basis that the practice of establishing Bodhisattva images ends in 51 Kaniska I (177/178 CE), during the reign of Huviska.¹

It is also notable that in an inscription dated to the same year (No. 51), another Dharmanandin established a Bodhisattva image. No doubt this could be coincidence. The donor is not entitled Dharma-teacher (*dharmakathika*) but Venerable (*bhadanta*), although both imply his elevated status within the monastic institution, and the inscription has EHS forms such as *bhikṣusya*, which, following Skinner's logic would place it earlier. The evidence in this case is therefore inconclusive. But it serves well to highlight the difficulties inhering in dating donative inscriptions.

DIACHRONIC PATTERNS OF PATRONAGE

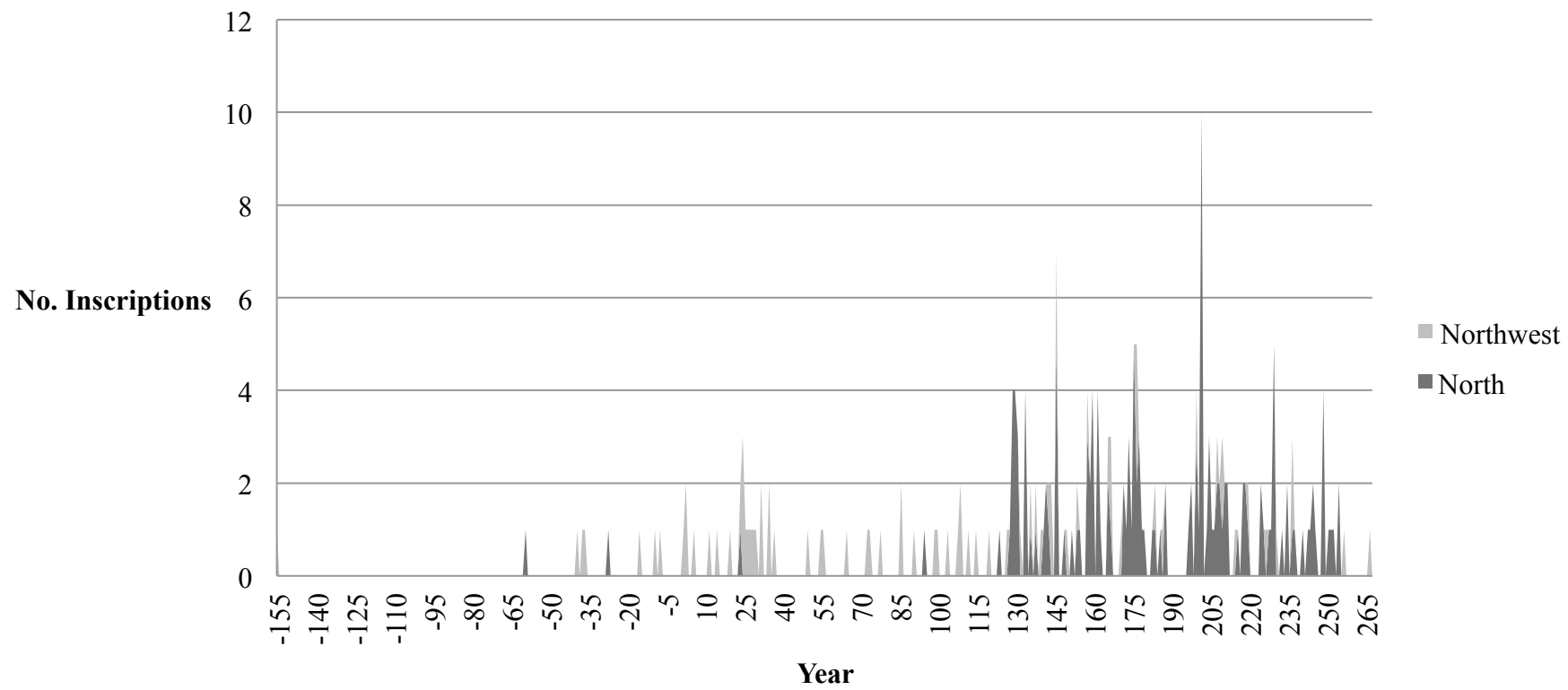
Dated inscriptions are quite naturally central to any historical study and have thence been used in scholarship primarily to determine the shifting political landscapes of the North and Northwest. But since these inscriptions are donative in character, they first and foremost bear witness to diachronic and geographic patterns of patronage, which are to be related to these broader historical vicissitudes. The graph below (Fig. 3.2) presents the number of *dated* inscriptions to occur within a given year between the mid-2nd century BCE and the late 3rd century CE. It

¹ Herbert Härtel, 'The Concept of the Kapardin Buddha Type of Mathura', in *South Asian Archaeology 1983: Papers from the Seventh International Conference of the Association of South Asian Archaeologists in Western Europe, Held in the Musées Royaux D'Art Et D'Histoire, Brussels*, ed. Janine Schotsmans and Maurizio Taddei (Naples, 1985), 656–57.

begins in 155 BCE, the earliest date typically given to the Indo-Greek ruler Menander, and closes with 267/268 CE, the final dated inscription from the Kaniṣka II era, during the reign of Kaniṣka III.

It is important to note that the available data within this period of 423 years is highly limited, with cases occurring in but 128 (30%) individual years. Most of these years also have only single cases, meaning it is difficult to ascertain a connection between specific historical moments and patterns of donative activity. However, there are certain discernible patterns within this time-span. Scholars have often viewed patterns of patronage in terms of a history of empires, thereby attributing rises and falls in donative activity to the influence of imperial administrations, whether that be due to direct patronage or to broader economic conditions, which naturally shift with rulers' economic policies. However, diachronic analysis of inscriptions reveals that certain patterns are not always to be positively correlated with successful empires. Indeed, we shall see that donative activity in fact rises in some periods of political and economic upheaval and that this rise is not to be attributed to imperial influence but to local rulers and other individuals and institutions.

Fig. 2.2 No. Inscriptions by Modern Year



Only 13 (2%) donative inscriptions stem from the Indo-Greek Period between the middle of the 2nd and middle of the 1st centuries BCE: 10 Brāhmī inscriptions in the North and three Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions in the Northwest (Fig. 3.3).¹ The majority of these, however, are dated inconclusively on palaeographic grounds or on the bases of art-historical categorisation. One relic dedication from the Northwest is dated to the reign of Menander in the mid 2nd century BCE and one other to 116 Yavana (59/58 BCE), likely at the very end of Indo-Greek or Mitra governance in the North.

During the Indo-Scythian (c. 75 BCE–30 CE) and Indo-Parthian Periods (c. 30–60 CE), whose limits are hard to define, there are many more inscriptions, of which 32 are dated (Fig 4.2), ranging from 9 Azes (39/38 BCE) to 103 Azes or 26 Gondophares (55/56 CE). In the graph above, these donations are clustered between 2–35 CE, the majority of which are to be attributed to Buddhist dedications enacted by individuals related to the Apracarājas (Fig. 6.6) or in two cases local Indo-Scythian satraps. From the perspective of Buddhist activity, therefore, one should in this case speak of a history of Buddhism not in terms of an Indo-Scythian or Indo-Parthian Period, but rather of an Apracarāja Period. Since these donations, of both the Apracarājas and satraps, were made during the phases of Indo-Scythian decline and Indo-Parthian insurgence,² this rise in donative activity is negatively correlated with the stability of empires and occurred rather in tandem with the economic and social uncertainty precipitated by war between these factions.

With the advent of the middle Kuṣāṇa Period, taken from the inauguration of Kaniṣka I in 127/128 CE, two changes are to be observed. First, the amount of donative activity increases overall, with a large number of donations made in the early years of the ruler's

¹ See Chapter Three: Buddhism during the Indo-Greek Period.

² See Chapter Four: The Decline of the Indo-Scythians.

governance. In some cases this was due to the direct influence of a suzerain.¹ Second, the geography of patronage shifts from the Northwest to the North and this remains the case for the remainder of Kuṣāṇa governance. During the Kuṣāṇa Period there are several other spikes in activity to be observed, which in some cases Skinner has correlated quite convincingly with both direct and indirect effects of empire.² However, both the general increase and the spikes in activity are not to be attributed to direct political patronage but to the fact that a broader demographic of society now had the wealth to fund the dedication of items of value, such as relics, statues, and so forth. For instance, the 33 inscribed donations in 77 [Vāsudeva] (204/205 CE), the highest in a given year, are found in relation to the construction of a Buddhist temple site at Jamalpur, Mathura, which predominantly involved monastic donors.

These shifting patterns of patronage can be correlated with the modifications to Buddhist discourse outlined in the foregoing. Namely, we can see in the Kharoṣṭhī *Avadānas* a form of propaganda, which relates to local rulers and their engagement with Buddhist institutions. Thus, with a rise in donative activity at the cusp of the Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian Empires, when local systems of governance realised greater autonomy, Buddhist narratives were composed with this specific type of political authority in mind. Contrastingly, with the rise of the Kuṣāṇa Empire, and the engagement now of suzerains in Buddhist rituals, the purpose of propaganda was adjusted to fit or reflect the new political landscape. The historical dimensions of these ruler and patterns of patronage shall be addressed in the following chapters.

¹ See Chapter Eight: Kaniṣka I.

² His findings are presented across the third chapter of his thesis, Skinner, 'Marks of Empire', 74–135.

CHAPTER THREE: THE INDO-GREEKS

‘The Greeks who caused Bactria to revolt grew so powerful on account of the fertility of the country that they became masters, not only of Ariana, but also of India’, as Apollodorus of Artemita [130–87 BCE] says: and more tribes were subdued by them than Alexander—by Menander in particular (at least if he actually crossed the Hypanis [Beas] toward the east and advanced as far as Imaüs [Himalayas], for some were subdued by him personally and others by Demetrius, the son of Euthydemus king of the Bactrians; and they took possession not only of Patalena, but also, on the rest of the coast, of what is called the kingdom of Saraostus [Saurāṣṭra] and Sigerdis [Sindhu]).¹

This account implies that the first ruler to establish Indo-Greek governance was Demetrius I (c. 200–190 BCE), which is corroborated perhaps by other sources, such as Justin, who names Demetrius ‘King of the Indias’. Numismatists, however, have highlighted that this version of history is difficult to substantiate. Iconography on his Bactrian silver coins, on the one hand, famously depicts, on the obverse, the ruler sporting an elephant scalp, symbolic of his military prowess and dominion over India, and on the reverse, a standing figure of Herakles

¹ Geogr^S 11. 1.

bearing a club, an elephant's head with a bell collar, a trident or *cadeus* with the legend ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ ('Of King Demetrius').¹ This may be related to later Greek historiographies, which tie Herakles to the conquest of India, and the hero may, therefore, be related to this discourse of dominion.² But these coins were never found in the domains he was supposed to have conquered, precluding any firm conclusions about his conquest.

Matters regarding the exact dates, successions, and domains of the Indo-Greek rulers remain a matter of debate.³ Scarce references in Greek and Roman historiographies and careful analysis of coin issues found in regions to the north and south of the Hindu Kush have afforded somewhat remarkably the possibility of reconstructing a broad picture of Indo-Greek rule. But a distinct lack of dated epigraphy from the period of their governance hinders the possibility of fixing an absolute chronology or saying much about the structure of their imperial administration. Later inscriptions reveal that specific administrative positions of imperial governance, such as the district governor (*meridarkha*, Gk. μεριδάρχης) and minister (*anankaya*, Gk. ἀναγκαῖος), were installed from this or the foregoing Seleucid Period (see Fig. 3.2). Perhaps the most salient of their administrative influences include the establishment of an era, termed in Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions as Pkt. *yona* and in Brāhmī inscriptions Skt. *yavana*, in 175/174 BCE (Fig. 2.1), and the manufacture and political technologies exhibited in their coinage. Osmund Bopearachchi writes:

¹ Bopearachchi and ur Rahman, *Pre-Kushana Coins in Pakistan*, No. 121–130; Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, Typ. 103–109.

² See *The Conquests of Alexander* in Chapter One.

³ The two major works published on the issue are Tarn, *The Greeks*; Narain, *The Indo-Greeks*. Many of the findings and assumptions of these works have been since revealed as inaccurate; for a more recent summary of the Indo-Greeks, see Errington and Curtis, 'Constructing the Past', 50ff.

The so-called Taxila type coins cannot be separated from the punch-marked tradition because of the symbols like mountain, hill with a crescent, river, and Elephant, depicted on them. However, the most distinguishable characteristic of these coins is that they are all die-struck...This is a radical change from the punching system to the Greek die-struck technique. Yet these rectangular coins are still marked by their irregular shape due to the cutting up into ingots of a strip of metal reminding us of the process used for some of the punch-marked series...Thus characterized by a transitional phase, these coins would have been the forerunners of the first Indo-Greek bilingual coinage of Agathocles and Pantaleon. I personally believe that these coins were the first attempts made by Demetrius I to introduce a new coinage to the territories south of the Hindu Kush, still used to the punch-marked coin system.¹

An inspection of Indo-Greek coinage reveals the rapidity with which the rulers sought to cater their media to local cultural norms. This adaptation manifests at two levels: in the motifs and languages used in coinage, and in the title rulers gave themselves.

Two successors to Demetrius I, Pantaleon (c. 190–185 BCE), and Agathocles (c. 190–180 BCE) issued rectangular coins employing local minting methods, weight standards, bi-lingual legends written in Greek and Brāhmī, and with imagery drawn from local iconography. One issue to bear the name of both rulers depicts a female figure bearing a lotus flower, who is widely identified with Lakṣmī. The latter ruler also issued two other coins, the first depicting two male figures identified as Saṃkarṣana and Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva with a Brāhmī legend, and another

¹ Bopearachchi and ur Rahman, *Pre-Kushana Coins in Pakistan*, 28.

depicting a railed-tree motif on the obverse with the Kharoṣṭhī legend—*hirañsame* (‘at Golden Retreat’)—and on the reverse the stacked-ball-and-crescent motif, with the Kharoṣṭhī legend—*Akathukreyasa* (‘of Agathocles’). This last image is known also to coinage issued by post-Mauryan rulers, such as the Aśvaka tribal confederacy and local guilds¹, and is regarded by some as being derived from a specifically Buddhist repertoire, although this view is now widely rejected.² Nonetheless, the introduction of bi-lingual legends combining Greek, Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī alongside local iconography in devices is a shift that should likely be attributed to a particular colonial moment in the early history of the Indo-Greeks in the Northwest.

It is in the legends of Indo-Greek coinage also that we encounter the first attempt to express imperial rule to the local populace. One ubiquitously finds the title *mahārāja* (‘Great King’), used as an equivalent for the Gk. βασιλεύς, wherein the adjectival prefix *mahā*—seemingly enabled rulers to distinguish themselves from local chieftains (*rāja*) who had been subjugated and amalgamated into the imperial fold. This title first occurs in issues of the first Indo-Greek ruler Demetrius I,³ but can be traced further back to issues of Lysimachus (c. 360–281 BCE), the successor to Alexander,⁴ as well as to the Diodoti of Bactria.⁵

Later the more lofty title Skt. *rājātirāja* (‘Supreme King among Kings’) was also introduced (Fig. 3.1) into coin legends. This first

¹ Bopearachchi and ur Rahman, *Pre-Kushana Coins in Pakistan*, 28.

² Narain, *The Indo-Greeks*, 59; Georgios Halkias, ‘The Enlightened Sovereign: Buddhism and Kingship in India and Tibet’, in *A Companion to Buddhist Philosophy*, ed. Steven Emmanuel (John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2013), 500. Discussed below in Chapter Three: Buddhism during the Indo-Greek Period.

³ Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, Typ. 100–112; Bopearachchi and ur Rahman, *Pre-Kushana Coins in Pakistan*, No. 121–130.

⁴ Bopearachchi and ur Rahman, *Pre-Kushana Coins in Pakistan*, No. 62.

⁵ Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, Typ. 63–99; Bopearachchi and ur Rahman, *Pre-Kushana Coins in Pakistan*, No. 92–120.

occurs in a square di-chalkon issue of Eucratides I (174–145 BCE), which reads, ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΕΥΚΡΑΤΙΔΟΥ ('Great King, the Great, Eucratides'), on the obverse, and on the reverse, *maharajasa rajatirajasa Evukratidasa* ('Great King, Supreme King among Kings, Eucratides').¹ Greek legends are not always in accord with corresponding Kharoṣṭhī legends, whose contents tend to vary. To take the coins of Eucratides I by way of example, it is observed that where a legend contains Gk. *μεγάλυς* ('great'), which in the above coin would correspond to the position of *rājātirāja*, one either finds there is no corresponding term in the Kharoṣṭhī,² or that other titles occur such as the more expected *mahataka* ('Great One').³ This indicates that the specific title *rājātirāja* was likely not given as a translation of a Greek term, that it was therefore not supplied by the Indo-Greeks but was already a concept of political relevance to the peoples of the region.

Fig. 3.1 *Rājātirāja*:

In searching for the origins of the title 'supreme king among kings', Iris Colditz has shown that semantic equivalents can be traced back to the Akkadian, *šar šarrāni*, through to Darius I in the Persian, *xšāyaθiya xšāyaθyānām*,⁴ the Gk. βασιλεύς βασιλεων, first introduced by Mithridates

¹ Typ. 193, Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*.

² Typ. 189–192, Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*. See also the rev. of one coin issued in Begram: *Kavisiye nagara devata* ('City Goddess of Kāpiśī'). Typ. 194, Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*.

³ Typ. 188, Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*.

⁴ Iris Colditz, 'Altorientalische und Avesta-Traditionen der Herrscherliteratur des vorislamischen Iran', in *Religious themes and texts of pre-Islamic Iran and Central Asia: Studies in Honour of Professor Gherardo Gnoli on the occasion of his 65th birthday on 6th December 2002*, ed. Carlo G. Cereti, Mauro Maggi, and Elio Provasi (Wiesbaden, 2003), 61–78. This title was used by Darius I in one edict at Behistun recording his seizure of the throne, which was produced in several languages including Old Persian, Elamite, Akkadian, and Aramaic.

II (123–88 BCE) to coin legends and adopted by subsequent rulers from Orodes I (85–75 BCE) to Vologese VI (208–228 CE), and ultimately to the Sassanians who used the Parthian, *šāhīn šāh*.¹ However, the source for its usage in the Northwest remains unclear. Harry Falk attributes Eucratides I's source to the Achaemenids,² although no evidence of their articulating this imperial title is attested in this region. B. N. Puri alternatively argues that the Indo-Scythian ruler Maues adopted the title from his contemporary Mithradites II.³ Maues was indeed the first to employ both the Greek and Indic counterparts widely and consistently in coinage throughout the Northwest. For instance, one silver tetradrachm reads, ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΜΑΥΟΥ ('King among Kings, the Great Maues') on the obverse and, *rajadirajasa mahatasa Moasa* ('Supreme King among Kings, the Great, Maues') on the reverse.⁴ The title underwent slight elaboration and modification in the Kharoṣṭhī under Azes I, Azilises, and Azes II, whilst the Greek was retained, e.g., obv. ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΑΖΟΥ ('King among Kings, the Great, Azes'), rev. *maharajasa rajarajasa mahatasa Ayasa* ('Great King, King of Kings, the Great, Azes'). Under the Indo-Parthian rulers, several combinations of the

For a translation, see Kuhrt, *The Persian Empire: A Corpus of Sources from the Achaemenid Period*, 141ff.

¹ Colditz, 'Altorientalische und Avesta-Traditionen der Herrscherliteratur des vorislamischen Iran', 66.

² Harry Falk, 'Names and Titles from Kuṣāṇa Times to the Hūṇas. The Indian Material', in *Coins, Art and Chronology II*, ed. Michael Alram et al. (Wien: ÖAW, Denkschriften, 2010), 73.

³ B. N. Puri, 'The Sakas and Indo-Parthians', in *History of Civilisations of Central Asia. The Development of Sedentary and Nomadic Civilizations: 700 B.C. to A.D. 250*, ed. János Harmatta (Paris: Unesco Publishing, 1994), 193–94.

⁴ Typ. 699; cf. Typ. 700–702; 704; 708–735, Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*. His joint issue with Queen Machene retains the same titles of Maues in Kharoṣṭhī. Typ. 736, Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*.

above titles were used, conceivably indicating hierarchies at the imperial level of governance as well as successions and progressions within individual ruler's careers. Gondophares did not adopt the titles and it is only the coins of his successor Orthagnes, which record ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΟΡΘΑΓΝΗΣ on the obverse and *maharajasa rajatirajasa mahatasa Gudapharasa Gadanasa* on the reverse. The Kuṣāṇas also adopted these titles, in Bactrian, but first in the Northwest as copies of Hermaeus, issued by Kujula Kadphises and, unlike former suzerains, in Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī epigraphy also.

Repeated occurrence of the political concept across expansive cultural, geographic, linguistic, and political boundaries does not reveal, necessarily, a linear transmission in all cases, as several scholars have tended to conclude. That the purported Greek or Parthian sources remain questionable is indicated by the fact invading rulers did not immediately adopt the title in initial coin issues but rather in later ones, presumably whilst cementing their power and political identity. This is suggestive of a process of assimilation and therefore the title's potential Indic pedigree. But this is not overtly supported by associated literature, wherein *rājātirāja* is highly rare.¹ That said, the synonym *rājādhirāja* is far more common, occurring as early as the Vedic *Taittirīyāraṇyaka*, here as an epithet for the deity Vaiśravaṇa,² as well widely in literature and epigraphy of subsequent periods for deities, rulers, and in one case the Buddha.³ All evidence points to the fact that the title was present in Indic contexts prior to the Indo-Greeks. This is potentially indicative, therefore, of an Indic source and its intentional suitability for the articulation of imperial rule in the region.

¹ It is to be found in the Lalitavistara in a long string of qualities encompassed by the 'wheel of Dharma' (*dharmacakra*). Lalit 26. 422–436.

² TĀr 1. 31. 6.

³ Av-ś 2. 88.

There is very little evidence to demonstrate how the Indo-Greeks structured their administrations and regional systems of governance. The absence of any joint issues between the suzerainties and local systems (unlike Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian coinage) indicates that perhaps they sought to centralise their power. Several titles of local officials, loaned from Greek, do in fact arise in later Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions from the Indo-Scythian, Indo-Parthian, and Kuṣāṇa periods, indicating that some version of the satrapy system—namely, one governed together by great satraps (*mahākṣatrapa*) and satraps (*kṣatrapa*), generals (*stratega*, Gk. στρατηγός; see Fig. 6.1), and district officers (G. *meridarkha*, Gk. μεριδάρχης)—was likely maintained by subsequent imperial and local regimes. However, the only trace of this system in the Indo-Greek period is found in respect to figures bearing the title ‘district officer’ and only one of these is dated to the time of their governance on palaeographic grounds.

The Reliquary Inscription of Theuduta (No. 2) is found on a steatite vase discovered by a certain C. G. M. Hastings in an unnamed ‘Pathan’ village, Swat, in the possession of a merchant who was using it for a moneybox. The inscription, engraved on the upper section of the vase, is written in early Kharoṣṭhī letters akin to those in Aśokan inscriptions and Indo-Greek coinage, dating it to the 2nd–1st century BCE.¹ It represents perhaps the earliest certain example of a dedication of the Buddha’s relics, enacted by a district officer named Theuduta (Θεόδοτος), who employs a standard textual formula *bahujanahitāya* (‘for the benefit of many peoples’) in his wish. If indeed the object originated from Swat, then Theuduta was presumably governing a part of the region under the contemporaneous ruler.

¹ F. W. Thomas, ‘A Greek Official in a Kharoṣṭhī Inscription’, in *Festschrift Ernst Windisch zum siebzigsten Geburtstag am 4. September 1914 dargebracht von Freunden und Schülern* (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1914), 362–65; Konow, *Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions: With the Exception of Those of Aśoka*, 1–4.

Fig. 3.2 *Meridarkha*:

The title ‘district officer’ is known outside the Northwest to texts and inscriptions from the Hellenistic and Roman periods of Egypt and Judah.¹ In *Maccabees*, the high priest of Judah, Jonathan, entered into negotiations with the Seleucids in the mid-2nd century BCE and was awarded the title *strategos* (see Fig. 6.1) and *meridarkh*,² indicating perhaps a close association between the two officers. The title is found in five Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions³ and a bi-lingual Kharoṣṭhī and Greek inscription⁴ from the Indic Northwest. The earliest of these likely dates to the Indo-Greek Period but the title more frequently arises in the Indo-Scythian and Kuṣāna Periods until the late 1st century CE.

Besides this inscription, only two others are dated to the Indo-Greek Period. Another records the donation of a lotus pond (*puṣkariṇī*) much further south at Pathyar, in the Kangra District of Himachal Pradesh, and is dated on the same grounds as the latter, although the religious affiliation of the donor cannot be determined.⁵ The second (whose

¹ Thomas, ‘A Greek Official in a Kharoṣṭhī Inscription’, 364.

² Eyal Regev, *The Hasmoneans: Ideology, Archaeology, Identity* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 21.

³ See No. 2–3, 10, 15, 36.

⁴ The inscription is found on a *phialē*. The Kharoṣṭhī reads: *kaliphōṇena meridarkhena pratiśunita nirakaṭe boasa* (‘By Kalliphōn, the Meridarchēs, after a promise, (this) was repaid for Boa.’). The Greek reads: ΚΑΛΛΙΦΩΝ ΜΕΡΙΔΑΡΧΗΣ ΕΥΞΑΜΕΝΟC ΑΝΕΘΗΚΕΝ ΤΩΙ ΧΑΟCΕΙ (‘Kalliphōn, the Meridarchēs, after a vow dedicated (it) to *Chaos’). Harry Falk, ‘Greek Style Dedications to an Indian God in Gandhara’, *Indo-Asiatische Zeitschrift* 13 (2009): 26–27.

⁵ This bi-script inscription, written in Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī characters akin to those of the Aśokan Edicts, reads: *Rāthitarasa Vayulasa pukariṇi*. See CKI 167. According to J. Ph. Vogel, the first term, identifying the donor Vayula, should be Rāthī, an ‘agricultural caste’ in the region whence the inscription

authenticity is questioned) was found at Shinkot, in the Bajaur valley region to the north of the Peshawar Plain and records the dedication of the Buddha's relics in a year of the otherwise unattested era of Menander (c. 155–130 BCE).¹

INDO-GREEKS AND MITRAS IN THE NORTH

There is some debate as to whether the Indo-Greeks governed in the North. Several Brahmanical works record the invasions of the Indo-Greeks at Sāketa and Pāṭaliputra² who were ultimately forced to turn back due to infighting. Kālidāsa's *Mālavikāgnimitra* describes a battle on the banks of the Indus between the Yavanas and the Śuṅga prince Vasumitra, who was protecting his father Puṣyamitra's *aśvamedha* horse.³ It is often claimed that the invading Indo-Greek ruler with whom the Śuṅgas battled was Menander. But there is little evidence to substantiate this claim, as many have⁴ and continue to do so.⁵ That the Indo-Greeks were forced to turn back for instance has been related to Menander being in conflict with Eucratides I (c. 170-145 BCE). In part, the assumption is based on Polybius' *Geography* (2nd century CE), which states Menander invaded Mathura⁶, and due to the fact that coins of both

derives. J. Ph. Vogel, 'Two Brahmi and Kharosthi Rock-Inscriptions in the Kangra Valley', *Epigraphia Indica* 7 (March 1902): 116–19. Such expressions of 'caste' identity are uncommon to Buddhist and Jain inscriptions, indicating that perhaps this dedication is Brahmanical in affiliation.

¹ See No. 1, discussed below in detail.

² See Chapter Two: Narratives of Decline.

³ Karttunen, *Yonas and Yavanas in Indian Literature*, 350.

⁴ Tarn, *The Greeks*, 228. Cf. Narain, *The Indo-Greeks*, 82.

⁵ Quintanilla, *History of Early Stone Sculpture at Mathura CA. 150 BCE-100 CE*, 9.

⁶ Tarn, *The Greeks*, 245.

him and his son Strato I were found in the region, albeit in small numbers.¹ Whether this is sufficient evidence to substantiate Indo-Greek rule, however, is a matter of debate.

It is clear that the Indo-Greeks and the Śuṅgas were engaged in close diplomacy, a matter confirmed by the famous Besnagar Pillar in Vidiśā, whose inscription records that during the reign of the Indo-Greek ruler Antialcidas (c. 115–95 BCE) a certain Heliodorus travelled from Taxila as ambassador to a presumed Śuṅga ruler, King Kāśīputra, and established a Garuḍa-pilar of Vāsudeva.² However, this locates the ruler not as far south as Mathura but at Taxila. One inscription from Mathura records the donation of a well (*udapāna*) and is dated much later to 116 Yavana (59/58 BCE)³, on which basis it is argued the Indo-Greeks governed the North and even perhaps until the mid-1st century BCE.⁴ The usage of an era, whilst evidencing Indo-Greek presence, does not demonstrate alone they ruled so late.

Formerly it was argued that the Śuṅgas governed such locales in the North as Mathura. Certainly, literary evidence appears to suggest that Puṣyamitra, the founder of the dynasty following the fall of the Mauryan Empire, invaded this far north.⁵ One inscription donated by a certain Dhanabhūti, previously equated with the Śuṅga ruler of the same name, has also been drawn on to substantiate this view but this inscription is now dated on palaeographic grounds to the Kuṣāṇa

¹ Narain, *The Indo-Greeks*, 77–78.

² For an edition and translation of the inscription, see Salomon, *Indian Epigraphy: A Guide to the Study of Inscriptions in Sanskrit, Prakrit and the Other Indo-Aryan Languages*, 65–67.

³ Quintanilla, *History of Early Stone Sculpture at Mathura CA. 150 BCE-100 CE*, 254–55.

⁴ Quintanilla, *History of Early Stone Sculpture at Mathura CA. 150 BCE-100 CE*, 9–10.

⁵ See Chapter Two: Narratives of Decline.

Period.¹ But on the basis of coinage there appears to have been several autonomous urban states at Mathurā, Kauśāmbī, and other cities, where independent Brahmanical rulers governed, distinct from the Śuṅga dynasty proper, but perhaps acting as vassals; namely the Mitra and Datta dynasties.² One inscription from Mathura corroborates the former dynasty's rulership, donated by certain Mitrā, the nursemaid of the ruler Viṣṇumitra's daughter Indrāgnibhadrā.³

BUDDHISM DURING THE INDO-GREEK PERIOD

W. W. Tarn long ago made the important observation that when the Graeco-Bactrians crossed the Hindu Kush at the beginning of the 2nd century BCE, they, unlike Alexander before them, had intimate knowledge of the cultural, social and political make-up of the Northwest.⁴ Following this assumption, one would expect to encounter evidence of this prescience in the manner in which the Indo-Greek rulers opted to articulate their governance in the Northwest. However, the ability to determine the extent to which the Indo-Greeks sought to instil their own norms or adapted to those they encountered is limited by certain factors. Foremost this is due to the aforementioned issues of chronology and by the fact the majority of sources available for the Indo-Greeks are represented by their coinage.

¹ See § 187. For a recent discussion, see Quintanilla, *History of Early Stone Sculpture at Mathura CA. 150 BCE-100 CE*, 10–13.

² Mitra rulers known from coinage include Gomitra I, Sūryamitra, Brahmamitra, Viṣṇumitra, Gomitra II, Satamitra, Dhruvamitra, Dṛḍhamitra. Datta rulers include Śeṣadatta, Puruṣadatta Uttamadatta, Kāmadatta, Bhavadatta, Rāmadatta, and Balabhūti. Chattopadhyaya, 'Mathurā from the Śuṅga to the Kuṣāṇa Period', 20.

³ See § 118.

⁴ Tarn, *The Greeks*, 129–30.

Views are divided in scholarship as to the religious landscape the Indo-Greeks encountered in the North and Northwest. Most would tend towards the view that Buddhism was in the latter region, having already been established since the Mauryan Period, as Buddhist discourse would lead us to believe, and since the 20th century, many scholars have argued that Buddhism was a central component of Indo-Greek politics and society. This view is exemplified still by Lamotte's statement, 'In contrast [to Puṣyamitra], in the North-West, certain Indo-Greeks, especially Menander, relied on Buddhism to assert their authority'¹—a position which in many respects is still maintained today.

But at this point, we must address a slight conundrum. If indeed, as Buddhist discourse would lead us to believe, Buddhism had expanded into the Northwest from the time of the Mauryan Aśoka in the 3rd century BCE and had widely constructed the symbols of their presence—stupas and monastic complexes—then presumably institutional Buddhism should have represented a cultural force of some measure. Logic demands therefore that the Indo-Greeks must also have been compelled to contend with their presence. Others argue that the manner of their interaction was mutual and manifested in an exchange of ideas in Graeco and Buddhist systems of thought.² There is, however, very little evidence to substantiate these views.

The stylistic influence on Buddhist art is of course well known, albeit first attested from a significantly later period than the Indo-Greeks' rule, and this evidences, therefore, that Hellenism stood later as a cultural koine quite apart from Indo-Greek politics. Coins issued by these rulers certainly represent some attempt at orienting their political media to locale ideologies. We have already seen that the coins of

¹ Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, xxiii. Parentheses are added.

² Johannes Bronkhorst, *Buddhism in the Shadow of Brahmanism* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 24–25.

Pantaleon and Agathocles depict such deities as Lakṣmī, Balarāma-Saṃkarṣaṇa, and Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa. Such evidence has led several to argue that it was not Buddhism but Bhāgavata and Vaiṣṇava cults who were most salient in the Northwest,¹ garnering sufficient attention as to warrant inclusion in coinage. Johannes Bronkhorst questions this evidence vehemently and contends that there were no Brahmins in the Northwest after the 3rd century BCE.² For him, these deities are not to be considered as part of Brahmanical culture and rather of certain cults, which ultimately were adopted thereinto.³ Later epigraphic and onomastic data from the 1st century BCE could be marshalled to contest his position.⁴ But the point of import here is that the Indo-Greeks did not, in adapting to local cultural conventions in the Northwest, deem it necessary to include Buddhist symbols or iconography in that particular medium.

Scholars have forwarded some apparent exceptions to this rule. In particular, one interpretation of the stacked-ball-and-crescent motif in the aforementioned coin of Agathocles as a stupa continues to provide evidence for some with the view that this Indo-Greek ruler was a Buddhist patron.⁵ A single coin of Menander is also cited in support of

¹ See Osmund Bopearachchi, 'Emergence of Viṣṇu and Śiva Images in India: Numismatic and Sculptural Evidence' (presented at From Alexander the Great to Kanishka: Numismatic Evidence in Constructing Early Central Asian and Indian History With Osmund Bopearachchi, Education Studios, Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, 2016). For further arguments in support of a strong Brahmanical presence in the Northwest, see Giovanni Verardi, 'Buddhism in North-Western India and Eastern Afghanistan, Sixth to Ninth Century AD', *ZINBUN* 43 (2012): 150–51.

² Bronkhorst, *How the Brahmins Won*, 17ff.

³ Bronkhorst, *How the Brahmins Won*, 24.

⁴ See Chapter Eight: Early Kuṣāṇa Period.

⁵ This interpretation was originally proposed by A. K. Narain, 'The Greeks of Bactria and India', ed. A. E. Astin et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University

his patronage, due to its depicting a *cakra*, which some have taken as an indication of his conversion to Buddhism. However this coin is quite unusual, dubiously only attested once, and the pan-Indic significance of the symbol renders any conclusions mere surmise. More commonly his coin issues depict Athena who is regarded as Menander's 'tutelary deity'.¹

Near uninterrupted sequences of such coinage within the early strata of stupas and monastic complexes at Buddhist sites in Pakistan indicate a firm Buddhist presence from the early 2nd century BCE,² although a greater degree of construction activity was more likely initiated in the middle to the latter half of that century or the century thereafter.³ It is not clear to what extent this evidence may be considered as reflecting Buddhism's status as an institutional presence in society. The existence of these rulers' coins says absolutely nothing specifically

Press, 1989), 406. But many continue to subscribe to the interpretation, see Halkias, 'The Enlightened Sovereign', 500.

¹ David MacDowall, 'Coinage from Iran to Gandhāra with Special Reference to Divinities as Coin Types', in *On the Cusp of an Era: Art in the Pre-Kuṣāṇa World*, ed. Doris Meth Srinivasan (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 248; Hans Loeschner, 'Kanishka in Context with the Historical Buddha and Kushan Chronology', in *Glory of the Kushans – Recent Discoveries and Interpretations*, ed. Vidula Jayaswal (New Delhi: Aryan Books International, 2012), 143.

² Single coins of Pantaleon (c. 190–185 BCE), Apollodotus I (c. 180–160 BCE) and Eucratides I (c. 174–145 BCE) were found at the site of Butkara I, Swat; and a single coin of the latter ruler also was present at the monastic sites Jandial B, Taxila and Takht-i-Bahi, Peshawar. For a tabulated presentation of coin deposits at stupa sites, see Errington, 'Numismatic Evidence for Dating Buddhist Remains', 211–16.

³ A coin of Menander was found in the second stratum (Gts2) of Butkara I, whose coins also represent the earliest to be uncovered at Dharmarājikā, Taxila, followed by one coin of Antialcidas (c. 115–95 BCE), one posthumous imitation of Heliccles (c. 120–90 BCE), 25 coins of Zoilus II (c. 55–35 BCE) and five imitations of Hermaeus (c. 90–70 BCE) dated to the early 1st century CE. Errington, 'Numismatic Evidence for Dating Buddhist Remains', 192–94.

about their attitudes towards Buddhism and points only to the fact that local peoples conducted ritual activities around stupa sites, of which coin-donations were a central aspect. If Buddhism were considered a force of any note, then this is certainly not reflected in the manner in which the Indo-Greeks pictured the society they encountered in their own media.¹ We may presume therefore that Buddhism functioned little in Indo-Greek statecraft and that the Indo-Greeks supported Buddhism little during the period of their rule.

The limited scope of Buddhism's societal power is also to be observed in the small group of donative inscriptions from this period, numbering only 13. These include 10 Brāhmī inscriptions from the time of what have been a joint Indo-Greek and Mitra governance in the North² and three Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions to the Indo-Greek Period in the Northwest.

The majority of those in the North are undated but can be fixed on palaeographic grounds and on the bases of art-historical categorisation. Of these three are Jain, recording the donation of 'worship tablets' (*āyāgapāṭa*)³ at Mathura⁴; two are Buddhist, one recording the donation of stone (*śilā*) to the east at the Ghoṣitārāma in Kauśāmbī,⁵ and a pillar from Amin in Rajasthan,⁶ two record the donation

¹ See Chapter One: The Graeco-Bactrians.

² On the uncertainties of governance in the North and specifically at Mathura, see Quintanilla, *History of Early Stone Sculpture at Mathura CA. 150 BCE-100 CE*, 9–10. Discussed further in Chapter Three: Buddhism during the Indo-Greek Period.

³ On this term, see D. C. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphical Glossary* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1966), 41, s.v. *āyāgapāṭa*.

⁴ See Quintanilla, *History of Early Stone Sculpture at Mathura CA. 150 BCE-100 CE*, 268–70.

⁵ See Quintanilla, *History of Early Stone Sculpture at Mathura CA. 150 BCE-100 CE*, 271.

⁶ See Quintanilla, *History of Early Stone Sculpture at Mathura CA. 150 BCE-100 CE*, 258.

of the *yakṣa* Mañibhadra statues, one from Mathura¹ and another from Kauśāmbī;² two are Brahmanical, one recording the donation of a well (*udapāna*), dated to 116 Yavana (59/58 BCE),³ and the other the donation of a certain Mitrā, the nursemaid of the ruler Viṣnumitra's daughter Indrāgnibhadrā;⁴ and the affiliation of one to record the dedication of a garden complex is not known.⁵

In the Northwest, two are Buddhist and represent the earliest known dedications of the Buddha's relics: the first (whose authenticity is questioned) was found at Skinkot, in the Bajaur valley region to the north of the Peshwar Plain and partially retains a date in the otherwise unattested era of Menander (c. 155–130 BCE);⁶ the second was found in the Swat valley to the east of Bajaur and can only be dated palaeographically to this period.⁷ The third records the donation of a lotus pond (*puṣkarīṇī*) much further south at Pathyar, in the Kangra District of Himachal Pradesh, and is dated on the same grounds as the latter, although the religious affiliation of the donor cannot be determined.⁸

¹ See § 139.

² Quintanilla, *History of Early Stone Sculpture at Mathura CA. 150 BCE-100 CE*, 256–57.

³ Quintanilla, *History of Early Stone Sculpture at Mathura CA. 150 BCE-100 CE*, 254–55.

⁴ See § 118.

⁵ The donation includes a lotus pond (*puṣkarīṇī*), garden (*ārāma*), hall (*sabhā*), stone tablet (*śilāpaṭṭa*), and well (*kūpa*), see Quintanilla, *History of Early Stone Sculpture at Mathura CA. 150 BCE-100 CE*, 258.

⁶ See No. 1, discussed in Chapter Three: Buddhism during the Indo-Greek Period

⁷ No. 2.

⁸ CKI 167.

Fig. 3.3: Inscriptions from the Indo-Greek and Mitra Periods

No.	Title	Provenance	Date	Donation	Ruling Group	Individuals		Ref.
						Name	Title	
1	Reliquary Inscription from Menander's Reign (No. 1)	Shinkot, Bajaur, Pakistan	—Menander (c. 155–130 BCE)	<i>śarīra</i>	Indo-Greek	—	—	CKI 176
2	Reliquary Inscription of Theuduta (No. 2)	Swat, Pakistan	—	<i>śarīra</i>	—	Theuduta	<i>meridarkh</i>	CKI 32
3	Āyāgapāṭa of Śimitrā	Kaṅkālī Ṭīlā, Mathura, India	—	<i>āyāgapāṭa</i>	—	Śimitrā Poṭhayaśaka	— <i>kālavāla</i>	Qu 2.1
4	Lotus Pond of Vayula	Pathyar, Kangra, Himachal Pradesh, India	—	<i>puṣkariṇī</i>	—	Vayula	<i>rāthithāra</i>	CKI 167
5	Āyāgapāṭa of Okaraṇa's Wife	Mathura, India	—	<i>āyāgapāṭa</i>	—	— Okaraṇa	<i>bhāryā</i> —	Qu 2.2
6	Āyāgapāṭa of [...] <i>tusikā</i>	Mathura, India	—	<i>āyāgapāṭa</i>	—	[...]t <i>usikā</i>	—	Qu 2.5
7	Slab of Phalgula	Kauśāmbī, India	—	—	—	Phagula Dhara	<i>bhikṣu</i> <i>antevāsin</i> <i>bhadanta</i>	Qu 2.6
8	Donation of Mitrā	Mathura, India	—	—	Mitra	Mitrā Indrāgnibhadrā Viṣṇumitra [...]mitra	<i>dhātrī</i> <i>duhitṛ</i> <i>rāja</i> <i>putra</i> —	§ 181
10	Well Donation of Āhogaṇī	Mathura, India	116 Yavana (58/57 BCE)	<i>udapāni</i> <i>puṣkariṇī</i>	—	Āhogaṇī Virabala Ghoṣadatta et al	<i>mātr</i> <i>sārthavāha</i> <i>putra</i> <i>brāhmaṇa</i>	Qu 1.2

On the basis of such limited evidence, it is obviously hard to draw any certain conclusions. What is clear is that patterns of patronage across the North and Northwest were quite evenly divided among various religious groups and that Buddhism was in fact in receipt of limited support from society let alone political figures. Nonetheless, the duo of inscriptions to record the dedication of the Buddha's relics are of great import, constituting the earliest epigraphic evidence for this practice within the region (Fig. 15.1).

The Reliquary Inscription of Theuduta (No. 2) has already been discussed above and is highly relevant as it likely constitutes the earliest evidence that Buddhism had indeed become salient enough to warrant a political figure's engagement in its rituals. The second inscription is also problematic in many respects and its authenticity remains contested in scholarship. It is found as the first of two inscriptions engraved upon a cylindrical steatite reliquary, reportedly from Shinkot in the Bajaur region of Pakistan¹:

Reliquary from Menander's Reign (No. 1)²

[Upside of lid, rim] [A]...*minedrasa maharajasa kaṭiāsa
divasa 4 4 4 1 1 pra[ṇasa]me[da]...*

[Upside of lid, centre] [A¹] [*śa*]...(prati)[*thavi*]ta.

[Underside of lid] [A²] [*p*]raṇasame[da]...śakamunisa

[A]...of Menander, the Great King, day 14 of Kārttika. Equal to life...[A¹]...were established. [A²] Equal to life ...of Śākyamuni.

¹ The reliquary was found encased in a silver casket and enclosing another smaller gold reliquary containing some ashes. All objects have since gone missing. For further details of its discovery, see N. G. Majumdar, 'The Bajaur Casket of the Reign of Menander', *Epigraphia Indica* 24 (38 1937): 1–8.

² See Appendix One for full editorial notes.

The reference to Menander should denote a regnal era (the year is lost), and thus does not provide evidence of the ruler's direct engagement with Buddhism. It is conceivable that the missing donor, having knowledge of the otherwise unattested era of Menander, may well have had a direct line of communication to the ruler or his administration and hence could have been a political figure. If nothing more, what the inscription does evidence is (if accepted as authentic) Buddhism's growing, albeit still limited, institutional power.

Menander (c. 155–130 BCE) represents one of the few rulers in the Northwest to have garnered sufficient renown to leave behind a trace in literature. This is particularly true of Greek and Roman¹ annals to derive from around the turn of the first millennium. In his *Geography*, Strabo (63 BCE–23 CE) ascribes to him notable military successes for subduing a greater number of Indian tribes and penetrating further into India than Alexander was able.² Justin also records the account of Pompeius Trogus, a contemporary of Emperor Augustus (63 BCE–19 CE), who mentions Menander as a ruler of India. Most notable perhaps is the reference to the ruler in Plutarch's (c. 45–120 CE) *Moralia*, wherein the funeral of Menander is described in attestation of his virtuosity:

When a certain man named Menander, who had been a good king of the Bactrians, died in camp, the cities celebrated his funeral as usual in other respects, but in respect to his remains they put forth rival claims and only with difficulty came to terms, agreeing that they should divide the ashes

¹ In the *Periplus*, his a coins are mentioned, along with those of Apollodotus, as being present on the market at Baryagaza, Gujarat. Peri 47. 16.9–11.

² Geogr^S 11. 1.

equally and go away and should erect monuments to him in all their cities.¹

Due to the formal similarity, the establishment of Menander's relics within monuments (*μνημεῖα*) here shares with the funerary procedure reserved for a select group of figures in Buddhist literature,² this passage is often cited as evidence of the ruler's 'Buddhophilia', and 'conversion' to Buddhism.³ Others suggest the funerary practice may be linked to 'Hellenistic hero cults',⁴ although if this were indeed the case Plutarch was unaware of it, as he observes the celebrations were 'unusual' in some respects and thus the crematorial element lay outside the norms with which he was familiar. The precise cultural source of this abnormality cannot be confirmed and the tantalising possibility of a Buddhist influence must, therefore, remain just that, as no mention is made elsewhere of Menander having received such rites.

Menander's mark on posteriority is famously evidenced by the development of a narrative cycle in Buddhist literature dedicated to a philosophical discussion between him and the monk Nāgasena. Witnesses of this narrative are found in one dedicated work, extant in Chinese under the name *Nāgasenabhikṣusūtra* 那先比丘經⁵ and in Pali with the title *Milindapañha*,⁶ as well as in other minor versions, for instance, in the *Samyuktaratnapitakasūtra* 雜寶藏經^{1,2}

¹ Mor^P 10. 28.

² See Chapter Fifteen: Relics and Stupas.

³ Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, 421. More recently Halkias, 'The Enlightened Sovereign', 501.

⁴ Neelis, *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade*, 105.

⁵ T 1670, translated before the 4th century CE by an unknown translator. This witness differs substantially from its Pali counterpart, see K. R. Norman, *Pāli Literature. Including the Canonical Literature in Prakrit and Sanskrit of All the Hīnayāna Schools of Buddhism* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1983), 111.

⁶ The text was translated into Pali prior to the 5th century CE, as Buddhaghosa quotes it, and was likely from a northwestern Prakrit version that was

The text upon which the *Nāgasenabhikṣusūtra* and *Milindapañha* was based is regarded as being composed in Northwest, principally due to their awareness of Greek names, city structures, and technology, the geography, and demographics of the Northwest and for certain linguistic peculiarities which suggest it was originally composed in Gāndhārī.³ Menander is said to have converted to Buddhism, having engaged in a polemic with the monk Nāgasena, who is presented as Buddhism's chief philosophical proponent, and as having been convinced of its philosophical position, leading ultimately to the ruler's pursuit of the Buddhist path.⁴ Certainly, this narrative is intent on furnishing Menander with a Buddhist identity but it also attempts to indigenise him to the Northwest. Speaking in Sāgala (Sialkot), Nāgasena and Menander have the following discussion.

composed later than the 2nd century BCE, as it mentions Menander. Precisely how much later is difficult to say, and most scholars estimate a date in the 1st century CE, but the earliest evidence of a form of the text is to be found in the Chinese translation of the 4th century CE, see fn. above. For full references to the edition and translation see the *List of Abbreviations*.

¹ T 203, translated in 470 CE by Kivkara 吉迦夜 and Tanyao 曇曜. A full translation of the work can be found in Charles Willemen, trans., *The Storehouse of Sundry Valuables. Translated from the Chinese of Kikkāya and Liu Hsiao-Piao (Compiled by T'an-Yao) Taishō, Volume 4, Number 203*, BDK English Tripiṭaka 10–I (Berkeley: Numata Centre for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1994), 224ff.

² For a comparative study of these works, see Paul Demiéville, 'Les versions chinoises du Milindapañha', *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 24 (1924): 1–258.

³ For a dated but nonetheless detailed discussion, see Tarn, *The Greeks*, 414–36. For some recent reflections on the matter, see Stefan Baums, 'Greek or Indian? The Questions of Menander and Onomastic Patterns in Early Gandhāra', in *Buddhism and Gandhara: An Archaeology of Museum Collections*, ed. Himanshu Prabha Ray (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), 33–46.

⁴ See T 1670a. 703c2–3; T1670b. 719a18–19; Mil 2. 420.

The elder [Nāgasena] asked, ‘Where, great king, is the land of your birth?’ ‘There is, sir, a place at two waters¹ called Alasanda; I was born there.’ ‘How far, great king, is Alasanda² from here?’ ‘Two hundred *yojanas*,¹ sir’... ‘Where,

¹ P. *dīpa* (Skt. *dvīpa*), lit. ‘between two rivers’, normally in the meaning of an ‘island.’ Rapson pointed out that this makes little sense for the location of Menander’s birth and, following the literal sense of the term and the usage of its cognate Ir. *doab*, which is often used in respect to landmasses between rivers, he argues that it refers to a location ‘between the Panjshir and Kabul rivers’. Edward James Rapson et al., eds., *The Cambridge History of India: Ancient India. Vol. I.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), 550. The location of the present archaeological site of Kāpiśī, just north of modern day Begram and east of Charikar, dates from the Indo-Greek period and is situated at the confluence of the two rivers (*dvīpa*(?)). In the *Pratīpadapañcika*, the commentary to the *Arthaśāstra* by Bhaṭṭasvāmin, a form of coral named *vairvarṇika* (‘colourless’) is said to derive from *yavanadvīpa*, which could refer to an area of the Mediterranean. Patrick Olivelle, trans., *King, Governance, and Law in Ancient India: Kautilya’s Arthashastra* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 27.

² Other passages concern themselves with geography:

sakayavanacīnavilāta ujjanakā bhārukacchakā kāsikosalāparantakā māgadhakāsāketakā soraṭṭhakā pāṭheyakā koṭumbaramādhurakā alasandakasmīragandhārā. Mil 331; Mil 327–328.

People from Scythia and Bactria, from China and Cilāta, from Ujjein, from Bharukaccha (Broach, Gk. barygaza), from Kāsi and Kosala and Aparanta, from Magadha, from Sāketa, from Surāṭṭha, from Pāvā, from Koṭumbara and Mathurā, from Alexandria, Kashmir, and Gandhāra.

Rapson identifies Alasanda in the *Milindapañha* with Alexandria-under-the-Caucasus, and specifically with the archaeological site at Charikar, on the basis that a *yojana* is approximately equivalent to 2.5 miles, which, when multiplied, broadly corresponds to the respective distances given between Charikar and Sialkot or Charikar and Kaśmīr. Rapson et al., *Cambridge History of India*, 550. Another passage in the *Milindapañha* implies that Alasanda is located across the sea and is perhaps better associated with Alexandria in Egypt:

Yathā mahārāja sadhano nāviko paṭṭane suṭṭhukatasuñko mahāsamuddaṃ pavisitvā vaṅgaṃ takkolaṃ cīnaṃ sovīraṃ suraṭṭhaṃ alasandaṃ kolapaṭṭaṃ suvaṇṇabhumiṃ gacchati. Mil 359.

great king, is the town of your birth?’ ‘There is, sir, a village called Kalasi; I was born there.’ ‘How far, great king, is the village Kalasi from here?’ ‘Two hundred *yojanas*, sir.’ ‘How far, great king, is Kaśmīr from here?’ ‘Twelve *yojanas*, sir.’²

Several scholars have taken the village Kalasi as Skt. Kāpiśī (i.e. Charikar),³ which would stand in both phonetic and geographical congruence and thus is not an unlikely conjecture.⁴ However, the

As, sire, a mariner, wealthy through constantly levying customs (-duties) in a seaport goes over the great sea, reaches Vanga, Takkola, China, Sovīra, Suratṭha, Alexandria, Kolapaṭṭana or Suvanṇabhūmi. Translation based on I. B. Horner, trans., *Milinda's Questions. Vol. II* (London: Luzac and Company, 1964), 222.

¹ A *yojana* is recorded with varying lengths. Cf. Monier Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary: Etymologically and Philologically Arranged with Special Reference to Cognate Indo-European Languages* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2008), 858. T. W. Rhys-Davids and William Stede, eds., *The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary* (Chipstead: Pali Text Society, 1921), 557.

² *Thero āha: Kuhiṃ pana mahārāja tava jātabhumīti. Atthi bhante Alasando nāma dīpo, tatthāhaṃ jāto ti. Kīva dūro mahārāja ito alasandā hotīti. Dumattāni bhante yojanasatānīti...Kuhiṃ pana mahārāja tava jātanaganan ti. Atthi bhante Kalasigāmo nāma, tatthāhaṃ jāto ti. Kīva dūro mahārāja ito Kalasigāmo hotīti. Dumattāni bhante yojanasatānīti. Kīva dūro mahārāja ito kasmīraṃ hotīti. Dvādasa bhante yojanātīti. Mil 82–83.*

³ Referred to in Pliny as Kapasene. H. Rackham, trans., *Pliny. Natural History in Ten Volumes*, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1938), 2. 25.

⁴ Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, 377. The name Kāpiśa (Begram) arises in a single undated inscription found on a bronze cylindrical, written in the Kharoṣṭhī script: ‘The principal gift of the *kṣatrapa* of Kāpiśa, son of the *kṣatrapa* Gaṇavhryaka.’ *Kaviśiakṣatrapasa Gaṇavhryakakṣatrapaputrasa daṇamukho*. Stefan Baums, ‘Catalog and Revised Texts and Translations of Gandharan Reliquary Inscriptions’, in *Gandharan Buddhist Reliquaries*, by David Jongeward et al. (Seattle: Early Buddhist Manuscripts Project, 2012), 249. CKI 150. This inscription was found some distance away from present day Begram, Afghanistan, in Manikyala, Pakistan, in the lowest stratum of

Nāgasenabhikṣusūtra has a radically distinct geography. It too states that Menander is from a country near the sea,¹ in regards to which Nāgasena later enquires:

‘King, what is the country of your birth?’ The king said, ‘The country of my birth is Daqinguo 大秦國 (Eastern Roman Empire). The country is called Alisan.’ Nāgasena asked the king, ‘How many *li* is the journey to Alisan [i.e., from Shijieguo 舍竭國 (Skt. Śākala)]?’ The king said, ‘The journey is two thousand *yojana*, which is equal to eighty-thousand *li*.’²

This would place Alexandria considerably farther afield than that in the *Milindapañha* (i.e. Alexandria in Egypt)³ and it was therefore not imperative for all those engaged in producing texts to deal with Menander that he be made a native of the Northwest. Indeed, the ruler’s presentation in these sources is generally inconsistent and ambivalent; the narrative retained in the *Samyuktaratnapīṭakasūtra*, for example, does not describe his conversion and presents the ruler in distinctly negative terms.

Great Stupa at this site. It was discovered along with coins of the Kuṣāṇa Huviṣka (152-187) and thus likely dates from the late 2nd century CE. Konow, *Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions: With the Exception of Those of Aśoka*, 150–51.

¹ T 670b. 695b05.

² 王本生何國。王言我本生大秦國。國名阿荔散。那先問王。阿荔散去是間幾里。王言去二千由旬合八萬里。 T 1670b. 717c9–11.

³ The Mahāvamsa states that an elder named Yonamahādhammarakkhata (‘the Yona protected by the great Dhamma’) came from city Alasanda of the Yonas, along with thirty-thousand monks: *Yonanagarālasandā so yonamahādhammarakkhato. Thero tiṃsasahassāni bhikkhu ādāya agama. Mv 29. 39.* Wilhelm Geiger, ed., *The Mahāvamsa* (London: Pāli Text Society, 1908). Geiger takes it as a possible reference to the former Alexander-among-the-arachosians. Geiger, *The Mahāvamsa or The Great Chronicle of Ceylon*, 194fn3.

Gérard Fussman also makes the important point that, unlike other rulers such as Aśoka and Kaniṣka I, Chinese monks who travelled in the region do not attribute any stupas to Menander,¹ nor indeed do narrative works to mention the ruler. There is one exception to be found in the very late *Avadānakalpalatā*, an 11th century work of the Kashmiri poet Kṣemendra. Therein, the *Stūpāvadāna* contains a prediction from the Buddha that Menander will establish a stupa in Pāṭalagrāma ('Village of the Trumpet Flower'), that is Pāṭaliputra, at the site of a hair-and-nail stupa established at the time of the Buddha by a householder named Potala:

Due to the assistance of the Well Gone, he [the householder Potala], who was stainless having acquired the principles of conduct,

With a small clipping of the Buddha's hair and nail had a stupa made of the precious substances constructed.

There the Fortunate said to Indra, who had come to see him,
'A king named Milinda will establish a stupa in this region.'²

Paul Demiéville has discussed this text at some length. He argues that Kṣemendra likely based this work on a text akin to the section of the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya* concerning the Buddha's journey along the Northern Route, where, at various places on the journey between Magadha and Uḍḍiyāna, he converts many beings and causes them to

¹ Fussman, 'Upāya-kauśalya: L'implantation du bouddhisme au Gandhāra', 26.

² *śikṣāpadāptavaimalyaḥ sugatānugraheṇa saḥ, tatkeśānakhaleśānkaṃ ratnastūpam akārayat. tatra saṃdarśanāyātām bhagavān indram abravīt, milindo nāma rājāsmiṃ deśe stūpam kariṣyati. Av-k 57. 15. P. L. Vaidya, Avadāna=Kalpalatā of Kṣemendra (Volume I-II) (Darbhanga: The Mithila Institute, 1959).*

construct monasteries and stupas.¹ The *Stūpāvadāna* similarly enumerates a series of locations where stupas were and would be established, which follows the itinerary of the previous text. The prediction of Menander in this text stands in the same relative position in the narrative as the prediction of Kaniṣka I in the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*, which Demiéville takes as no coincidence and concludes that Kṣemendra had a text that favoured the Indo-Greek ruler above the Kuṣāṇa. He rightly notes that Pāṭaliputra is an unusual location for Menander's stupa and that Śākala (Sialkot) would make more sense.²

Situating narratives of Menander in their socio-historical context is therefore fraught with difficulties and has long posed significant issues to scholarship. Even though the relative abundance of both historiographical and Buddhist literature to deal with the ruler no doubt attests to the unique influence he had on society and politics, little specific can be said about what that impact actually entailed. From the narrow perspective of Buddhist literature, one may be inclined to conclude that there was something in his system of governance or personal practice that led to the development of a narrative cycle dedicated to him. But a lack of evidence beyond literature precludes any certain conclusions being made and suggest the narrative was a creation of a later period, albeit designed for an audience who identified with the memory of the ruler.

Indeed, on the basis of the available sources, it is impossible to derive anything concrete concerning the social position of Buddhism during the Indo-Greek Period in general. The absence of a Buddhist ideological influence in the coins of the Indo-Greek rulers and a limited number of donative inscriptions suggest that Buddhist institutions were

¹ See Chapter Two: Narrative of Decline.

² Demiéville, 'Les versions chinoises du Milindapañha', 37–43.

not an obvious force in the society of the North and Northwest during this time. A subsequent increase in the number of inscriptions would rather suggest that Buddhism's rise was not a result of the social conditions installed under the Indo-Greeks but coincided more with the fall of this empire and the circumstances to follow it.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE INDO-SCYTHIANS

Indo-Greek hegemony in the Northwest began to dissolve in the late 2nd and early 1st century BCE, following the repeated influx of nomadic Scythians¹ from the Central Asian steppe, who had themselves been pushed southwards from Sogdiana by the Yuezhi 月氏. The exact dates

¹ Variations of the ethnonym ‘Scythian’ occur across several sources: Ir. Saka; Skt. Śaka; G. Sago, Saka; Gk. Σάκαι, Σκύθαι; Ch. 塞, 塞迦. Three groups of Scythians are identified in Achaemenid inscriptions and the historiographies of Herodotus: [1] the Eurasian Saka Paradrava (‘across the sea’), who inhabited the Pontic steppe across the Black Sea; [2] Saka Tigraxauda (‘wearing the pointed cap’), who inhabited western Central Asia and [3] Saka Haumavarga (‘hauma-drinking’) who inhabited south-eastern Iran and Sogdiana, a region which came to be termed Ir. Sakasthān and Skt. Śakasthāna. These groups are tentatively united under a cultural umbrella by their employing ‘animal styles’ in their material culture. For a discussion of these matters, see Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, 447–48; Jason Neelis, ‘Passages to India: Śaka and Kuṣāṇa Migrations in Historical Contexts’, in *On the Cusp of an Era: Art in the Pre-Kuṣāṇa World*, ed. Doris Meth Srinivasan (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 55–94. Here, we use the term in respect to the latter group as designating ‘a nomadic peoples who had settled in Śakastan, or Seistan, in south-eastern Iran’ and who eventually moved into Indic spheres. Quintanilla, *History of Early Stone Sculpture at Mathura CA. 150 BCE-100 CE*, 120. As a toponym, the term occurs in one Kharoṣṭhī inscription, the Mathura Lion Capital (No. 26), and as an ethnonym, it arises twice, once in respect to the Indo-Scythian Prince Damijada in a donative inscription, see CKI 42; and once in the *Dharmāntarhitāvadāna*, contained with a Kharoṣṭhī manuscript of the British Library Collection, see Av^{L6} 53.

and itineraries of these invasions are not known precisely but on the basis of rock inscriptions and art located along trade routes, three migratory movements have been deduced: one moving across the Hindu Kush and east towards the Punjab, Kashmir, and south to Mathura; one by way of northern Karakorum route into Dir, Swat and Peshawar; and another by way of Afghanistan, who eventually settled in West India, with their capital at Ujjain.¹

INDO-SCYTHIAN SUZERAINS

In the Northwest, three main lineages of Indo-Scythian have been identified, respectively founded by the suzerains Maues, Vonones, and Azes I. The relationship between these three groups, and indeed the extent to which the classification 'Indo-Scythian' is accurate in all cases, is decidedly unclear. Primarily, their ethnic relation is deduced from numismatic and onomastic affinities and not from demonstrable relations, whether familial or political. By the mid 1st century BCE, however, it seems that representatives of each lineage would come to be subsumed under the empire of the latter ruler, Azes I, and his descendants, Azilises and Azes II. These rulers' governance fell across the entirety of the Northwest until the mid 1st century CE, after which time the Indo-Parthians and Kuṣāṇas assumed power in fairly quick succession.²

There are 46 donative inscriptions that can be securely dated to the period of Indo-Scythian governance, ranging from the first decade of Azes I's reign in the mid 1st century BCE until the advent of the Indo-

¹ Neelis, 'Passages to India', 61.

² Robert C. Senior, *Indo-Scythian Coins and History. 4. Supplement* (Lancaster: Classical Numismatic Group, 2006), 151ff.

Parthian Period in the mid 1st century CE (Fig. 4.2). Considered alongside numismatic and manuscriptural remains, this means that far more can be said about the structure of their imperial administrations than was possible for the Indo-Greeks in the previous chapter. The suzerains widely applied the convention of using the title *mahārāja rājātirāja* (Fig. 3.1), distinguishing themselves from a group of local rulers named the Apracarājas, who were not integral elements of the imperial structure, as is often argued, but subsumed under it, from great satraps (*mahākṣatrapa*) and satraps (*kṣatrapa*), who often passed their status hereditarily,¹ and from district governors (*meridarkha*, μεριδώρχης). A select few Apracarājas and satraps also issued their own coinage in specific locales, indicating a certain degree of autonomy, itself a concomitant of a diminishing of imperial power towards the end of Azes II's reign. These interconnected histories of the Indo-Scythians, the satraps they installed, and other local rulers are markedly complex and many uncertainties remain regarding the precise temporalities of their dominion.

The earliest of the Indo-Scythian suzerains is identified as Maues (c. 75–65 BCE). His coinage is found for the most part in regions of Northern Pakistan, including Peshawar, Swat, and Punjab, and thus it is most likely he entered the Northwest either with the Indo-Scythians from Seistan (Southeastern Iran) through Kāpīśī (Begram), or by way of the northern Karakorum route.²

¹ On this matter, see Richard Salomon, 'The Kṣatrapas and Mahākṣatrapas of India', *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens und Archiv für indische Philosophie* 18 (1974): 5–26.

² On these routes, see Errington and Curtis, 'Constructing the Past', 59; Neelis, 'Passages to India', 69–70; Puri, 'The Sakas and Indo-Parthians', 185.

Following a joint coin issue of Queen Machene and Maues unearthed in Swat,¹ it has been suggested that Maues married into the Indo-Greek family of the former, who is held to be the widow of the preceding ruler at Taxila, Archebius (c. 90–80 BCE). Her union with Maues thus reflects an alliance between these specific Indo-Greek rulers in Swat and the Indo-Scythians. This is indicated in part by a ‘transition issue’ in coinage, which maintained Indo-Greek monograms, but (e.g., in the case of the Machene-Maues joint issue) dropped portraiture, a trait typical of Indo-Greek coinage that is absent from all Indo-Scythian issues.² The discovery of the coins of Maues’ son Artemedrios, found at Barikot in Swat, also suggests the two had a son,³ beginning a Graeco-Scythian lineage. Collectively this evidence has led to the conclusion that the shift from Indo-Greek to Indo-Scythian governance in this region was peaceable.⁴ Above, we conjectured on this basis that Maues established his own era in 75/74 BCE, employing a continuation of the Indo-Greek Era of 175/174 BCE,⁵ which would, if accepted, tie in well with the political continuation of a partial Indo-Greek polity. In later coinage, he also broadly copied the Indo-Greek coin types that were already in circulation, using a variety of Graeco, Iranian, and Indic deities with some small stylistic modifications including ‘Hellenistic’ garb.⁶

¹ Obv. ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΗΣ ΘΕΟΤΟΠΟΥ ΜΑΧΗΝΗΣ. rev. *rajadirajasa mahatasa moasa*. Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, Typ. 736.

² François Widemann, ‘Maues King of Taxila: An Indo-Greek Kingdom with a Saka King’, *East and West* 53, no. 1/4 (2003): 98–100.

³ The second was found in Swat, which mentions his son by the name of Artemidoros: obv. ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΙΚΗΤΟΥ ΑΡΤΕΜΙΔΟΡΟΥ. rev. *rajatirajasa moasa putrasa artemidoarasa*. R. C. Senior, *Indo-Scythian Coins and History. Coinage of the Scythians* (Lancaster: Classical Numismatic Group, 2001), 233.

⁴ Narain, *The Indo-Greeks*, 135ff; Widemann, ‘Maues King of Taxila’, 101ff.

⁵ See Chapter Two: The Era of Maues.

⁶ MacDowall, ‘Coinage from Iran to Gandhāra with Special Reference to Divinities as Coin Types’, 250ff.

Maues also gave himself the title *rājātirāja*,¹ indicative of this adaptive process to local political norms, as argued above (Fig. 3.1).

Maues' governance was both incomplete and short-lived. Certain areas of Punjab remained under the control of the Indo-Greek ruler Telephos (c. 75–70 BCE). And Apollodotus II (c. 65–50 BCE) and Hippostratus (c. 50–48 BCE) temporarily wrested power from Maues in Taxila.² Regions of Arachosia were also likely under the control of the Indo-Scythian suzerain Vonones (c. 65–48 BCE), who jointly issued coins with his brother Śpalahora and nephew Śpalagadama, and was followed by his brother Śpalariśa (c. 50–40 BCE)³ but the nature of the relation of Vonones and his lineage to other Indo-Scythians is difficult to determine. Many theories have been offered in this regard⁴ and still others classify him as Indo-Parthian, due to his sharing the name of the Arsacid ruler Vonones I. By the mid 1st century BCE these rulers governed jointly with the Indo-Scythian dynasty of Azes I (c. 48–10 BCE), as shown in the joint issues of Śpalariśa with this latter suzerain.⁵ Azes I assumed control over regions in North Pakistan, from Peshawar in the west to Taxila in the east, wresting power from Maues' deposer, the last Indo-Greek ruler Hippostratus, whose coins he overstruck. He too established his own era also in 46/45 BCE, which would be used across the region for some centuries to come.⁶

¹ E.g., obv. ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΜΑΥΟΥ rev. *rajadirajasa mahatasa Moasa*. Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, 466–79.

² See Bopearachchi and ur Rahman, *Pre-Kushana Coins in Pakistan*, 45–46.

³ See Bopearachchi and ur Rahman, *Pre-Kushana Coins in Pakistan*, No. 692–703; Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, 439ff.

⁴ On these different solutions, see Puri, 'The Sakas and Indo-Parthians', 187–88.

⁵ See Bopearachchi and ur Rahman, *Pre-Kushana Coins in Pakistan*, No. 702–703; Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, Typ. 695.

⁶ See above Chapter Two: Dynastic and Regnal Eras.

The dynamics of this transfer of power are potentially revealed in two inscriptions from Buner, a valley region lying to the northeast of Peshawar, and to the north of Taxila. The first inscription (No. 4) is dated to 9 Azes (39/38 BCE) during the reign of a great satrap named Vasa-Avakaśa, son of Mahapalasuśpala. Harry Falk proposes that this satrapy initially belonged to the aforementioned ruler Vonones, whom he classifies as Parthian, and that Vasa-Avakaśa is to be related dynastically to him as well as to the later Indo-Parthian Gondophares who governed after from c. 30 CE. He arrives at this conclusion on the following onomastic grounds: [1] the name Vasa-Avakaśa is to be understood as a rendering of Vasa-Abdagases from the Greek script, whose latter member in the compound is shared with another Abdgases, the nephew of the Indo-Parthian Gondophares;¹ and [2] his father, Mahapalasuśpala, shares the element –śpala (‘army’) in his name with the former member of the names of Vonones’ brothers, Śpalahora and Śpalariśa, and nephew Śpalagadama. On this basis, he contends ‘the so-called “Indo-Parthians” are then nothing else but the successors of Vonones.’²

It remains a matter of debate, however, where precisely Vonones and his dynasty governed. Formerly, the rulers were localised specifically in Bannu to the south of the Peshwar Plain, and Kandahar and Ghazni in Afghanistan to the west.³ But coins of the rulers have also arisen in hoards in Swat and Punjab, indicating their governance stretched across much of the Northwest after the reign of Maues.⁴ This would perhaps substantiate Falk’s views and, if maintained, indicate that

¹ See No. 4.

² Harry Falk, ‘Three Inscribed Buddhist Monastic Utensils from Gandhāra’, *Zeitschrift Der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 156 (2006): 307–400.

³ See Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, 441.

⁴ Errington and Curtis, ‘Constructing the Past’, 61.

Azes I adopted existing satrapies of other Indo-Scythian rulers into his empire in a joint system of governance.

The second inscription is engraved around the lower section of a schist domed-stupa reliquary, a relic dedication offered by an unknown donor (the name should have appeared in a now damaged portion of the object), dated to year 11 of a great satrap (*mahākṣatrapa*) named Namipala. Due to shared provenance, in addition to onomastic and palaeographic affinities, Falk argues that this and the former inscription are to be dated to a common era, corresponding, namely, to the same as that of Azes I—this would date 11 Namipala to 37/36 CE.¹

These correspondences further raise questions as to the relation between Vasa-Abdagases and Namipala. If the latter governed a satrapy in the same region as the former, one would presume, perhaps, that a line of succession existed between the two. Certain pieces of evidence indicate this may well have been the case. Foremost, the name Namipala is akin, in part, to that of Vasa-Abdagases' father, Mahapalasuśpala, and it would therefore not be too far a stretch to regard the two as related in a family lineage, beginning from the grandfather Mahapalasuśpala, through the father Vasa-Abdagases, and ending with the son Namipala. It is quite regular for individual elements of an ancestor's name to be passed to descendants and it is also widely observed that the position of satrap was inherited.² That in the second of these two inscriptions the era of Azes I is not overtly stipulated in the date formula, and rather an era of the satrap Namipala is employed, is potentially indicative either of the political independence these satraps enjoyed apart from the Indo-Scythian Empire proper, or, the divergence in a calendric norm could represent the sentiments of a once extraneous local dynasty having been forcibly subsumed by Azes I.

¹ Falk, 'Ancient Indian Eras: An Overview', 138–40.

² On this matter, see Salomon, 'The Kṣatrapas and Mahākṣatrapas of India', 22–23.

Following these dedications, there is a lacuna of near three decades in the historical record of donative inscriptions associated with Azes I. What this indicates precisely is impossible to determine with the evidence at hand. Nonetheless, certain conjectures may be forwarded which may later be proved or disproved. For instance, the general premise, often followed by historians, that low donative activity is to be related to wider economic and political issues would perhaps offer a degree of explanation. But there are also exceptions to this pattern to be found in regions to lie beyond Azes I's imperial domain. In particular, to the northeast of the Peshawar Plain and Taxila, several Indo-Greek rulers maintained power over locales during the reign of Azes I, including Zoilus II and Apollophanes (c. 55–35 BCE) and the last Indo-Greek ruler in the Northwest Strato II (c. 25 BCE–10 CE).¹ After their fall, several Indo-Scythian rulers and satraps assumed control and they appear not to have strictly identified with Azes I's empire, but rather with Maues'.

The first indication of this is to be found in the Inscription of Damijada, discovered in the Agror valley of Hazara, Pakistan, whose date formula reads: *[arja]n[o]*² *Damijadasa sakasa...[ṣaṣṭihae 20 20 20]*.³ Palaeographically, the Kharoṣṭhī is to be attributed to the Indo-Scythian Period but there is a question as to which era the year 60 should be reckoned under. Such a high numeral likely precludes a regnal year of the Indo-Scythian prince Damijada and for geographical reasons

¹ Boppearachchi and ur Rahman, *Pre-Kushana Coins in Pakistan*, 45–47.

² Konow originally read *ra[ra]n[o]*. Konow, *Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions: With the Exception of Those of Aśoka*, 13–16. I have corrected the reading after Falk's suggestion of *arjano* for the Khotanese *alysānai* ('prince'). Harry Falk, 'Annexe: names and Weights Inscribed on Some Vessels from the Silver Hoard', *Journal des Savants* 2, no. 1 (2001): 314–15.

³ For a full edition, see CKI 42.

Konow proposed it should be dated to the Maues era.¹ If this latter era were equivalent to the era of Azes I, the inscription would have been written in 12/13 CE. However, if our proposition that it be reckoned from 75/74 BCE² holds, this would produce a date of 15/16 BCE. The association with Maues rather than Azes I is perhaps favourable, in light of Damijada governing a region which lies adjacent to the satrapy of Chukhsa (Chhachh), a region located today in the north of Attock, between Peshawar to the west and Hazara to the east,³ where other satraps explicitly related to that suzerain governed. Most notably among these is the satrap Patika, who is the only known figure to explicitly employ the Maues' era.⁴

To this, two other inscriptions may be added. First, the earliest possible evidence for the Maues era is the Maira Inscription⁵, found further south than the former, in the Chakwal District of Punjab. It comprises three separate fragments (A, B, and C) that were all found together in a well. Though very little may be gleaned from the record, Fragment B specifies a date in the year 58, day 12 of a month, which can be tentatively reconstructed to Āśvayuj: ...*saṃ* 20 20 10 4

¹ Since Maues' coinage was uncovered predominantly in Punjab and in locales to the northeast of Taxila, all inscriptions from that region that are dated but do not specify an era and fit within the palaeographical range of the Indo-Scythian Period are hypothesised as belonging to Maues Era. Clearly, such assumptions are insufficient and should only be taken as provisionary. For further discussion, see Konow, *Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions: With the Exception of Those of Aśoka*, xxxii.

² See Chapter Two: Dynastic and Regnal Eras.

³ On the initial identification of the Chukhsa satrapy with Chhachh, see Marshall, *Structural Remains*, 39, 48. For a summary of all such identifications, see Joe Cribb, 'Dating and Locating Mujatria and the Two Kharaostes', *Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society* 223 (2015): 28.

⁴ See below.

⁵ For discussion see Konow, *Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions: With the Exception of Those of Aśoka*, 11–12.

4...(A)[śpa](yuj)...10 1 1.¹ Fragment C specifies what is likely Maues' name: *moasa*.² For this reason, the date formula is regarded as attributable to Maues' era and could be dated to 17/16 BCE. Second, an inscribed stone from Mansehra, dated to 68 [Maues] (7/6 BCE) on the same geographical grounds, should be noted here. However, the state of the text is so poor as to make any further observations fruitless.³ Little concrete can be derived from such evidence but it seems to be the case that certain figures, who were likely contemporaneous with Azes I, did not wholly conform to all elements of his imperial structure—the calendar being a central component thereof—which is suggestive of the scenario that certain factions of the fallen empire of Maues continued to control the valley regions in Punjab and to the northwest of the Peshawar Plain, alongside certain Indo-Greek rulers some decades after Maues' demise.

The next inscription⁴ to explicitly mention the era of Azes arises far to the east at Haḍḍa, Afghanistan. This gold scroll (No. 9) is dated 39

¹ CKI 40. Reconstructed elements are my own.

² CKI 41.

³ CKI 44.

⁴ Sonya Rhie Quintanilla has recently argued that a Jain worship-tablet (*āyāgapāṭa*) from Mathura is also to be dated to the Indo-Scythian Period:

Āyāgapāṭa of Unknown Donor

[1]...*sāvatsare 20 1 m[ā] 2 di 20 6*

[2]...*sa ca ari[ha]ta pūjāye. Qu 2. 9.*

The year given in the date formula is 21. Criticising the few scholars to consider this inscription, who dated it to the Śaka era of 78 CE, and ruling out a later date in the era of Kaniṣka I on stylistic and palaeographic grounds, Quintanilla argues that the object must belong to the period of Indo-Scythian governance at Mathura. She dates it to the Vikrama Era of 58/75 BCE, which she considers equivalent to that of Azes I, producing a date of 37/36 BCE. Quintanilla, *History of Early Stone Sculpture at Mathura CA. 150 BCE-100 CE*, 112–13. In light of Harry Falk's new reckoning of the latter era, the inscription's date could be adjusted to 27/26 BCE and, if accepted, this object would constitute the earliest epigraphic evidence for the presence of the Indo-

Azes (9/8 BCE) and records the erection of a stupa by a collective of approximately 22 individuals. The object provides the only evidence of Azes I having dominion over this region to the west and it is not supported by numismatic findings, which are absent from this region and place his rule rather to the east, as discussed above.¹ For a long time, Salomon regarded this inscription as a fake² and it is only recently that he sought to reaffirm its authenticity on the basis that the inscription retains the epigraphically rare and topographically accurate toponym ‘in Haḍḍa’: *Heḍḍaiami*.³ Whether or not this historical incongruence between numismatic and epigraphic evidence demands the inscription be once again regarded as a forgery is naturally a tricky matter. One further piece of evidence to suggest the inscription is likely a forgery is to be found in the date formula, which states the stupa was dedicated in the month Jyaiṣṭha, after eight days, when the moon was in conjunction with the constellation *citrā*: [1]...*mase Jeṭhe divasahi aṭahi* [2] *imeṇa cetreṇa*. Assuming that this month is reckoned from the new-moon (*āmanta*), after eight days, the moon would not be in *citrā* but rather in *maghā*. Such astronomic inaccuracy would, therefore, appear to rule out the inscription’s authenticity. If accepted, however, it would

Scythians in Mathura, which, as well shall argue later, does not arise again until the early Common Era (see below). Her argument does perhaps find some degree of support from numismatic findings, as certain rulers with names ending in –datta adopted the title of satrap under Indo-Scythian influence and could have governed approximately at this time, see S. C. Ray, ‘Stratigraphic Evidence of Coins from Excavations at Mathura’, in *Mathura—The Cultural Heritage*, ed. D. M. Srinivasan (New Delhi, 1988), 140–45.

¹ See also Bopearachchi and ur Rahman, *Pre-Kushana Coins in Pakistan*, 38.

² Salomon, *Ancient Buddhist Scrolls from Gandhāra: The British Library Kharoṣṭhī Fragments*, 144fn3.

³ Zémalyalāi Tarzi, Richard Salomon, and Ingo Strauch, ‘An Inscribed Bowl from Terrace 57 at Tape Šotor, Haḍḍa’, *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 38 (2015): 151.

fundamentally transform the geo-political history of the Indo-Scythians under Azes I.

THE DECLINE OF THE INDO-SCYTHIANS

Numismatists are in agreement that Azes I was succeeded by Azilises (c. 1–15 CE) at the turn of the Common Era or shortly before.¹ It appears that his death precipitated a certain number of major changes to the political landscape of the North and Northwest, all of which are indicative of the fact Indo-Scythian hegemony began to diminish from this time, giving way to the formation of distinct power structures.

The first point to note in this regard is that a group of local rulers, named as Apracarājas in coins, inscriptions, and manuscripts, suddenly arise in the epigraphic record, as governing the Bajaur and Dir valleys to the north of the Peshawar Basin. Typically these rulers are considered ethnically as Indo-Scythian and politically as internal elements of that imperial administration.² In Chapter Six, I shall take steps to systematically demonstrate why these assumptions are incorrect on both counts. But it is important to point out here two early inscriptions, which indicate the Apracarājas were intent on affirming their independence from the Indo-Scythian overlords. Most significant in this regard is that one of their rulers, Vijayamitra, inaugurated his own era in 2/1 BCE, indicating the establishment of a new calendric norm apart from the era of Azes I, and in the fifth year of his reign rededicated the relics of the Buddha.³ A year before, the wife of a district governor (*meridarkh*)¹ also

¹ Errington and Curtis, 'Constructing the Past', 61.

² For a recent articulation of this position, see Richard Salomon, *The Buddhist Literature of Ancient Gandhāra: An Introduction with Selected Translations* (Somerville: Wisdom Publications, 2018), 30–31.

³ See No. 1 in Appendix One: Select Inscriptions.

recognised his rule in an inscribed relic dedication found at Samarbagh, Dir, which is dated 50 [Azes] (2/3 CE). These two donations were followed by a flurry of such activity among the Apracarājas; 20 dedications in total, which is the highest degree of such activity among any group in this period.² Inscriptions of these rulers and individuals related to them uniquely applied the convention of stipulating that Azes I was ‘deceased’ (Skt. *atīta* ‘one who has gone beyond’, *vṛttakāla* ‘one whose time has passed’) and dates to employ this formula begin from 63 Azes (15/16 CE) and continue until 121 Azes (74/75 CE), whereafter the Azes era is maintained but without posthumous specification.

A second factor indicative of this decline is encountered in the coinage of Azilises’ successor, Azes II (c. 16–40 CE), who governed in the second quarter of the century.³ Towards the end of his reign, a ‘great debasement’ occurred in his coin issues, marked by a sharp devaluation in metal, with coins having only 10% silver mixed with copper. Coinage during the Indo-Period before the great debasement was constituted of 87–94 % silver under Maues, 76–94% under Vonones, 78–92% under Azes I, 89% under the satrap Jihonika⁴, and 38–85 % under Azes II. After this time, a dramatic reduction of 8–20% silver is found in joint issues of Azes II and the Apracarāja Indrivasu (c. 30–50 CE) and Azes II and the Apraca General (*stratega*, Gk. *στρατηγός*)⁵ Aśpavarma, as well as under the Indo-Parthian Gondophares (c. 30–55 CE). Scholars have associated this evidence with a ‘monetary crisis’ indicative of broader economic and political issues that occurred in the third to fifth

¹ See Fig. 3.2.

² See Chapter Six: The Apracarājas.

³ Errington and Curtis, ‘Constructing the Past’, 61.

⁴ See below.

⁵ See Fig. 6.1.

decades of the Common Era;¹ though decreasing silver percentages at the beginning of Azes II's reign may also indicate such issues began earlier.

The third factor to be considered is the arising of Indo-Scythian satraps in coinage during the reign of Azes II, indicating a fragmentation of imperial power and that local systems of governance—dovetailing with the rise of the Apracarājas—began to wield greater degrees of autonomy.

SATRAPS IN THE NORTH AND NORTHWEST

As mentioned above, in regions to the northeast of the Peshawar Basin and Taxila, principally in Cukhsa (Chhachh), several satraps associated with Maues held power seemingly apart from the empire of Azes I proper. We have already considered the Inscription of Damijada in this connection. But several other rulers arise in further inscriptions and coinage. These include Liako Kusuluko and his son Patika, who are named in inscriptions as satraps of Cukhsa; Kharaostes, who governed in central Chhachh,² and his son Mujatria in Jalalabad, Afghanistan³; Rajuvula in Taxila, northern Chhachh and Jammu;⁴ and Jihonika in southern Chhachh,⁵ who is also named in inscriptions as a satrap of Cukhsa and appears to have succeeded Patika in that region. The precise dates and politics of these satraps remain a matter of debate. However, we shall see that all, except Jihonika and perhaps Kharaostes, arise

¹ David MacDowall, 'Numismatic Evidence for a Chronological Framework for Pre-Kuṣāṇa Art from Khalchayan to Gandhāra', in *On the Cusp of an Era: Art in the Pre-Kuṣāṇa World*, ed. Doris Meth Srinivasan (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 95–118.

² Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, 596ff. But cf. Cribb, 'Mujatria and Kharaostes', 30ff.

³ Cribb, 'Mujatria and Kharaostes', 28. More on this below.

⁴ Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, 586ff.

⁵ Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, 592ff.

together in a single inscription, the Mathura Lion Capital (No. 25–26). This important record indicates that circumstances either demanded or allowed for the political shift of these satraps from the Northwest to the Indic North, precisely why and when remains unclear.

Concrete evidence first arises for these satraps in the Copper Plate Inscription of Patika (No. 12). This inscription records the dedication of the Buddha's relics at Taxila in 78 Maues by a certain Patika, son of the satrap of Cukhsa (Chhachh) Liako Kusuluko: *Kṣaha[ra]ta[sa]* [2.] [*Cukhsa*]sa ca *kṣatrapasa Liako Kusuluko nama tasa [pu]tro Pati[ko]*. Above¹ we briefly addressed the matter of fixing the inauguration of Maues' and summarised the varying solutions to have been offered. Following Harry Falk, the tendency in scholarship is to now equate the eras of Azes I and Maues, which would date Patika's dedication to 30/31 CE. But this cannot be accepted, as it creates a certain number of chronological issues for the histories of the Indo-Scythian satraps considered in this section. These issues demand that the era be placed before that of Azes and, we suggest, was inaugurated in 75/74 BCE, dropping the hundred numeral of the Indo-Greek Era established a century prior. Under this new reckoning, Patika's dedication would be dated to 3/4 CE. Now it is incumbent to demonstrate why this is the more favourable option of the two, the justification for which requires lengthy discussion, because the dates of Patika and the era of Maues hinge upon the overall chronology of all the aforementioned satraps in the North and Northwest.

The Mathura Lion Capital is engraved with a Kharoṣṭhī inscription and was found, as the title indicates, in Mathura, in the Indic North—it is one of only two such donative inscriptions to be found in this region. It is undated but, when considered alongside other coins and inscriptions, can be approximated to around 30 CE. Two donors are

¹ See Chapter Two: Dynastic and Regnal Eras.

named and each is perhaps to be associated with a distinct donation.¹ If so, the earlier of the two inscriptions is a relic dedication made by Yasi Kamui, the principal queen (*agramahiṣī*) of the Great Satrap Rajuvula, and daughter of the *yuvarāja*² Kharaostes. This Rajuvula and Kharaostes are likely the same as the aforementioned satraps, whose coins were found in the Northwest. Yasi also names her son Nagadiaka, her mother Abuhola, her brother Hayuara and her paternal grandmother Piśpasi, who is presumably the mother of Kharaostes. The later inscription records a land grant made by the satrap Śodāsa, son of Rajuvula, to the Sarvāstivādins. This section mentions several other figures, including, again, the *yuvarāja* Kharaostes, as well as the princes Khalamasa and Maja, and the aforementioned Great Satrap Patika and the Satrap Miyaka. The precise relations of these individuals cannot be determined in all cases; however, it is possible to produce some form of dynastic lineage for the rulers of Mathura (Fig. 4.1).

¹ On the identification of these two inscriptions and their relative chronology, see Harry Falk, 'Ten Thoughts on the Mathura Lion Capital Reliquary', in *Felicitas. Essays in Numismatics, Epigraphy and History in Honour of Joe Cribb*, ed. S. Bhandare and S. Garg (Mumbai: Reesha, 2011), 134. See also, Baums, 'Catalog', 219fn41–42.

² On this title, see below.

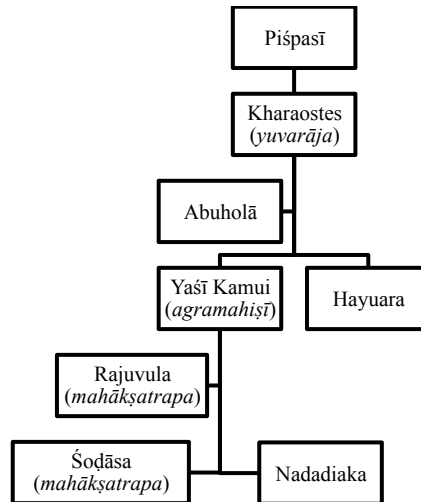


Fig. 4.1. Dynastic Lineage of Satraps at Mathura

The true identity of Kharaostes and nature of the status inhering in his title *yuvarāja* are not certain. It has long been affirmed that he is the same Kharaostes, son of Artā, who issued copper coins as satrap¹ in central Chhachh and who is recorded on a Kharoṣṭhī silver goblet from an unknown location in the Northwest.² On the latter, he is named as the son of a great satrap and bears the title *yagurāja: mahākṣatrapaputrasa [ya]guraṃṇā Khara[yosta]sa*.³ This Kharaostes in the Northwest can be dated to before 30 CE; the design of his coins finds its prototype in those of Azes II and the inscribed silver goblet must have been produced sometime before this date, as it was subsequently rededicated as a

¹ E.g., Rev. *Chatrapasa pra Kharaostasa Artasa putrasa*, Obv. ΧΑΡΑΗΨΣΤΕΙ ΣΑΤΡΑΠΕΙ ΑΡΤΑΥΟΥ. Boppearachchi and ur Rahman, *Pre-Kushana Coins in Pakistan*, No. 975; Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, Typ. 887.

² CKI 242.

³ CKI 241.

reliquary by the Apraca Prince Indravarma II¹ during the reign of the Apracarāja Indravasu, who succeeded his father, Apracarāja Vijayamitra (c. 2 BCE–32 CE), in the fourth decade of the Common Era.²

Whether this Kharāostes is the same as he in the Mathura Lion Capital is questionable and the solution has vast implications for the history of the North and Northwest. Much of the debate hangs on the purport of the title *yagurāja* on the silver goblet and *yuvarāja*³ on the Mathura Lion Capital. Scholars have taken the component *yagu-* in the former as *yabgu*⁴, a title associated specifically with certain Kuṣāṇas and the tribal structure of the Yuezhi 月氏. Since *yabgu-* is not compounded as a portmanteau with *-rāja* elsewhere, many suggest it would be best to construe *yagurāja* as a misspelling of *yuvarāja*. However, Richard Salomon argues that the title *yabgurāja* is possible, in so far as it represents an attempt to assimilate a non-Indic position into a system of Indic political norms; on this basis he regards the title as indicative of Kharāostes' promotion from the status of *yuvarāja* in the Mathura Lion Capital.⁵ Harry Falk differed in his reading of the silver goblet and

¹ Salomon argues that the relic dedication of Indravarma II is palaeographically later than that of Kharāostes, Richard Salomon, 'An Inscribed Silver Buddhist Reliquary of the Time of King Kharāosta and Prince Indravarma', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 116 (1996): 433.

² On this chronology, see Chapter Six: The Apraca Dynasty.

³ Cribb adopts this solution, Cribb, 'Mujatria and Kharāostes', 31.

⁴ Ch. 葉護. The *Houhanshu* 後漢書 names five such *yabgu* and one in particular who unified the Kuṣāṇa Empire. Scholars identify this figure with Kujula Kadphises, who occurs with this title in his coins. John M Rosenfield, *The Dynastic Arts of the Kushans* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), 12–15. On the five *yabgu*, see A. K. Narain, 'The Five Yabgus and the Yüeh-Chih', in *India, History and Thought: Essays in Honour of A. L. Basham*, ed. S. N. Mukherjee (Calcutta: Subarnarekha, 1982), 174–85.

⁵ Salomon, 'An Inscribed Silver Buddhist Reliquary of the Time of King Kharāosta and Prince Indravarma', 440–42.

proposed *ekarāja* ('sole ruler'),¹ understanding that the two Kharaostes are the same and arguing therefore, that the silver goblet was made after the capital, which he dates to 40 CE, and that Kharaostes 'self-christened' himself *ekarāja* to elevate himself above the status of *yuvarāja*. He suggests, however, that we should not take this title 'too seriously', as Kharaostes never issued coinage worthy of that status.²

Both scholars contend therefore that the silver goblet was inscribed after the Mathura Lion Capital. But if the two Kharaostes are identical, it is impossible that the goblet is the later of the two. Kharaostes must have dedicated the silver goblet before or around 30 CE, at the time he was issuing coinage. There is no evidence he maintained a satrapy in the Northwest after this time and it is rather more likely he shifted to Mathura with his kin and compatriates, Patika and Rajuvula. This of course leaves open the question as to the purport of *yuvarāja*. If it means 'heir-apparent', then there is the issue of precisely whom he would succeed. Falk proposed he was the successor of Azes II.³ This is possible and it could be argued that he was unable to adopt the position of suzerain due to the invasions of the Indo-Parthians. Since no such figure is named, however, this solution cannot be substantiated. Stefan Baums has also more recently suggested it could have the sense of 'young king' and 'thus not refer to the age or succession status of Kharaosta'.⁴ This would indicate the title is perhaps reflective of these rulers adapting to local political norms. Notably, several individual in the Mathura Lion Capital also bear the title prince (*kumāra*), which is not found elsewhere in relation to Indo-Scythian rulers.

¹ Falk, 'Mathura Lion Capital', 133–34.

² Falk, 'Mathura Lion Capital', p. 134.

³ Falk, 'Mathura Lion Capital', 123.

⁴ Baums, 'Catalog', 221fn44.

Joe Cribb has recently questioned the very identification of these two Kharaoestes. He does so primarily on the basis of another coin from Mathura, which identifies a Kharaoestes as satrap in this region.¹ However, he further argues [1] that the satrapy governed by Artta, Kharaoestes, and his son Mujatria should be relocated from Chhachh to Jalalabad in Afghanistan and dated to the late 1st century CE, [2] that the Kharaoestes known to coinage as satrap in the Northwest is distinct from the one known to coinage in the North, whom he argues, on the basis of an altered reading of the Mathura Lion Capital, to be the successor of Rajuvula or Śoḍāsa; and [3] that *yuvarāja* is a title subordinate to that satrap.² None of these arguments are indubitable, however, and they thus require a little unpacking.

On the first point concerning where the satrapy of Kharaoestes and his son Mujatria should be located, Cribb provides substantial evidence from Masson's coin finds that suggests the latter likely governed in eastern Afghanistan. These coins fall into two groups: a heavily debased, circular silver series minted in the name of Azes II, which places them after the great debasement and the suzerain's reign (i.e., post-30 CE),³ and another square copper series to name Mujatria as the son of Kharaoestes: *kṣatrapasa kharaostaputrasa mujatriasa*.⁴ Many of these coins were found in hoards that also contained the coins of late Apraca figures, such as the Apracarāja Indrvasu and General Aśpavarma (c. 35–60 CE),⁵ as well as the Indo-Parthian ruler Sasan (c. 60–70 CE) and the coins of Kujula Kaphises (c. 70–90). This places

¹ His coin belongs to the same series as those of Rajuvula and Śoḍāsa. Cribb argues that this Kharaoestes at Mathura is the successor of these two satraps and that he is distinct from Kharaoestes in Northwest. Cribb, 'Mujatria and Kharaoestes', 30. His arguments are dealt with below in greater detail.

² Cribb, 'Mujatria and Kharaoestes', 31.

³ Cribb, 'Mujatria and Kharaoestes', 33–34.

⁴ Cribb, 'Mujatria and Kharaoestes', 28, 34–35.

⁵ See Chapter Six: The Apraca Dynasty.

Mujatria as a contemporary of late Apracarājas and Indo-Parthians and the immediate predecessor of the Kuṣāṇa.¹ However, Cribb does not provide evidence that Kharaostes' satrapy was also in that region, nor does he demonstrate why the established view of his reigning in Chhachh should be rejected.²

The second matter is whether this Kharaostes is the same as the Kharaostes in the Mathura Lion Capital. To support his contention that the two are distinct, Cribb introduces a new copper coin from Mathura to name a Kharaostes as satrap: *khatapasa kharahostasa*. The coin's formal features place it in the same series of Rajuvula and Śoḍāsa and indicate he ruled as satrap *after* these two.³ On this basis, Cribb argues his third point that the title *yuvarāja* subordinates Kharaostes to the great satrap Rajuvula in the first section of the Mathura Lion Capital and to Śoḍāsa in the second section. This logic in turn is applied to the silver goblet inscription, wherein Kharaostes is named *yagurāja* (which Cribb takes to be a misspelling for *yuvarāja*) and as the son of the great satrap, implying subordination in this case also.⁴ This view, however, demands that the Mathura Lion Capital 'inscription is interpreted as positioning the Mathuran Kharahostes as the son or grandson of Rajuvula or the son of Sodasa'.⁵ Yet, such a reading appears quite impossible:

Mathura Lion Capital (No. 25)

[A1] *mahakṣatrovasa Rajulasa* [A2] *agramaheṣia Yasia* [A3]
Kamuia dhitra [A4] *Kharaostasa yuvaraṇa* [A5] *matra*
Nadadiakasa ya [A6] *sadha matra Abuholaa* [A7] *pitra-*

¹ Cribb, 'Mujatria and Kharaostes', 30.

² Cribb, 'Mujatria and Kharaostes', 31–33.

³ Cribb, 'Mujatria and Kharaostes', 31.

⁴ Cribb, 'Mujatria and Kharaostes', 30–31.

⁵ Cribb, 'Mujatria and Kharaostes', 31.

*mahipiśpaśia bhra[A8]tra Hayuar(*e)na...[A11]...śarira
pratēḥavīto*

The donor Yasi, by whom the relics were established, identifies herself with certain titles in the instrumental that express her identity and her relation to three other figures in the genitive, namely as the highest queen (*agramahiṣyā*) of Rajuvula, the daughter (*duhitrā*) of Kharaostes, and mother (*matrā*) of Nadadiaka. Thereafter, several other participants with whom (*sadha*) the donation was made are named: her mother (*matrā*) Abuhola, paternal grandmother (*pitāmahī*) Piśpasi, and brother (*bhratrā*) Hayuara. Yasi also bears the title Kamui, which other scholars have understood to be part of her name.¹ But it more likely constitutes another marker of identity, such as the region whence she originated, as the same title occurs as an interlinear insertion in the second place to name Kharaostes: [E1, E'] *Kharaosto Kamuiyo yuvaraya*. Both individuals are connected by this marker of identity, although to what the title refers precisely is not clear.

We are left, therefore, with a conundrum. Four separate pieces of evidence bear the name Kharaostes: in the Northwest one coin names him satrap and one inscription *yagurāja*, and in the North one inscription names him *yuvarāja* and one coin satrap. The sources in the Northwest are to be dated to before or around c. 30 CE and those from Mathura to shortly after this time, which coincides with Kharaostes' disappearance from the former region. To argue these figures are distinct would appear to fly in the face of several striking linguistic and chronological congruencies that are surely more than mere coincidence. If the two Kharaostes are the same, this still leaves the matter of Mujatria, whose coinage places him quite firmly in eastern Afghanistan in the mid 1st century CE. Since his rule also coincides with the fall of the Indo-

¹ For a discussion, see Baums, 'Catalog', 220fn44.

Scythians and the rise of the Indo-Parthian, is it not possible that he too was forced to move and in this case opted to go west rather than south? All this remains conjecture. But perhaps more compelling arguments in favour of the Kharaostes' identification are to be found in the chronologies of other satraps in the Northwest who also appear on the Mathura Lion Capital.

As observed above, the date of the Mathura Lion Capital is dependent upon whether the Copper Plate Inscription of Patika (No. 12) is dated to 78 Azes I, which would produce a modern year of 30/31 CE, or Maues, in which case we argue it was inscribed in 3/4 CE. The capital informs us that Patika eventually succeeded his father as great satrap and that his rule was contemporaneous to the reigns of the great satrap Rajuvula and satrap Śoḍāsa in Mathura. Coins of Rajuvula are first found in the Punjab and Jammu and numismatists have dated these to c. 10–20 CE, immediately after the Indo-Greek ruler Strato II.¹ This suggests that in the third decade of the Common Era, Rajuvula shifted south to Mathura. Cribb suggests this occurred c. 19–45 CE,² which is no doubt broadly accurate but can be fixed to the earlier end of that span, as shall be demonstrated.

If Falk's model is adopted, and Patika's inscription dated to 30/31 CE, we thus encounter a problem. The Mathura Lion Capital must postdate both Patika's dedication, in which his father is still satrap and he does not yet bear this title, as well as the approximation given by numismatists for when Rajuvula still reigned in the Northwest. Falk's date of course does not satisfy these two conditions and Patika's

¹ Bopearachchi and ur Rahman, *Pre-Kushana Coins in Pakistan*, 47.

² Joe Cribb, 'The Early Kushan Kings: New Evidence for Chronology: Evidence from the Rabatak Inscription of Kanishka I', in *Coins, Art, and Chronology: Essays on the Pre-Islamic History of the Indo-Iranian Borderlands*, ed. Michael Alram and Deborah E. Klimburg-Salter (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1999), 195.

dedication must have been made earlier, which precludes the inscription be dated to the era of Azes I. It is notable that neither Liako Kusuluka nor Patika issued coinage in the Northwest. This may well suggest their tenure was brief. In his dedication, Patika wishes that his father's, as well as his son and wife's health may increase: [4] [*kṣatra*]*pasa saputradarasa ayubalavardhi[e]*. Whether or not this indicates his family was in poor health is not clear. Nevertheless, a concern for his father's health may suggest he died shortly after this inscription was composed in 3/4 CE and provide an explanation for his absence in the Mathura Lion Capital, composed c. 30 CE, when Patika had been usurped by the Indo-Parthian Gondophares.

In the earlier section of the Mathura Lion Capital, Rajuvula is named great satrap and in the latter section Śoḍāsa as satrap. From coins, we know the latter too became great satrap¹, presumably following the death of his father. Exactly when this succession occurred is indicated by the Āyāgapata of Amohinī, which is dated to the year 42 or 72 of his reign as lord and great satrap:² *sv[ā]misa mahakṣatrapasa Śoḍāsasa*

¹ Śoḍāsa first issued coinage, in which he names himself satrap and son of the great satrap Rajuvula, and then later the lord (*svāmi*) and great satrap (*mahākṣatrapa*) himself. Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, 608–9.

² There has been some lengthy discussion concerning whether or not the Brāhmī numeral ✕ (found in this inscription) or the numeral 𑀅 (found in other inscriptions) represent 40 or 70. A brief note of question is given by Bühler who reads 42 on the basis of the erroneous reading of *mahārājā* for *mahākṣatrapa*. Georg Bühler, 'Jain Inscriptions from Mathurā', *Epigraphia Indica* 2 (1894): 199. More lengthy discussions have been conducted by Lüders and van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, who conclude on the basis of palaeographic correspondences with other inscriptions from Mathura, dated to the years of Huviṣka and Vāsudeva (ruling respectively between the approximate years 26–60 and years 64–98 of Kaniṣka I era) that at Mathura, ✕ is 70 and 𑀅 is 40, and thereby favour the 70 as the correct reading. Lohuizen-de Leeuw, *The Scythian Period: An Approach to the History, Art, Epigraphy and Palaeography of North India from the 1st Century B.C. to the 3rd Century A.D.*, 65–72; Lüders,

savatsare 42/72.¹ There is some question as to the era to which this year should be dated. It cannot be dated according to the conflated Azes I and Maues under Falk's proposition, as this would produce a date of 6/5 BCE, if the numeral 42 is adopted, or 25/26 CE, if regarded as 72²—in both cases Falk's dating proves untenable. Under the former solution, this inscription would precede Patika's dedication of Falk's reckoning in 30/31 CE by several years and under the latter by around five years. But Patika was not yet great satrap at the time of his donation and only later acquired this title in the Mathura Lion Capital, at a time when Śoḍāsa was satrap also. It therefore simply cannot be the case that the Mathura Lion Capital and Āyāgapāṭa of Amohinī were dedicated before Patika's inscription.

The only solution is that Patika's dedication is pushed back and to this end, the proposed reckoning of Maues' era to 75/74 BCE proves quite adequate. According to this scenario, Patika made his relic donation in 3/4 CE. This would allow time for Rajuvula to shift to Mathura sometime after 20 CE, following numismatic findings, and for

Mathurā Inscriptions, 243–46; Chattopadhyaya, 'Mathurā from the Śuṅga to the Kuṣāṇa Period', 21. Reading the character one can see that it is not wholly clear and there appears to be a small serif at the bottom of the right diagonal stroke, which would perhaps be in favour of reading 40, as others more recently have done. See, for example, Falk, 'Mathura Lion Capital', 279. However, this date proves impossible to maintain, as shall be demonstrated below. For a related discussion on a set pillar base inscriptions from Jamalpur, Mathura, see Skinner, 'Marks of Empire', 7–8.

¹ For an edition, see Quintanilla, *History of Early Stone Sculpture at Mathura CA. 150 BCE-100 CE*, 275.

² The inscription has been dated in early and more recent scholarship to the Vikrama era of 58/57 BCE (15/16 CE), see Fleet, 'Note on a Jain Inscription at Mathurā', 647; Lohuizen-de Leeuw, *The Scythian Period: An Approach to the History, Art, Epigraphy and Palaeography of North India from the 1st Century B.C. to the 3rd Century A.D.*, 11–13; Quintanilla, *History of Early Stone Sculpture at Mathura CA. 150 BCE-100 CE*, 119; 275.

Patika to become great satrap also, as the Mathura Lion Capital records. This latter inscription, in turn, must have been inscribed before the Āyāgapāṭa of Amohinī, for Śoḍāsa is satrap in the former and great satrap in the latter. It is impossible that the year recorded in this latter inscription is dated, according to my reckoning, to 42 Maues (33/32 CE) or 72 Maues (3/2 BCE), which would perhaps be expected considered the potential association between these satraps and that suzerain. If the era of Azes I, only the latter solution of 72 Azes I (24/25 CE) is acceptable, as it would leave sufficient time for both Patika and Śoḍāsa to become great satrap at their respective times. Equally, if the year 42 is to be considered as a date in Śoḍāsa's regnal era, this solution could be justified on the premise that the era was established after c. 20 CE.

Assuming Śoḍāsa did establish his own regnal era, he must have done so no later than the mid 1st century CE. The Donation of Gotamī, dated to the year 270 [Yavana] (95/96 CE) of a great king¹, which refers in all likelihood to Vima Takhtu, indicates that the Kuṣāṇas had taken Mathura by this time. There is no evidence to suggest Śoḍāsa governed alongside the Kuṣāṇas nor indeed that he immediately preceded them, for, as A. K. Narain points out, there are four other satraps known from coinage to have governed Mathura after Śoḍāsa and before the Kuṣāṇas. The first bears an Iranic name, Torañadāṣa, and the remaining three Indic names, Vajatama, Śivadatta and Śivaghosa.² Therefore, he must have become great satrap at least 42 years before losing power in the region.

¹ For an edition and translation, see § 123.

² A. K. Narain, 'Ancient Mathurā and the Numismatic Material', in *Mathurā: The Cultural Heritage*, ed. Doris Meth Srinivasan (New Delhi: American Institute of Indian Studies, 1989), 116. Levels 24–25 at Sonkh, Mathurā appear to confirm this chronology. Herbert Härtel, *Excavations at Sonkh. 2500 Years of a Town in Mathura District* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1993), 86; 307ff. The succession of these *kṣatrapas* is disputed, however; see the discussion in Chattopadhyaya, 'Mathurā from the Śuṅga to the Kuṣāṇa Period'.

The chronology of the satraps in the North and Northwest can thus be summarised as follows. Sometime 3/4 CE (the time of Patika's dedication) and more likely around 20 CE (when Rajuvula and Kharaostes issue coins in the Northwest) all individuals moved southwards, taking control of regions in the North around Mathura. Śoḍāsa succeeded his father in Mathura as great satrap no earlier than 25/26 CE, if the Āyāgapāṭa of Amohinī is dated to 72 Azes I, and no later than c. 50 CE, if dated to year 42 of his own era. Taking this as our chronological framework, the question remains as to why these satraps journeyed south and whether, namely, this was a matter of political expansion, as some maintain,¹ or if they were forced out. Of the two, the latter solution shall be shown to be the more likely, in light of Indo-Parthian invasions, whose coinage and inscriptions confirm the here-proposed chronology for these satraps.

After Patika had left Chhachh, another satrap named Maṇigula and his son Jihonika succeeded him in the region, governing at the cusp of the Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian Empires. The former did not issue coinage and is only known from his son's, whose first issues name him as a satrap and have a base of 89% silver, indicating he governed before the 'great debasement' at the end of Azes II's reign, c. 30 CE.² These dates coincide with the relative chronology of Kharaostes, Rajuvula, and Patika, who had shifted south to Mathura. Unlike other satraps, however, Jihonika maintained his governance in the Northwest and issued overstrikes of the Indo-Parthian Gondophares' 'bull-and-lion'

¹ Quintanilla, *History of Early Stone Sculpture at Mathura CA. 150 BCE-100 CE*, 170.

² Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, 193. For example, Rev. *Manigulasa chatrapasa putrasa chatrapasa Jihuniasa*, Obv. ΜΑΝΝΟΡΟΙ ΥΙΟΥ ΣΑΤΡΑΠΟΥ ΙΕΙΟΝΙΣΟΥ. Bopearachchi and Rahman, No. 973-974; Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, Typ. 879-883.

coins in southern and central Chhachh,¹ wherein he is entitled great satrap.²

The latter period of Jihonika's reign also coincides with the archaeological dates given by John Marshall for an inscribed silver vase to mention him, which was found in the Indo-Parthian layers of a purportedly Buddhist temple in Taxila.³ Therein, he is named as the satrap of Cukhsa, and son of Maṇigula, who is here identified as the brother of a certain Great King: *maharaja[bhra](^{*}ta Ma)[ṇi](^{*}gula)sa putrasa Jihonikasa Cukhsasa kṣatrapasa.*⁴ Jihonika and his father were

¹ See Errington and Curtis, 'Constructing the Past', 64.

² E.g., *Jihonigasa Maṇigulasa putrasa mahakṣatrapasa* ('Jihonika, son of Maṇigula, the *mahākṣatrapa*'). Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, 596; Senior, *Indo-Scythian Coins and History. Coinage of the Scythians*, 122. He is also named a great satrap in a Kharoṣṭhī Buddhist manuscript, see Av^{L2} 1–7. This shall be discussed later in Chapter Four: Satraps, District Governors, and Buddhism.

³ John Marshall, *A Guide to Taxila.*, 4th ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 65–66. Marshall records that the vase was found buried along with a host of other gold and silver items (many inscribed with different names) beneath a room of a house and against the foundation wall of an 'apsidal temple', consisting of a court with a small stupa hall (a rectangular enclave housing a stupa), with two smaller stupas, a circumambulatory path, and two rows of eight living and sleeping cells, presumably used by attendee monastics. On this basis, he hypothesised that the vase belonged to a hoard of objects that were originally donations made to the Buddhist urban temple. Marshall, *Structural Remains*, 150–56. More recently, Lars Fogelin has doubted this view, suggesting it would be highly unusual and unique to find a monastic complex in the middle of a city. He thus argues that this silver vase has nothing to do with Buddhist practice but could be 'an urban shrine for lay worship'. Lars Fogelin, *An Archaeological History of Indian Buddhism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 196.

⁴ CKI 63. Konow formerly dated this inscription on palaeographic grounds to the same period as the Copper Plate Inscription of Patika (No. 12); this would date it closer to the turn of the Common Era. Konow, *Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions: With the Exception of Those of Aśoka*, 82. More recently, however, Gérard Fussman has placed it closer in time to Apracarāja dedications. Fussman,

therefore kin to a ruler in the Northwest but it is not self-evident as to which individual the title Great King refers to. Several theories have been proposed. Sten Konow argued it refers to the Kuṣāṇa Vima Kadphises,¹ however this is impossible as the latter's grandfather Kujula Kadphises issued copies of Jihonika's coins,² which would give the satrap a *terminus ante quem* of c. 70 CE, although numismatists would date him to no later than 40 CE.³ Hans Loeschner argues he was nephew to Maues⁴ but this would separate the two by more than half a century, which is unlikely. Falk explored the possibility that the title refers to Azes II, whom he sees as the predecessor of the *yuvarāja* Kharaostes, on the basis of homogeneity in the coin issues of Azes II, Kharaostes, and Jihonika, which demonstrate 'some sort of claim to serve dynastic continuity'.⁵ Indeed, this, as noted above, is a strong possibility, and would lend to the view that Kharaostes was unable to succeed Azes II, having been usurped by the Indo-Parthian Gondophares. That Jihonika alone maintained his satrapy in the Northwest could only have been achieved if Jihonika had successfully withstood Indo-Parthian advancements or if he made an alliance.

'Inscriptions kharoṣṭhī du Musée de Caboul', 31. This would make the paleography marginally later and agree with numismatic and archaeological contexts.

¹ Konow, *Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions: With the Exception of Those of Aśoka*, 82.

² David MacDowall, 'The Azes Hoard from Shaikhan-Dheri: Fresh Evidence for the Context of Jihonika', in *South Asian Archaeology 1971*, ed. Norman Hammond (Park Ridge: Noyes Press, 1973), 255. See also Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, 735.

³ MacDowall, 'The Azes Hoard from Shaikhan-Dheri: Fresh Evidence for the Context of Jihonika', 229.

⁴ Loeschner, 'Kanishka in Context with the Historical Buddha and Kushan Chronology', 145.

⁵ Falk, 'Mathura Lion Capital', 123.

Fig. 4.2: Dated Inscriptions from the Indo-Scythian Period

No.	Title	Provenance	Date	Donation	Ruling Group	Individuals		Ref.
						Name	Title	
1	Inscribed Plate of Saṃghamitra (No. 4)	Buner, Pakistan	9 Azes, (39/38 BCE)	<i>dāna</i>	Indo-Scythian	Saṃghamitra Vaśa-Avakasa Mahapala-Śuspala	— <i>mahākṣatrapa putra</i> —	CKI 459
2	Reliquary Inscription of Unknown Donor from the Reign of Namipāla (No. 5)	Buner, Pakistan	11 Namipala (37/36 BCE)	<i>śarīra</i>	Indo-Scythian	Balamitra Namipala	— <i>mahākṣatrapa</i>	CKI 827
3	Reliquary Inscription of Gomitra (No. 6)	—	12 [Azes] (36/35 BCE)	<i>śarīra</i>	—	Gomitra	<i>śramaṇa dharma-kathika</i>	CKI 464
4	Āyāgapāṭa of Unknown Donor	Kathoti Kua, Mathura	21 [Azes] (27/26 BCE)	—	—	—	—	Qu 2.9
5	Inscription of Damijada	Shahdaur, Pakistan	60 [Maues] (15/14 BCE)	—	Indo-Scythian	Damijada	<i>erzuṇa śaka</i>	CKI 42
6	Reliquary Inscription of Loṇa (No. 7)	Charsadda, Pakistan	—	<i>śarīra</i>	Apracarāja	Loṇa Viśuvarma	<i>antaḥpurikā kumāra</i>	CKI 247
7	Reliquary Inscription of Unknown <i>Meridarkh</i> (No. 3)	Taxila, Pakistan	—	stupa	—	—	<i>meridarkh</i>	CKI 33
8	Reliquary Inscription of Toda et al (No. 9)	Haḍḍa, Afghanistan	26 [Azes] (9/8 BCE)	stupa	—	Toda et al	<i>sahaya</i>	CKI 455
9	Inscribed Donation of Dharmarava	Mansehra, Pakistan	68 [Maues] (7/6 BCE)	—	—	Dharmarava	—	CKI 44
10	Inscription of Vaḍhitira Corporation	Mahjia, Fatehjang, Punjab, Pakistan	68 [Maues] (7/6 BCE)	<i>dānamukha</i>	—	Vaḍhitira	<i>sahaya</i>	CKI 45

11	Reliquary Inscription of Naganamda (No. 10)	Samarbagh, Pakistan	50 [Azes] (2/3 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	Indo-Scythian Apracarāja	Naganamda Taravia Vijayamitra	<i>bhāryā meridarkh apracarāja</i>	CKI 454
12	Copper Plate Inscription of Patika (No. 12)	Taxila, Punjab, Pakistan	78 Maues (3/4 CE)	<i>śarīra saṃghārāma</i>	Indo-Scythian	Patika Liako Rohiṇimitra	<i>mahādān-apati putra kṣatrapa upādhyāya</i>	CKI 46
13	Reliquary Inscription of Vijayamitra (No. 11)	Shinkot, Bajaur, Pakistan	5 Vijayamitra (3/4 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	Apracarāja	Vijayamitra	<i>apracarāja</i>	CKI 176
14	Well Donation of Vaśiśuga Corporation	Muchai, Pakistan	81 [Maues] (6/7 CE)	<i>kūpa</i>	—	Vaśiśuga	<i>sahaya</i>	CKI 47
15	Reliquary Inscription of Saṃgharakṣita (No. 13)	—	60 [Azes] (12/13 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	—	Saṃgharakṣida Śiraka	<i>putra</i> —	CKI 403
16	Reliquary Inscription of Indravarma I (No. 14)	—	63 Azes (15/16 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	Apracarāja	Indravarma I et al	<i>kumāra</i>	CKI 242
17	Silver Scroll of Utara (No. 15)	—	—	<i>dhātu Śīlāstambha</i>	Apracarāja	Utara Indravarma I et al	<i>kumārabhārya kumāra</i>	CKI 265
18	Well Donation of Hima	Dewai, Pakistan	200 [Yoṇa] (24/25 CE)	<i>toyamda dānamukha</i>	—	Hima	<i>bhadra</i>	CKI 110
19	Āyāgapāṭa of Amohinī	Kaṅkālī Ṭīlā, Mathura, India	72 [Azes] (24/25 CE)	<i>āyavatī</i>	—	Amohinī Pāla Hārītī et al	<i>śramaṇ-śrāvikā bhāryā putra</i> —	Qu 2.15
20	Well Donation of Pipalakhaṇa Corporation	Kudu Kel, Pakistan	100 [Azes] (42/43 CE)	<i>kūpa</i>	—	Pipalakhaṇa	<i>sahaya</i>	CKI 51

21	Reliquary Inscription of Rukhuṇa (No. 17)	—	73 Azes 201 Yoṇa 27 Vijayamitra (25/26 CE)	stupa	Apracarāja	Rukhuṇa Vijayamitra Indravarma I	<i>apracarājabhārya</i> <i>apracarāja</i> <i>stratega</i>	CKI 405
22	Reliquary Inscription of Utara (No. 18)	—	—	stupa	Apracarāja	Utara —	<i>strategabhāryā</i> <i>stratega</i>	CKI 255
23	Reliquary Inscription of Indragivarma (No. 19)	—	—	<i>śarīra</i>	Apracarāja	Indragivarma Vijayamitra	<i>kumāra</i> <i>putra</i> <i>apracarāja</i>	CKI 402
24	Reliquary Inscription of Ramaka (No. 20)	—	74 Azes (26/27 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	Apracarāja Indo- Scythian	Ramaka Mahaśrava e[...]—muñatra Yola-[] et al	<i>putra</i> — <i>kṣatrapa</i> <i>kṣatrapa</i>	CKI 251
25	Reliquary Inscription of Ramaka and Uḍita (No. 21)	—	—	<i>śarīra</i> <i>dānamukha</i>	Apracarāja	Ramaka Mahaśrava Uḍita	<i>putra</i> — —	CKI 243
26	Mount Banj Inscription	Kabal, Pakistan	102 [Maues] (27/28 CE)	<i>dānamukha</i>	—	Makaḍaka	—	CKI 52
27	Silver Goblet of Kharaostes	—	—	—	Indo- Scythian	Kharaostes —	<i>yabgurāja</i> <i>putra</i> <i>mahākṣatrapa</i>	CKI 241
28	Reliquary Inscription from Gunyar (No. 22)	Gunyar, Swat, Pakista	76 Azes (28/29 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	—	—	—	CKI 544
29	Reliquary Inscription of Śatruleka (No. 23)	—	77 Azes (29/30 CE)	<i>dhātu</i>	Apracarāja Indo- Scythian	Śatruleka Vijayamitra et al	<i>kṣatrapa</i> <i>apracarāja-</i> <i>bhāgineya</i> <i>apracarāja</i>	CKI 257

29	Relic Slab Inscription of Thavara	—	—Azes	<i>śarīra</i>	—	Thavara	—	CKI 558
30	Reliquary Inscription of Prahodi (No. 24)	Bajaur, Pakistan	32 Vijayamitra (30/31 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	Apracarāja	Prahodi Vijyamitra Śirila Aśorakṣida	<i>antaḥpurikā apracarāja īśvara stūpakarmika navakarmika</i>	CKI 359
31	Mathura Lion Capital (No. 25)	Mathura, India	—	<i>śarīra</i> stupa Busavihāra <i>saṃghārama</i>	Indo-Scythian	Yasi Rajuvula Kharaostes et al	<i>agramahiṣī mahākṣatrapa yuvarāja</i>	CKI 48
32	Mathura Lion Capital (No. 26)	Mathura, India	—	<i>pr̥thivī</i>	Indo-Scythian	Śoḍāsa Rajuvula Kharaostes Khalamasa Maja Patika Miyika Budhila Et al	<i>kṣatrapa putra mahākṣatrapa yuvarāja kumāra kaniṣṭha mahākṣatrapa kṣatrapa bhikṣu</i>	CKI 48
33	Reliquary Inscription of Unknown Donor from Swat (No. 27)	Swat, Pakistan	80 Azes (32/33 CE)	—	—	—	—	CKI 828
34	Inscription of Śivarakṣita	Shahdaur, Pakistan	80 Azes (32/33 CE)	—	—	Śivarakṣita	<i>aḍha</i>	CKI 43
35	Lotus Pond Donation of Malaṣu	Jalalabad, Afghanistan	83 [Azes] (35/36 CE)	<i>puṣkariṇī</i>	Indo-Scythian	Malaṣu Tivharṇa et al	<i>cozbo putra kṣatrapa</i>	CKI 179

36	Reliquary Inscription of Dhramila et al (No. 28)	—	83 [Azes] (35/36 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	—	Dhramila et al	—	CKI 266
37	Reliquary Inscription of Indravarma II	—	—	<i>śarīra stupa</i>	Apracarāja	Indravarma II Viśpavarma Śiśireṇa Indravasu Vasumitra Indravarma Utara Vijayamitra	<i>kumāra putra stratega strategabhārya apracarāja jīvaputrā stratega strategabhārya apracarāja</i>	CKI 241
38	Inscribed Well of Saṃghamitra	Paja, Pakistan	111 [Maues] (37/38 CE)	<i>kūpa</i>	—	Saṃghamitra Ananda	<i>putra</i> —	CKI 56
39	Stone Shrine of Śoḍāsa	Mathura, India	—	<i>pratimā śailadeva-grha</i>	Indo-Scythian	— Rajuvula	<i>svāmin putra mahākṣatrapa</i>	§ 113
40	Rock of Śoḍāsa	Mathura, India	—	<i>parvata prasāda sabhā śilāpaṭṭa</i>	Indo-Scythian	Śoḍāsa Rajuvula	<i>mahākṣatrapa putra</i>	§ 178
41	Inscribed Pillar of [...] - itadevī	Katra, Mathura, India	—	<i>torāṇa</i>	Indo-Scythian	[...] - itadevī — Śoḍāsa	<i>bhāryā āmatya</i> —	Qu 1.13
42	Doorjamb of Vasu	Mathura, India	—	<i>mahāsthāna torāṇa vedika</i>	—	Vasu Śoḍāsa	— <i>svāmin</i>	§ 115
43	Stele of Kauśikī	Mirjāpur Mathura, India	—	<i>puṣkariṇī ārāma sabhā udapāna stambha</i>	Indo-Scythian	Kauśikī Vasu Mūlavasu Śoḍāsa	<i>mātrī</i> — <i>gañjavara brāhmaṇa svāmin</i>	Qu 1.10

				<i>śilā</i>				<i>mahākṣatrapa</i>
				<i>pratimā</i>				
44	Stele of [Mūlavasu]	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	—	<i>puṣkariṇī</i> <i>ārāma</i> <i>sabhā</i> <i>udapāna</i> <i>staṃbha</i> <i>śilāpaṭṭa</i>	Indo- Scythian	— Śoḍāsa	<i>gañjavara</i> <i>brāhmaṇa</i> <i>svāmin</i> <i>mahākṣatrapa</i>	§ 68
45	Bodhisattva Statue of Nandā (No. 47)	Mathura, India	—	<i>bodhisattva</i>	Indo- Scythian	Nandā —	<i>upāsikā</i> <i>kṣatrapa</i>	§ 2
46	Inscribed Silver Vase of Jihonika	Taxila, Pakistan	—	—	Indo- Scythian	Jihonika Maṇigula	<i>kṣatrapa</i> <i>putra</i> <i>mahārājabhrāṭṛ</i>	CKI 63

BUDDHISM IN THE INDO-SCYTHIAN PERIOD

The claim is often made in scholarship that the Indo-Scythians served a central role for Buddhist institutions as patrons and that Buddhism in turn was a fundamental component of their imperial endeavours. No doubt Buddhist institutions thrived during the period of their rule. But this does not entail that the Indo-Scythians, loosely defined, were the sole progenitors of that flourishing. Indeed, that this attribution is even made derives from a decided lack of precision in the usage of the category ‘Indo-Scythian’. It includes, namely, all individuals associated with an Indo-Scythian system of the imperial system of governance—suzerain, satraps, local rulers such as the Apracarājas¹, and district governors—as well as those, whose name is demonstrably Iranian, or at the very least non-Indic. Clearly, this is insufficient to determine patterns of patronage with any precision. Thus, when the Indo-Scythians are divided politically into different sub-sets, pertaining to imperial and local systems of governance, when such groups as the Apracarājas are omitted, and when a closer inspection of the times and spaces in which Buddhist donations were made is accounted for, a quite different picture emerges of Buddhism during the Indo-Scythian Period.

From the perspective of Indo-Scythian coinage, little more can be said than what was observed in the case of the Indo-Greeks, for many of the devices, as observed above, were only slightly modified from these predecessors. Nothing, therefore, in the iconography or symbols of either the suzerains or satraps’ coins suggests that Buddhism provided the ideological basis for Indo-Scythian political media. Of course, certain evidences have been offered in scholarship. In particular, lengthy

¹ See Chapter Six: The Apracarājas.

debate has centred on a single copper coin issue of Maues to depict a figure and whether this figure should be interpreted as the ruler himself seated atop a cushion with a sword across his lap¹ or as a Bodhisattva or Buddha in a cross-legged meditation posture.² Numismatists widely favour the former position and if the latter were the case, it would demand that Maues had rendered Buddhism a tool of his imperial endeavours. One would, therefore, expect to observe other evidence of the ruler's support or of an increase in patronage of Buddhist institutions during his reign. In both cases there is none. During the period of Maues' governance in Swat, Peshawar, and Punjab there are no dated inscriptions that provide evidence of either this ruler's patronage of Buddhism or of any other governing as part of his administration. Likewise, coinage issued by the ruler is uncommon at Buddhist sites and recorded at only two sites at Taxila: four copper coins of Maues and Azes I were found in stupa S8 and three coins of Apollodotus II, Maues, and Śpalahores were found in a relic deposit in stupa U1 at the Dharmarājikā, all of which post-date his reign,³ as well as in the monastery at Lalachak.⁴

Numismatically there is little evidence in general from Buddhist sites to substantiate foundational constructions during the Indo-Scythian Period.⁵ However, during the period of Azes I's reign (c. 48–0 BCE) six dated inscriptions in the Northwest and one in the North demonstrate that such work had indeed begun at this time (Fig. 4.2). The earliest of these were donated in the years 9–12 Azes (39–35 BCE). Two are of

¹ Bopearachchi and ur Rahman, *Pre-Kushana Coins in Pakistan*, 44, No. 691.

² For a summary of this debate and arguments in favour of the latter view, see A. K. Narain, 'First Images of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas: Ideology and Chronology', in *Studies in Buddhist Art of South Asia*, ed. A. K. Narain (New Delhi: Kanak Publications, 1985), 7–12.

³ Marshall, *Structural Remains*, 271–73.

⁴ Marshall, *Structural Remains*, 388.

⁵ See Errington, 'Numismatic Evidence for Dating Buddhist Remains', 194.

import from the perspective of a Buddhist political history, as they constitute some of the first potential instances of institutional saliency.

First is the Inscribed Plate of Saṃghamitra (No. 4), dated 9 Azes (39/38 BCE) during the reign of the aforementioned great satrap named Vasa-Abdagases, a local ruler governing under Azes I. This bronze plate was found in Buner and was dedicated for the Fortunate One Śākyamuni by a certain Saṃghamitra, who bears no title or epithet but, as his name reveals, was in all likelihood a monk if not a devout Buddhist.¹ Since Azes I is mentioned explicitly in the date formula we may say there was a concern with identifying the ruler in this ritual context. But this symbolic inclusion is far from constituting evidence for any substantial participation on the part of the suzerain. Second is the aforementioned Reliquary Inscription of an Unknown Donor from the Reign of Namipāla (No. 5), also from Buner, which records the dedication of the Buddha's relics in year 11 of Namipala (37/36 BCE), who is potentially a direct descendant of Vasa-Abdagases.² Finally, there is the Reliquary Inscription of Gomitra (No. 6), dedicated in 12 [Azes] (36/35 BCE) by Gomitra, a monk bearing the pedagogic title Dharma-teacher (*dharmakathika*).³ This record suggests that monastic figures served key roles in the development of an early relic cult. Both of the former two donations were also made during the early part of the month Kārttika, which, if considered as being reckoned from the new moon (*āmanta*), would correspond to the last fortnight of monastic retreat period during monsoon. This is a common time for donations to be made⁴ and would

¹ The name Saṃghamitra is common to inscriptions. In Buddhist inscriptions, it is found as the name of five monks (CKI 75, 131, 155, 459, Sk 107) and three figures who do not bear an occupational title (CKI 56, 249, § 47). It is also the name of two Jain monks (Sk 138, 177).

² See above Chapter Four: Indo-Scythian Suzerains.

³ On this title, see Chapter Ten: Pundits, Pedagogues and Specialists.

⁴ See Chapter Eleven: Ritual Rhythms in Donative Inscriptions.

perhaps indicate some form of monastic oversight in the ritual process also.

As observed above, there is a lacuna in the epigraphic record following these dates for several decades. Naturally, this means we have no evidence for Buddhist donative activity in the last forty years of the 1st century BCE, except for the doubtful Reliquary Inscription of Toda et al (No. 9), dated 39 Azes (9/8 BCE), which, if authentic, provides evidence for the establishment of a stupa by a collective of individuals bearing Greek, Indic and other non-Indic names, who do not appear to be related to the Indo-Scythian rulers.

SATRAPS, DISTRICT GOVERNORS, AND BUDDHISM

From the turn of the Common Era, a huge number of inscriptions arise, primarily in connection with the donative activities of the Apracarājas, dated between 2/3 CE and 30 CE in the Northwest. These inscriptions reflect nothing in the way of imperial participation in Buddhist ritual contexts. What they do evince, rather, is that Buddhism had indeed become a tool for the formation of power at local levels of governance, namely among the Apracarājas, satraps, and district governors, several of whom occur in Buddhist donative inscriptions and manuscripts. What is to be noted is that the participation of these figures in Buddhist donative contexts—and specifically in the practice of relic dedication—coincides with the decline the Indo-Scythian hegemony (see above) and the transitioning into a distinct political landscape, which saw a redistribution of power and autonomy to local levels of governance.

Whilst details of the Apracarājas are excluded from this section and considered fully in Chapter Six a brief note is here necessary, as certain figures arise in their inscriptions, who are potentially related to the Indo-Scythian administration. The first (No. 10) to note is the district governor Taravia, whose wife, Naganamda, established relics in year 50

of an unspecified era, which we must take to be that of Azes (2/3 CE), and during the reign of Vijayamitra: [1.] *Viyamitrassa Ava[2]cara[ja](*sara[ra]ja)[m](*i)*. One would assume that Taravia had been installed as district governor by the Indo-Scythian suzerain Azilises, with whom, following numismatic chronologies, this donation is coeval. However, that Azes I is not mentioned in the date formula and rather the reign of Vijayamitra is stressed make this conclusion uncertain. The Apracarājas are noted for using greek titles for administrative roles within their internal system of governance, which was structured independently of the empire.¹ It is likely this same district governor is also implicitly referred to as the son of Śreṭha, entitled mother to the district governor (*meridarkhmātr*), in the Silver Scroll of Utara (No. 15), donated by the wife of the Apraca prince Indravarma I.

Second, the donor of the Reliquary Inscription of Śatruleka (No. 23) is identified in terms of a kinship relation, as the maternal nephew of the Apracarāja (*apracarājabhāgineya*) Vijayamitra, and as satrap (*kṣatrapa*). This dedication was made in 77 Azes (29/30), at the very end of Azes II's rule in the Northwest and at the advent of the Indo-Parthian Gondophares. Since the title satrap is nowhere else applied to Apraca figures, we must provisionally assume the rulers did not organise their kingdom into satrapies and that Śatruleka, therefore, was installed as a satrap by an imperial system. Due to the chronology of the dedication, however, the specific imperial system could be Indo-Scythian or Indo-Parthian, with whom the Apracarājas would form an alliance. Besides these two figures, no others related to the Indo-Scythian Empire are mentioned.

Contrary to the Indo-Scythian suzerains, for local satraps Buddhism was quite evidently a political tool. The earliest evidence of

¹ For an elaboration of this argument, see Chapter Six: The Political Identity of the Apracarājas.

this is found in the Copper Plate Inscription of Patika (No. 12), in which Patika states he establishes an unestablished relic of the Fortunate One Śākyamuni and a monastic complex: [3] *Patiko apratiṭhāvita bhagavata Śakamuṇisa śariraṃ (*pra)tithaveti [saṃgha]ramaṃ*. The notion that this relic and monastic complex were unestablished (Skt. *apraṭiṣṭhāpita*), belongs to a specific formula, known to a select few inscriptions and passages in Buddhist legal and narrative literature, which is associated with Buddhism's expansionist efforts in establishing relics and stupas at new locations in order to generate Brahmā-merit (*brahmapuṇya*).¹ This form of expansion is for the most part enacted by political agents and, as shall later be argued, was inspired by a specific form of propaganda, devised by Buddhists to affirm the notion that this practice was efficacious in the formation of political power. Because this formula is doctrinally specific, its very presence indicates a quite intimate relation between this satrap-to-be and Buddhist legal specialists. The close association between Patika and the Buddhist institution is also substantiated in his being named 'master of donations' (*dānapati*)² and that the donation was made in conjunction with the instructor (*upadhyāya*) and 'overseer of new constructions' (*navakarmika*) Rohiṇimitra.

When Patika, Kharaostes, and Rajuvula were compelled to leave their satrapies in the Northwest and reform their governance anew in Mathura, it appears they achieved this in part through a relic dedication. As elucidated above, the Mathura Lion Capital was established in the first decade (c. 20–30 CE) of their reign in this region. The early part of the inscription records a relic was established by Yasi, principal queen (*agramahiṣī*) of the great satrap Rajuvula's and daughter of the *yuvarāja* Kharaostes:

¹ See Chapter Fourteen: Eschatology and Brahma-Merit.

² On these titles, see Chapter Ten: Individuals in Donative Inscriptions.

[A11]...*śarira praṭethavīto* [A12] *bhāḁavato Śakamuṇisa budhasa* [A13] *Śaki{[mu]}rayasa śpa[e] Bhusavi[ha]-* [A14]*[ra] thuva ca sagharama ca caṭ{*u}*[A15]*diśasa saghasa Sarva*[A16]*stivatana parigrahe*

...a relic of the Fortunate One, Śākyamuni Buddha, was established in her [i.e., Yasi's] own Buddhavihāra, in addition to a stupa and monastic complex, into the possession of the Sarvāstivādins, belonging to the community of the four directions.

The second section of the Mathura Lion Capital (No. 26) records that Rajuvula's son, the satrap Śoḁāsa, also donated a piece of land (*prthivī*) to the Sarvāstivādins.

However, Śoḁāsa participated more widely in donations conducted under the auspices of Brahmins in Mathura. These include [1] a well inscription, which records the donation of a statue of Vṛṣṇi-Pañcavīras and a stone shrine for the gods (*śailadevaḁṛha*),¹ and [2] a temple (*prāsāda*), meeting hall (*sabhā*) and stone slab (*śilāpaṭṭa*),² in which the Lord (*svāmin*) and Great Satrap Śoḁāsa appears to have functioned as a donor. In the remainder, he arises in connection with [3] the donation of a gateway (*torāṇa*) of the wife of his minister (*āmatya*),³ and as a participant also in [4] the donation of a great temple (*mahāsthāna*) and gateway as part of Vāsudeva cult by a certain Vasu, who, from two further donations of lotus ponds (*puṣkarinī*), gardens (*ārāma*), meeting halls (*sabhā*), wells (*udapāna*), pillars (*stambha*) and stone slabs (*śilāpaṭṭa*), we know to be the son of Śoḁāsa's treasurer (*gañjavara*), the Brahmin Mūlavasu: one [5] donated by Vasu's mother

¹ § 113.

² § 178.

³ Qu 1. 14.

Kauśikī as part of a Vāsudeva cult, and another [6] by his father Mūlavasu. For these local satraps, therefore, it seems that Brahmins served in the structure of their local economic bureaucracy. Buddhism, comparatively, received far less patronage at this time.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE INDO-PARTHIANS

The fall of the Indo-Scythians was finally a result of the invasions of the Indo-Parthian¹ Gondophares. Coin finds reveal that he and his successors ultimately took control over much of the Northwest, including in Arachosia, Dir, Peshawar, Taxila, Chhachh and Jammu.² This occurred, most likely, in the second and third decades of the Common Era. Gondophares' coins are almost entirely constituted of debased silver, indicating his rule began just after the 'great debasement' in the second decade of the 1st century CE³ and his coins in the latter region partially mimicked those of Rajuvula,⁴ suggesting the Indo-Parthian's reign followed immediately after that satrap. This lends to the view that Rajuvula's eventual dominion over Mathura was the product of a forced shift rather than a deliberate expansion.

This numismatic chronology is confirmed by epigraphic sources, which evince that Gondophares established his own era in 29/30 CE, the existence of which is attested by a single inscription from Takht-i-Bahi, Peshawar, which records the donation of a hall (*parivāra*) by a certain

¹ Skt. Pahlava.

² Joe Cribb, 'New Evidence of Indo-Parthian Political History', *Coin Hoards* 7 (1985): 294.

³ Bopearachchi and ur Rahman, *Pre-Kushana Coins in Pakistan*, 48.

⁴ Cribb, 'The Early Kushan Kings: New Evidence for Chronology: Evidence from the Rabatak Inscription of Kanishka I', 189.

Balāsami Boyāṇa in 103 Azes and 26 Gondophares (55/56 CE).¹ This inscription most likely coincides with the reign of Gondophares nephew, Abdagases, who is mentioned five years prior in another inscription considered below, or perhaps the later ruler Sasan, who was apparently the nephew of the Apraca General Aśpavarma.² In a list of beneficiaries in the inscription, it is stipulated that a certain Prince Kapha is to be worshipped: *erzuṇa Kapasa puyae*.³ Many have understood this to be the Kuṣāṇa ruler Kujula Kadphises, on the basis he too names himself Kapha in coins, indicating that the emperor-to-be lived as a subordinate prince to the Indo-Parthians and perhaps, as Michael Skinner argues, that this Balāsami Boyāṇa was a supporter of, or middle-man between, the two factions.⁴ If so, this would indicate that he was already recognised politically in the region, some two decades before we have evidence for his becoming suzerain.⁵ Such a conclusion naturally raises many questions as to the nature of Indo-Parthian and Kuṣāṇa relations, which shall be explored in slightly more detail in the following chapter.

Several rulers followed Gondophares in the mid-1st century, each of whom would adopt his name (lit. ‘winner of glory’)⁶ as a dynastic

¹ For an edition, see CKI 53.

² Cribb, ‘The Early Kushan Kings: New Evidence for Chronology: Evidence from the Rabatak Inscription of Kanishka I’, 186.

³ CKI 53.

⁴ Most recently argued by Skinner, ‘Marks of Empire’, 51.

⁵ See Chapter Eight: The Kuṣāṇas.

⁶ A Gondophares is particularly famous for his arising in the Acts of Thomas (3rd century CE). A story relates that a certain Abbanes, a merchant working for Gundaphorus, named as the King of India, travelled from India to Jerusalem where he met Thomas the Apostle. They return to India together and Gondophares asks Thomas to build him a palace, to which Thomas agrees. However he does no such thing and instead goes about proselytizing the Christian faith. Thomas is imprisoned until Gondophares’ brother Gad (known to coins as Gadana) while taken ill, has a dream vision of said palace, which Thomas had built in heaven through his good deeds. Needless to say, the

title.¹ Coin sequences show that it was his nephew Abdagases who first succeeded him. He too issued coinage throughout the Northwest but is attested epigraphically as governing over Dir to the north of Gandhara, in conjunction with the Apraca General Aśpavarma in 98 Azes (50/51 CE).² By this time, the Apracarājas had thus shifted their allegiance from their former Indo-Scythian overlords to the Indo-Parthians, a matter confirmed by their subsequent issuing coinage with Gondophares' mark. The fall of the Indo-Scythians had afforded them the opportunity to garner and affirm their own political power, matter explicitly recognised in the Reliquary Inscription of Ariaśrava et al (No. 31), dated 98 Azes (50/51 CE), whose donor, Ariaśrava, stipulates her relic dedication was made in the reign of Gondopahres' nephew Abdagases and the General Aśpavarma, son of Indravarma I: *Gupharasa bhratuputrasa Avakaśasa rajami Iṃdravarmaputre statree Aśpavarmame rajami*.³

Thereafter, other Indo-Parthian suzerains are known to individual locales. Gadana governed alongside Orthagnes in Arachosia, where he was succeeded by Pakores and Sarpedanes, as well as alongside Ubozanes in Jammu, followed by Sarpadenes. Sasan succeeded Abdagases in Gandhara and issued coins across the entirety of the Northwest. In one coin he is also named as the nephew of General Aśpavarma, which necessitates that an exogamous marriage had taken place between the Apracarājas and Indo-Parthians in the mid-1st century CE.⁴ Eventually, they would be succeeded by the Kuṣāṇa Kujula

Parthian rulers are converted to Christianity. Acts of Thomas. II. 17-24. Albertus Frederik Johannes Klijn, *The Acts of Thomas. Introduction, Text and Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

¹ Cribb, 'New Evidence of Indo-Parthian Political History', 295–96.

² See the Reliquary Inscription of Ariaśrava et al (No. 31).

³ See Chapter Six: The Apracarājas.

⁴ For a tabulated representation of Indo-Parthian chronology and geography, see Cribb, 'New Evidence of Indo-Parthian Political History', 298.

Kaphises; the question of when and where shall be taken up in the next chapter.

BUDDHISM AND THE INDO-PARTHIAN

The relationship of the Indo-Parthians to the now well-established Buddhist institution is not so easily determined. From coinage, it seems Buddhism was not on their agenda, as Gondophares and his successors' coinage employed Graeco deities as well as the military themes of a 'ruler on horseback' and 'seated archer'.¹ Equally, none of the rulers arise in active roles within Buddhist donative epigraphy.

In the two examples given above, one may well argue that individuals related to their governance were patrons of Buddhism. The first dedication of a hall by Balasami Boyaṇa at the Takht-i-Bahi monastic complex to mention the era of Gondophares and Prince Kapha as a beneficiary could well be construed in such terms. It is in this case quite clear the figure was in some form or fashion related to the Indo-Parthians, though he does not identify himself with an obvious title, by means of which that connection can be clarified. Similarly in the case of second reliquary dedication of Ariaśrava (No. 31), we can determine that both she and her husband Siasena were related in some way to the both the Indo-Parthian Abdagases and the Apracarāja General Aśpavarma in stipulating it was within their reigns that the donation was made. But again neither the donor, nor any other figure she mentions, bear a title which could explicate the extent to which the Indo-Parthian was indeed some form of participant in the ritual. Onomastically, one would more likely attribute a firmer connection to the Apracarājas, as Ariaśrava (Skt. Āryaśravā), Siasena (Skt. Siṃhasena), as well as their

¹ Errington and Curtis, 'Constructing the Past', 65–66.

daughters and sons, have distinctly Indic names and the participation of those rulers in Buddhist activity is without question.

CHAPTER SIX: THE APRACARĀJAS

Following the death of Azes I around the turn of the 1st century CE, Indo-Scythian hegemony had begun to wane in the Northwest. Within the first three decades, the Indo-Parthians were already presenting challenges and having themselves only just secured power were to be quickly ousted by the Kuṣāṇas a mere two decades thereafter. It is in this context of rising and falling empires that two groups of rulers, self-named in epigraphy as the Apracarājas and the Oḍirājas, suddenly emerge in the historical record, as governing local kingdoms in the valleys to the north of the Peshawar Basin. These rulers and their kingdoms are known foremost by virtue of the numerous relic and stupa dedications they made throughout their domains and are noted for counting among the rare few to feature in Buddhist narrative literature. Indeed their patronage of Buddhism is now widely credited in scholarship as being a principal reason for Buddhism's institutional success in the region. However, the matter of the specific nexus between the political formation of their kingdoms and Buddhism is a point too little explored. With the intention of now shifting the narrative from a history of empires to that of locales, this and the following chapter shall explore the nature of this relation and the mutual interaction between two still formative institutions, one governmental and other monastic, and considering the role of Buddhist ideology and praxis as an integral component of this process.

Many challenges still remain in establishing accurate histories of these groups in the political landscape of the Northwest. A fair amount of numismatic, epigraphic, and textual sources afford the possibility of determining their dynastic lineages, ancestral claims, and, most of all, their ardent support of Buddhist institutions. But a lack of provenance for most of the objects associated with them means the precise delineation of their kingdoms remains problematic and ambiguities within their donative inscriptions concerning dates, kinship relations, and political affiliations render an uncertain picture of the internal structure of the dynasties as well as the precise manner of their relations to the imperial systems whose rules they bridged.

Yet these issues are made even the more problematic by the manner in which scholarship has hitherto tended to identify the rulers. In particular, a bias is to be found in viewing the groups through the hermeneutical lens of a history of empires. Thus, one often encounters the characterisation that these groups were ‘semi-Indianised’ Scythians,¹ the successors to Azes I, and the military personnel and ‘feudatory allies’ of Azes II,² thereby aligning them, both ethnically and politically, with a loosely defined Central Asian pedigree. In his most recent publication Richard Salomon characterises the situation as follows:

¹ See e.g., Richard Salomon, ‘The Inscription of Senavarma, King of Oḍi’, *Indo-Iranian Journal* 29 (1986): 288; Richard Salomon, ‘Dynastic and Institutional Connections in the Pre- and Early Kuṣāṇa Period: New Manuscript and Epigraphic Evidence’, in *On the Cusp of an Era: Art in the Pre-Kuṣāṇa World*, ed. Doris Meth Srinivasan (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 183; Errington and Curtis, ‘Constructing the Past’, 62; Neelis, *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade*, 117–18.

² See Salomon, ‘Senavarma’, 288; Salomon, ‘Dynastic and Institutional Connections in the Pre- and Early Kuṣāṇa Period: New Manuscript and Epigraphic Evidence’, 183; Errington and Curtis, ‘Constructing the Past’, 62; Neelis, *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade*, 117–18.

We know little about the prehistory of these kings, who burst suddenly into view in this period as enthusiastic patrons of Buddhism, but they seem to be at pains to present themselves as natives with long-standing ancestral Buddhist associations [...which is] historically very doubtful and there is reason to suspect that...they were actually invaders of Scythian or other Central Asia origin. Although for the most part the kings of these two dynasties have Indian sounding names, their wives often have Iranian or other foreign names... Other sources, such as coins jointly issued by later members of the Apraca lineage and the Indo-Scythian king Azes, ruler of the region of Taxila, indicate that these kingdoms to the north of Gandhāra were allied, at least politically and probably ethnically with the powerful Scythian kingdoms that were then ruling central Gandhāra.¹

Objectively the presentation of the evidence is indeed unobjectionable; however, the arguments that [1] these rulers did not have ancestral relations to the region, that [2] they were ‘probably’ Indo-Scythian in ethnicity, and [3] were inherent components of the systems of the empire, are entirely problematic.

Over the following two chapters I reconsider the evidence from an alternative stance. I argue that the rulers’ presence in the region demonstrably predates the Indo-Scythians, perhaps even into greater antiquity, that ethnolinguistic identity is itself so complicated an issue during this period of the Northwest as to render any such arguments untenable, but that if we are to affirm the utility of such evidence we may deduce from their usage of Greek, Indic and Iranian names a regionally discrete identity and heritage, and that both the Apracarājas

¹ Salomon, *The Buddhist Literature of Ancient Gandhāra: An Introduction with Selected Translations*, 30–31.

and Oḍirājas were independent political groups seeking to present themselves as such, whose very possibility to be attributed to the fluctuations of weakened rather than predominant empires.

IDENTIFYING THE APRACARĀJAS

From the late 19th century, a growing corpus of objects, which now includes seven coin issues, 20 donative inscriptions, five inscribed seals, and one Buddhist Kharoṣṭhī manuscript (Fig. 6.6), has been unearthed, attesting to the existence of a dynastic group in the Northwest named the Apracarājas. Ever since their discovery, several issues have repeatedly arisen with regard to determining the group's identity and political position in the landscape of the Northwest. In particular, the etymology of the term Apraca remains obscure and currently there are two interpretations: N. G Majumdar first proposed an underlying Skt. *apratya* ('without rival'), i.e., 'kings without rival',¹ which long stood as the accepted interpretation, but H. W. Bailey later suggested that spelling variations in the term² evidence formative linguistic stages—*apaca* > *avaca* > *apraca*—suggestive of an Ir. *baja*, the prefix found today in the modern toponym Bajaur, whence several inscriptions of the Apracarājas, i.e. 'kings of Apraca' derive.³ Their domain is indeed typically located in the mountainous valley regions of Bajaur⁴ to the

¹ Majumdar, 'The Bajaur Casket of the Reign of Menander'; R. B. Whitehead, 'The Dynasty of the General Aspavarma', *The Numismatic Chronicle and Journal of the Royal Numismatic Society*, Sixth, 4, no. 1/4 (1944): 102.

² Various rendered in Kharoṣṭhī as *apraca-rajā*, *apraca-rajā*, *apaca-rajā*, *apaca-rajā*, *avacarajā*, *avacarajā*, and in Brāhmī as *apraca-rāja*.

³ H. W. Bailey, 'Two Avaca Inscriptions', *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 1 (1978): 10.

⁴ See Richard Salomon, 'Three Kharoṣṭhī Reliquary Inscriptions in the Institute of Silk Road Studies', *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* 9 (2003): 39–69. Eight

west and Dir¹ to the north, and perhaps also included the major urban centres of Gandhara² to the east; however, due to a lack of provenance for most of their associated objects, determining the limits of their polity remains an issue. We know from their coins and dated inscriptions that the rulers governed this region at the cusp of the Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian periods, between the late 1st century BCE and mid 1st century CE, but little certain can be said as to the foregoing and following periods due to difficulties in reconstructing their genealogy. Thus, several debates remain in regard to how far back the Apracas can be traced, to the precise order of their lineage, as well as to their identity and the nature of their affiliation to the coeval imperial systems alongside which they governed. To date, numerous divergent solutions to these issues have been suggested. Below I supplement these and present my own with a view to resolving some of the more persistent problems.

It was Alexander Cunningham who, though unbeknownst to him at that time, was the first to encounter the Apracarājas within two coin types (Fig. 6.6).³ On these, he read the names of the ruler Vijayamitra and the General (G. *stratega*, Gk. *στρατηγός*) Aśpavarma. Noting the Indic derivation of the latter's name and the Greek title 'general' (Fig.

objects were found in Bajaur: [1] Reliquary Inscription of Menander (No. 1) and Reliquary Inscription of Vijayamitra (No. 11), [2] Reliquary Inscription of Prahodī (No. 24), [3] Silver Scroll Inscription of Utara (No. 15), [4] Reliquary Inscription of Rukhuṇa (No. 17), [5] Reliquary Inscription of Ramaka (No. 20), [6] Reliquary Inscription of Ramaka and Uḍita (No. 21), [7] Reliquary Inscription of Śatruleka (No. 23), and [8] Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī Seal of Indravarma II (CKI 364).

¹ One object was found in Dir: Reliquary Inscription of Ariaśrava et al (No. 31).

² Two objects were found near Peshawar, ancient Puṣkalāvātī: [1] the Reliquary Inscription of Loṇa (No. 7) and [2] a Seal of Viśpavarma, CKI 470.

³ Alexander Cunningham, 'Coins of the Sakas', *The Numismatic Chronicle and Journal of the Royal Numismatic Society* 10 (1890): 110, 126, 169–70.

6.1), Cunningham concluded that Aśpavarma was a ‘Hindu general’, who, having undergone a process of cultural Scythianisation, had been subsumed into the Indo-Scythian imperial system.¹ This model was soon to be reversed however; R. B. Whitehead subsequently examined three further coins: a joint Indo-Parthian issue of Aśpavarma, indicated by Gondophares’ associated symbol,² another of the Indo-Parthian ruler Sasan, named as the nephew of Aspa, which was reconstructed to Aśpavarma,³ and a final one naming Indravarma (sic)⁴ who bore the title Apracarāja. In his analysis Whitehead wrote:

The Kharoṣṭhī legend is remarkable since the new title apracharaja is without epithet, a unique feature for these coins of full denomination. The word has been interpreted ‘king without a rival’; it was a hereditary title descending from father to son [...]. The names Vijayamitra and Indravarma [sic] are Indian, while Sasan is Iranian; the line cannot have been Hindu by race. These Saka military chiefs had adopted high-sounding Indian names; they had become Hinduized and claimed to be Kshatriyas.⁵

Such models of ‘Hinduisation’ regarding this group were already current⁶ and they also proved enduring, as evidenced by more recent scholars who have continually reproduced versions of this process,

¹ See Cunningham, *Four Reports Made During the Years 1862-63-64-65*, xxxvii.

² See Chapter Five: The Indo-Parthians.

³ R. B. Whitehead, ‘Some Rare Indo-Greek and Scythian Coins’, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal* 6, no. 10 (1910): 563–64.

⁴ Cunningham read *Itravarmasa*; but this has been since corrected to *Itravasusa*, see Typ. 1135, Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, 760. This Apracarāja Indravasu is known also to later inscriptions, see below.

⁵ Whitehead, ‘The Dynasty of the General Aspavarma’, 102.

⁶ For another iteration, see Rapson et al., *Cambridge History of India*, 577.

characterising the Apracarājas on similar onomastic grounds as ‘semi-Indianized’.¹ But what is the justification for the conclusions that, on the one hand, the Apracarājas were an *intrinsic* component of the Indo-Scythian imperial structure, and, on the other, that an associated identity can be derived from their names?

THE POLITICAL IDENTITY OF THE APRACARĀJAS

It is indisputably the case the Apracarājas were one element of the Indo-Scythian administration under Azes II; this much at least can be admitted based on their coinage issued jointly with that suzerain (Fig. 6.6). Moreover, their unique usage, as observed above,² of Azes I’s era in donative inscriptions—stipulating that the suzerain is ‘deceased’ (Skt. *atīta* ‘gone beyond’³, *kālagata* ‘whose time has passed’⁴)—reveals at most an intimate concern with Indo-Scythian succession or at least that they were compelled to mark what was presumably installed as a calendric norm by the Indo-Scythian overlords. Precisely what form of political or indeed ethnic relation these examples reveal is a matter of debate. However, there is one major piece of evidence that leads one to favour the view the Apracarājas were a dynastic group *extraneous* to the Indo-Scythians imperial structure: Vijayamitra established his own era in 2/1 BCE, precisely at a time when it is likely Azes I had passed. If calendars—as instruments to establish control over time—truly exerted the civil and symbolic power they appear to have done, Vijayamitra’s

¹ This erroneous classification is frequently repeated, see Errington and Curtis, ‘Constructing the Past’, 62; Neelis, *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade*, 117–18; Salomon, ‘Senavarma’, 288; Salomon, ‘Dynastic and Institutional Connections in the Pre- and Early Kuṣāṇa Period: New Manuscript and Epigraphic Evidence’, 183.

² See Chapter Four: The Indo-Scythians.

³ CKI 242.

⁴ CKI 331, 544.

marking of his inauguration could well be taken as a significant attempt to diverge from a long established imperial precedence.

That the rulers were intent on affirming independence is also strengthened upon closer inspection of their relation to the Indo-Scythian Empire. Above we considered how the different empires structured their administrations. In the case of the Indo-Scythians, the main elements thereof were constituted of the suzerain at its head, often entitled *mahārāja rājātirāja* (Fig. 3.1), which was used to mark their intrinsic imperial status as well as their predominance over extraneous local rulers entitled *rāja*. It was moreover observed that in no cases (prior to one isolated instance under the Kuṣāṇas¹) could the title *rāja* be attributed to individuals intrinsically related to an imperial administration; such figures, rather, were entitled great satrap (*mahākṣatrapa*), satrap (*kṣatrapa*) or ‘regional governor’ (*meridarkha*, Gk. μεριδάρχης). Whilst such figures are not unmet in Apracarāja inscriptions, it is clear they are not individuals related to the dynasty.

This is true in all cases with but one exception. One figure named Śatruleka², who names himself as the ‘maternal nephew of the Apracarāja [Vijayamitra]’ (*apracarājabhāgineya*), was indeed a satrap. But one may consider why he alone of the entire Apracarāja dynasty was awarded this title. That he was distant enough in the line of succession to never consider contemplating his taking the throne may have been a personal factor and one cannot ignore also that the date of his inscription is 77 Azes (29/30 CE) and was therefore donated precisely around the time in which the Indo-Parthian Gondophares was attempting to usurp power. His satrapy therefore either belonged to the twilight years of the Indo-Scythians, indicating the Apracarājas had cultivated sufficient political power by this stage to be incorporated in

¹ See CKI 244

² See the Reliquary Inscription of Śatruleka (No. 23). A bi-lingual seal also attests to the name Śatralaka and the Gk. Κατρολαῖος, CKI 943.

this manner, or that he was installed as part of a new Indo-Parthian alliance and fledgling empire.

This brings us to the final essential piece of evidence regarding the Apracarājas political identity; namely, that they shifted allegiance from the Indo-Scythians to the Indo-Parthians. Both the coin issues of the General Aśpavarma and his nephew Great King Sasan (Fig. 6.6) were issued in conjunction with both of these empires and the latter also went on himself to adopt the imperial title Great King and the dynastic epithet Gondophares. A joint governance between the Apracas and Indo-Parthians is confirmed by the Reliquary Inscription of Ariaśrava et al (No. 31), dated 98 Azes (50/51 CE), insofar as the donation was made in the reigns (*rājye*) of Gondophares' nephew Avakaśa (gen. Gk. Αβδαγασου) and General Aśpavarma, in recognition of their joint rule.

Fig. 6.1 *Stratega*

This military office 'general' (G. *stratega*, Gk. στρατηγός) is attested as early as 6th century BCE Athens, at which time one such figure would be elected to the post from each of the tribes populating the Athenian assembly. In the 5th–4th century BCE, the tribal structure was abandoned and any number of generals could be elected from a single tribe. These figures are often described as autocrats, indicating the extent of the political power they wielded, but many were assigned to specific military campaigns across the Greek Empire.¹ At the time of the Seleucid Empire, it has long been accepted that the office of general replaced that of the satrap in the governance of satrapies.² However,

¹ Debra Hamel, 'Strategoi', in *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History*, ed. Roger S. Bagnall et al., 2012.

² Tarn, *The Greeks*, 241.

Babylonian documents indicate a double regime until the time of the Indo-Greek Demetrius I.¹ Presumably, this dual system was therefore introduced to the Northwest at this time but there is no evidence of it being used directly under the Indo-Greeks or later under the Indo-Scythians, Indo-Parthians or Kuṣāṇas. The latter empire for instance would use the Skt. equivalent *senāpati* ('army-commander'). The title only occurs among the Apracarājas and was awarded internally by these rulers to their underlings in the system of succession that stood apart from an imperial system of governance.

It is nevertheless curious that the Apracarājas used the title general (G. *stratega*, Gk. *στρατηγός*). Whilst first employed in Athens in the 6th century BCE it was subsequently used by the Seleucids of Central Asia in the 4th century BCE and was likely introduced by them or indeed the later Indo-Greeks in the 2nd century BCE into the Northwest. Equally curious, however, is that no evidence exists of this latter, nor indeed of any other ruling group in the Northwest, using the title.

The title occurs 14 times in coins, inscriptions, and a Buddhist manuscript (Fig. 6.6) in relation to three figures, all of whom are part of the Apraca dynasty. The earliest of these is found in the Reliquary Inscription of Indravarman I (No. 14), dated 63 Azes (15/16 CE) in respect to the donor's brother Vaga, son of the Apracarāja Viṣuvārman. Because it was written within the reign of the Indo-Scythians, and likely during the time of Azes II, it cannot be ruled out it was they who introduced the title to incorporate the Apracarājas into their satrapy and military system, which would, therefore, have been akin to that of the Seleucids and Indo-Greeks. For lack of independent evidence, this cannot be corroborated however and it seems more likely, whatever the

¹ R. J. van de Spek, 'The Latest on Seleucid Empire Building in the East', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 138, no. 2 (2018): 391.

initial source may have been, that it was a title used internally within the Apraca dynasty.

These generals are found in both the Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian periods, and were therefore dependent upon neither in employing the position. Thus, during the reign of Vijayamitra, Prince Indravarma I (No. 14) names his brother Vaga as a general but in a later inscription, dedicated by their mother, Rukhuṇa (No. 17), we find that Vaga is likely deceased and that Indravarma I had become general. Later, the latter's son, Aśpavarma, would also adopt the title, indicating perhaps a line of succession and that a given Apracarāja would always have a general acting as something akin to a 'vice-king'.¹ This apparent usage, employed as part of a dynastic structure, is quite distinct from the Athenian position of general or indeed that of an individual co-governing with a satrap as employed by the Indo-Greeks.

The Apracarājas thus installed their own political system, which was structured in terms of a dynastic hierarchy. At the head were the patriarchs, the rulers who were ubiquitously entitled Apracarāja. Six have been hitherto identified—Vijayamitra I, Viṣuvarma, Vijayamitra II, Indravasu, Vijayamitra III, and Indravarma—although the existence of the three Vijayamitras remains unclear, as does the identity of Indravarma. Underneath them were the Generals, of which four are named—Vaga, Indravarma I (who may have become Apracarāja), Viśpavarma, and Aśpavarma—but their positions in the dynastic lineage are again uncertain in many cases. Finally, several figures are called prince (*kumāra*)—Viṣuvarma, Indravarma I, Indragivarma, and Indravarma II—of whom at least one was to become a general and two were to become rulers, indicating the status was reserved for potential successors.

¹ Falk, 'Names and Titles', 73.

Many of these patriarchs presided over their own court, which comprised such figures as an advisor (G. *anaṃkaya*, Gk. ἀναγκαῖος)—another loan word (equivalent perhaps to Skt. *āmatya*) presumably from the Indo-Greek Period—as well as an inner-court (*antaḥpura*) of women comprising a number of wives who were also positioned in a hierarchy. The highest was entitled ‘one who has a living son’ (*jīvaputrā*), of which two are mentioned—Rukhuṇa and Vasumitra (Fig. 6.6). The former is known to be the wife of Apracarāja Viṣuvarma and the latter the wife of Apracarāja Indrivasu. The exact purport of the status is unclear but here designates most fundamentally that the individual is mother to a successor (Fig. 6.4). Underneath them are other women, either named or only mentioned as being the wives (*bhāryā*) of a given prince or ruler. In two cases women bear the title ‘woman of the inner court’ (*antaḥpūrikā*)—Loṇa (wife of Prince Viṣuvarma) and Prahodi (wife of Apracarāja Vijayamitra)—who were minor wives of a prince or king.

From this overview, we can see that the shape of the Apracarāja dynasty and court drew on both inherited titles from a Seleucid or Indo-Greek imperial system as well as a structure traditionally well known to South Asia. One need not derive any process of ‘Indianisation’ or ‘Scythianisation’ from this; the co-existence of Iranian and Hellenistic imperial systems as well as local governmental structures of dynastic rulership was by this point at the turn of the Common Era long-standing and well entrenched. The Apracarājas and their identity are therefore best construed in terms of this context; that is, as derived from a multi-linguistic and multicultural milieu, as independently affirmed, and as structured perhaps in such a way as to maintain their own systems of power and navigate effectively the empires governing them.

NAME AND IDENTITY AMONG THE APRACAS

The final point to be considered in identifying the Apracas concerns the relationship between name and identity. Salomon (cited at the beginning of the chapter) argued for their Scythian ethnicity exclusively on the basis that many women in the family bear Iranian names. An inspection of all names to occur, however, reveals this conclusion to be rather hasty. Whilst several individuals (not only women) do indeed bear appellations of Iranian derivation, others are Greek, the overwhelming majority are Indic, and some are mixed within a family (Fig. 6.2). Thus, to take Rukhuṇa's family (the example Salomon employs as evidence for a Scythian identity) we find her children were called Ir. Vaga and Skt. Indravarma, her mother or father Mahaśrava (Skt. Mahāśravā), her sister Bhaīdata (Skt. Bhagadattā), her brother Ramaka (Skt. Rāmaka), and his children Mahavarma (Skt. Mahāvarma) and Mahindra (Skt. Mahendra).

Indic	Iranian	Greek	Unclear
Viṣṇuvarma (Skt. Viṣṇuvarman)	Rukhuṇa	Ṇika	Daṣakq
Loṇa (Skt. Lavaṇā)	Vaga	Menandra	Uḍitā
Vijayamitra	Sasan		Śísireṇa
Prahodi (Skt. Prabhūtī)			Davili
Indravarma II			
Utara (Skt. Uttarā)			
Vasavadata (Skt. Vāsavadattā)			
Mahaveda (Skt. Mahāvedā)			
Bhaīdata (Skt. Bhagadattā)			
Indravarma II			
Aśpavarma (Skt. Aśvavarman)			
Mahaśrava (Skt. Mahāśrava)			
Ramaka (Skt. Rāmaka)			
Mahaverma (Mahāvarman)			
Mahindra (Skt. Mahendra)			

Indrivasu
 Vasumitra (Skt. Vasumitrā)
 Indragivarma (Skt. Indrāgnivarman)
 Viśpavarma (Skt. Viśvavarma)
 Aśpavarma
 Subhutika (Skt. Subhulikā)
 Śatruleka (Śatrulaka)
 Indraseṇa (Skt. Indrasena)

Fig. 6.2 List of Apraca Names

The Indic names are governed by conventions reflective of class (*varṇa*) and cult affiliation. Thus, three figures suffixed *–varman*, normatively used by the *kṣatriya* class,¹ to the name of the deity of whom they were the ‘defender’, i.e., Viṣṇuvarman, Indravarman, Viśvavarman, Mahāvarman. (What this says about the religion of the Apracas is a matter of contention and shall be discussed below.) Certain women also bear the suffix *–dattā*, which is normatively ascribed to individuals of the mercantile (*vaiśya*) class of the Vedic social system.² However, the extent to which the usage of such suffixes can be taken as reflective of class identity is a thorny issue and they were not uniformly applied in epigraphy throughout the Indic sphere;³ all that can be stated is that common Indic principles of name formation were known to the Northwest among the Apracas and may, therefore, imply the associated Brahmanical naming ceremonies (*saṃskāra*).⁴ Other rulers

¹ Alfons Hilka, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der indischen Namengebung. Die altindischen Personennamen* (Breslau: Verlag von M. & H. Marcus, 1910), 22.

² Hilka, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der indischen Namengebung. Die altindischen Personennamen*, 26.

³ Hilka, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der indischen Namengebung. Die altindischen Personennamen*, 29.

⁴ Cf. Bronkhorst, *How the Brahmins Won*, 30.

demonstrably internal to the Indo-Scythian empire did not follow these naming conventions and thus once again this evidence seriously challenges the assumed Scythian identity of these figures and thence the utility of such notions as ‘Indianisation’ which scholars continue to propose.

If, then, we can presume the Apraca family identified themselves in terms of a local established cultural idiom, constituted of multiple ethnolinguistic identities, it seems rather more likely that, being a product of this milieu, the Apracas were a group of some antiquity to the region. In this case, it may, therefore, be worthwhile to consider their potential antecedents.

PROPOSED ANTECEDENTS OF THE APRACARĀJAS

Prashant Srivastava¹ has recently sought to do just this. He proposes that the Apracas are an Iranian-speaking group related to an earlier tribal confederation in the Northwest named in Sanskrit literature as Aśvaka (‘horsemen’) or Aśmaka, for which he forwards several geographical, onomastic, and numismatic pieces of evidence.

The Aśvakas and Aśmakas do not occur in Vedic literature and only arise in later sources post-dating the Persian Empire. These sources know two groups, one located in the Deccan and another in the Northwest. Both in early Pali sources and in Pāṇini’s *Aṣṭadhyāyī* the former are named as Aśmaka (P. Assakas), one of the *mahājanapadas*.² The *Mahābharāta*, however, knows both this southern group and another in the Northwest, which is corroborated by other later sources, including the *Padmapurāṇa* and the *Bṛhatsamhitā*.³ However, in the

¹ Prashant Srivastava, *The Apracharajas: History Based on Coins and Inscriptions* (Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, 2008).

² AN 1. 212–213; Pāṇ 4. 1. 173.

³ For a discussion of the relevant textual passages on both groups and their potential relation, see Hemachandra Raychaudri, *Political History of Ancient*

Aṣṭadhyāyī, V. S. Agrawal has also identified regions of two other groups known to the Northwest, the Hāstināyana,¹ Āśvayāna² and the third in the *Naḍādigāṇa*, the Āśvakāyana,³ which he assimilates respectively with the Astakenian, Aspasiensians, and Assaceniens of Greek historiographies.⁴

Arrian's *Anabasis* states that Alexander, having conquered and executed Astes, hyparch of Peucelaotis (Skt. Puṣkalāvati), advanced towards the regions of the Aspasiensians and Assaceniens. He first went along the Choes (Kabul)⁵ River in the direction of the Euaspla (Kunar)⁶ River where he raised one Aspasiensian city named Andaca before arriving at another already burned city named Arigaeum.⁷ H. H. Wilson and C. Masson suggest this latter site is to be located in Bajaur specifically and equivalent to Skt. Arijaya ('foe-vanquishing').⁸ Alexander went on to the region of the Assaceniens, crossing the Guraeus (Panjkora) River

India: From the Accession of Parikshit to the Extinction of the Gupta Dynasty (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1923), 23; Bimala Churn Law, *Ancient Indian Tribes* (Lahore (India): Motilal Banarsidass, 1926), 86ff; Srivastava, *The Apracharajas*, 45–48.

¹ Pāṇ 6. 4. 174.

² Pāṇ 4. 1. 110.

³ Pāṇ 4. 1. 99.

⁴ V. S. Agrawal, *India as Known to Pāṇini* (Lucknow: University of Lucknow, 1953), 453–54.

⁵ On this identification, see John W. McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described by Ptolemy* (London: Trübner & Co., 1885), 86–88.

⁶ H. H. Wilson and C. Masson, *Ariana Antiqua: A Descriptive Account of the Antiquities and Coins of Afghanistan: With a Memoir on the Buildings Called Topes* (London: The Honourable the Court of Directors of the East India Company, 1841), 188. I considered whether *Apraca* can be seen behind Arigeum but this is likely wishful thinking.

⁷ *Anab*^A 4. 419–421.

⁸ Wilson and Masson, *Ariana Antiqua: A Descriptive Account of the Antiquities and Coins of Afghanistan: With a Memoir on the Buildings Called Topes*, 189.

and marching on the city of Massaga (Mingora)¹ in Swat, corresponding to the domain of the later Oḍirājas,² whom Srivastava does not consider. This region defined at the time of Alexander in the 4th century BCE corresponds to today's Bajaur, Dir and lower Swat valleys, and would indeed, as Srivastava states, belong to the known domain of the Apracarājas around the turn of the Common Era. If the Apraca ancestry were to be traced some centuries prior, the Aśvakas (Aspasians) would, therefore, represent the most likely candidates.

In an attempt to establish concrete evidence for this conjecture, Srivastava goes on to argue the Aśvakas and Apracas should be equated due to the fact their names share in the element Ir. *aśpa* and Skt. *aśva* ('horse') and that a remnant thereof is to be sought in the name of General Aśpavarma ('horse-defender').³ His name would imply perhaps a cult of the horse among the Apracas, which could be understood in light of the graves of horses excavated by Giuseppe Tucci in Swat, which he argues are to be related to the Aśvaka (Aspasian and Assacanian) tribal confederacy.⁴ Whilst this is in favour of an Aśvaka presence in the region, the evidence need not be extended to include the Apracarājas or indeed the Oḍirājas who held sway over this valley.

Many scholars have identified a series of enigmatic coins discovered by Cunningham at Taxila⁵ as issues of the Aśvakas in a post-Mauryan Period. These die-struck copper coins depict a figure worshipping a hill with a crescent atop along with other symbols include the 'stacked-ball motif' and so-called 'taurine symbol' in addition to a

¹ Anab^A 4. 425–427.

² See Chapter Seven: The Oḍirājas

³ Srivastava, *The Apracharajas*, 62, 74.

⁴ Giuseppe Tucci, 'The Tombs of the Asvakayana-Assakenoi', *East and West* 14, no. 1/2 (1963): 27–28.

⁵ Alexander Cunningham, *Coins of Ancient India from the Earliest Times Down to the Seventh Century A.D.* (London: B. Quaritch, 1891), 61.

legend which reads *vaṭasvaka*. Much has been written as to the purport of the latter term, and I shall not recapitulate this discussion here, but many have read Aśvaka into the legend, producing the Skt. Vaṭāśvaka ('Aśvakas of the fig-tree clan', 'coin of the Aśvakas').¹ If accepted, this would attest to the existence of the Aśvakas as late as the 3rd–2nd century BCE, immediately preceding Apracarāja governance.

Srivastava also attempts to demonstrate through these coins the presence of a Śiva cult in the Northwest on the basis of the hill-with-crescent motif and taurine symbol. The former has been widely interpreted as stupa² or a *caitya*³ but he argues that when depicted with a worshipper and stack of balls, the image should be understood as the 'balls of food' (*piṇḍa*) used in *śrāddha* worship specifically enacted at a *caitya*⁴ of Śiva, whom, he argues, is also signified by the hill motif.⁵ The 'taurine symbol' ♂ below the worshipper (equally as enigmatic as the

¹ For discussion, see Kalyan Kumar Das Gupta, 'The Aśvakas: An Early Indian Tribe', *East and West* 22, no. 1/2 (1972): 33–40; Srivastava, *The Apracharajas*, 53–55.

² For example, Robert Göbl, *A Catalogue of Coins from Butkara I (Swāt, Pakistan)*, ed. Domenico Faccenna (Rome: Istituto Italiano Per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente and Centro Studi e Scavi Archeologici in Asia, 1976).

³ For a summary of these varying identifications, see Gupta, 'The Aśvakas', 35–36; Srivastava, *The Apracharajas*, 56ff.

⁴ This deduction is largely made on the basis of one of the few passages in Brahmanical literature to mention *caityapūjā*. For example, the *Arthasāstra* states that in the context of danger from demons (*rakṣobhaye*) 'at changes of the moon, one should perform *caitya*-worship with offerings of raised platforms, umbrellas, handfuls of food, banners and goats: *parvasu ca vitardīchatrollopikāhastapatākācchāgopahāraiś caityapūjāḥ kārayet*. AŚ 4. 3. 40–41. The specifically Brahmanical attribution of these coins, however, is far from fixed and more generally the popular presence of graves (e.g., *loṣṭaciti* ('piled up balls of clay') or *śmaśāna* ('elevated crematorium')) in Brahmanical practice remains a matter of debate, due to the fact that very few texts mention this practice and that there is an almost entire lack of archaeological or art-historical evidence, see Zin, 'Brahmanische Asketengräber', 1075–80.

⁵ Gupta, 'The Aśvakas', 37.

last) is also drawn on as evidence of Śiva worship due to an association with the deity's mount Nandin.¹ However he does not attempt to link the Apracas with a Śiva cult—their names and inscriptions rather indicate they were worshippers of Viṣṇu as well as Brahmā and Indra, who were also deities of the Buddhist pantheon at this time—and the association with Śiva is in any case now widely rejected.² Both symbols maintained lasting and widespread significance throughout the Indic sphere and most now recognize their pan-Indic significance without affirming any specific religious attributions.³

It is therefore impossible to substantiate with the evidence at hand whether the Apracarājas should be traced to the Aśvaka tribal confederacy that was present some two or three centuries prior to them. That these Aśvakas are no longer mentioned in any source after the 2nd century BCE does entail they were either replaced by a new migratory

¹ Srivastava, *The Apracharajas*, 57–58.

² For a summary of this discussion, see Anna Maria Quagliotti, *Buddhapadas: An Essay on the Representations of the Footprints of the Buddha with a Descriptive Catalogue of the Indian Specimens from the 2nd Century B.C. to the 4th Century A.D.* (Kamakura, 1998), 79ff.

³ Herbert Härtel records the symbol on some odd examples of Painted Grey Ware and Black-and-Red Ware pottery in the pre-Mauryan (Period I) levels at Sonkh, Mathurā, as well as on certain Mauryan Red Wares (Period II), and Mitra pottery (Period III) at the same site Härtel, *Excavations at Sonkh. 2500 Years of a Town in Mathura District*, 17; 357ff. It appears most widely together with the stacked-ball-motif and the tree-with-railing motif on several objects dated to the Mauryan period—the Soghaura Copper Plate, a copper bolt found in an Aśokan pillar from Rāmpurvā, Bihar, a pillar base, some bowls from Patna, as well as silver punch marked coins from Taxila—and thus many scholars, since all objects were found in the Mauryan sphere, contend that the motifs came to hold particular significance from the Mauryan period (4th-2nd century BCE), and perhaps formed part of the imperial symbolism. Gupta, 'The Aśvakas', 36–37. The taurine symbol also appears with fair frequency on terracotta pottery (Level 28) and seals (Levels 26/25) at Sonkh in Period III, and the Kṣatrapa Period IV (Level 23). Härtel, *Excavations at Sonkh. 2500 Years of a Town in Mathura District*, 303–4; 329.

group from Central Asia, namely the Indo-Greeks and Indo-Scythians, as most would likely propose, or that they had evolved locally from a tribal system to a chiefdom under the Apracarājas (and Oḍirājas) due to the imperial influences of the Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythians.¹

THE APRACARĀJA DYNASTY

It is true that from the late 1st century BCE the Apracarājas appear in inscriptions with a fully formed chiefdom structure. One of the key questions, therefore, is to when this may have occurred. The answer is dependent on the extent to which the Apraca dynasty can be traced historically, a matter which centres almost entirely upon the interpretation of the aforementioned² reliquary from Shinkot in Bajaur, Pakistan, and specifically the relation between the two inscriptions engraved thereupon. These include the Reliquary Inscription from the Reign of Menander (No. 1), found on the upside (A and A¹) and underside (A²) of the lid and the Reliquary Inscription of Vijayamitra (No. 11), comprising two lines on the upside of the lid (C¹ and C²), two running concentrically in four lines (D¹, B, D², and D³) on the inside of the bowl from the rim to the centre, and one on the base (E). Arguments regarding the authenticity of the former were discussed above and need not be repeated here. However, the latter too has also been the subject of some debate with implications for the dynastic history of the Apracarājas.

¹ On the effects of empires on local systems of governance, see Srivastava, *The Apracharajas*, 69–73.

² See Chapter Three: The Indo-Greeks.

Reliquary Inscription of Vijayamitra (No. 11)

[C²] The bowl was established [C¹] by Vijayamitraa [D¹] These relics became broken, are not honoured and so have perished over time; neither *śrāddha* nor food and water are brought for the ancestors, and so the bowl is not fully covered. [D²] In the fifth 5 year [B] of Viyakamitra the Apracarāja [D²] on the 25th day of the month Vaiśākha this [D³] relic of the Fortunate One, Śākyamuni, the Perfectly Awakened One, was dedicated by Vijayamitra the Apracarāja.

Contention has centred on the occurrence of three names: [C¹] *vijaya[m](it)[r](e)[ṇa]*, [B] *viyakamitrāsa apracarājasa*, and [D³] *vijayamitrena apracarājena*. For spatial and palaeographic reasons, the first editor, Majumdar, periodised B with the earlier of the two inscriptions, arguing that D¹⁻³ had been engineered to fit around B at a later date and therefore that one Apracarāja Viyakamitra was coeval with the Indo-Greek ruler Menander in the mid 2nd century BCE.¹ Sten Konow contrarily argued that B should be palaeographically attributed to the Indo-Scythian period and that a scribe had added this line in the space between D¹ and D² in order that it be construed with the date formula in the latter, producing a reading of 5 Viyakamitra (3/4 CE).²

¹ See Majumdar, 'The Bajaur Casket of the Reign of Menander'.

² See also Harry Falk, 'The Introduction of Stūpa-Worship in Bajaur', in *Afghanistan, ancient Carrefour entre l'Est et l'Ouest. Actes du colloque international organisé par Christian Landes & Osmund Bopearachchi au Musée archéologique Henri-Prades-Lattes du 5 au 7 mai 2003*, ed. O. Bopearachchi and M. F. Boussac, *Indicopleustoi: Archaeologies of the Indian Ocean 3* (Brepols: Turnhout, 2005), 352–53.

This meant that the three individuals in C¹, B, and D³ were one and the same, and that Viyakamitra is simply a variant spelling of Vijayamitra.¹

Although once a proponent of this latter position, Richard Salomon now takes the view that B is an earlier inscription composed for the founder of the Apracarāja dynasty, Vijayamitra [I], a remote ancestor of another Vijayamitra [II] in C¹ and D³.² Building on this position, Stefan Baums further suggested that there are three dedications recorded on the object: one (A and D¹) made during the reign of Menander, a second (B) by Vijayamitra [I] in the late 1st century BCE, and a third (D², D³, and E) by Vijayamitra [II].³ Certainly, the possibility that the names Viyakamitra and Vijayamitra belong to distinct individuals cannot be ruled out, simply because the matter is contingent on highly debatable palaeographic evidence, as the above fluctuations in scholarly opinion prove. However, Baum's argument also presumes that D¹, which does not obviously correspond palaeographically to A and which describes the conditions of a rededication, belongs to the time of Menander, thus presupposing still another establishment before that. This seems improbable, and in light of the fact that no corroboratory evidence exists for an earlier Viyakamitra also, it would perhaps be preferable to provisionally maintain Konow's palaeographic arguments and consider this section in D¹ as belonging to the dated rededication of a single Vijayamitra in B, D², D³, and E.

This Vijayamitra represents the Apracarāja most frequently encountered in inscriptions, yet he also remains the most elusive and we know little of his kinship relation to other members of the Apraca

¹ See Sten Konow, 'New Traces of the Greeks in India', *New Indian Antiquary* 2 (40 1939): 639–48; cf. Richard Salomon, 'The "Avaca" Inscription and the Origin of the Vikrama Era', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 102 (1982): 63–64.

² Salomon, 'Indo-Greek Era', 382.

³ Baums, 'Catalog', 202–3.

dynasty. Contrastingly, he is the only ruler whose dates can be fixed; this is due to his having established a regnal era in 2/1 BCE, whereafter he appears to have enjoyed a lengthy reign lasting three decades.

Vijayamitra's dedication appears to suggest also that certain problems had prevented the regular ritual duties being performed at the stupa he re-established; many reasons can be imagined that may have created such circumstance and one possibility is there was conflict with the imperial interests of the Indo-Scythians during Azes I's reign, ultimately leading to a disturbance in regular ritual activity. Although evidence for such a conclusion is sparse, we must entertain the possibility that the Apracarājas for the first time had acquired the capacity to articulate their political power and that they were doing so in a context in which the Indo-Scythians were seeking to maintain their own. That this would come to be ubiquitously achieved through a Buddhist ritual medium reflects also that Buddhism as ideological and institutional force had become sufficiently salient to effect engagement from the Apracarājas with a view to affirming the political recognition of their kingdom.

The beginnings of this process are to be traced earlier still, for Vijayamitra's donation was made but a year after another inscribed schist reliquary, found in the remains of a stupa at Samarbagh, Pakistan, to stipulate the name of the ruler.

Reliquary Inscription of Nagaṇḍa (No. 10),

In the year 50, day 24 of the month *Kārttika*, during the reign of Vijayamitra the Apracarāja under the constellation *hasta*.

On this day Ṇagaṇada...

On this day Ṇagaṇada, wife of Taravia the regional governor, establishes a stupa at Jalo-[...], 'we establish the relics [of] the great one, the one who has abandoned greatness; all

Buddhas are worshipped. A gift for the Dharmaguptaka *saṃgha*.

This dedication, dated 50 [Azes] (2/3 CE) and ‘during the reign’ (*rājye*) of the Apracarāja Viyāmitra (a contracted form of Vijayamitra), was performed by Naganāṃda, the wife (*bhāryā*) of a district governor (*meridarkha*, Gk. μεριδάρχης) named Taravia, who presumably served as a functionary of the Indo-Scythians under either Azes I or Azilises. This formal recognition of Vijayamitra’s reign by an individual extraneous to the Apracarājas, a mere four years after the ruler had established his own era, is perhaps the earliest indication of a redistribution of power in the political landscape of the Northwest.

Epigraphic evidence for the Apracarājas is found still earlier, however, during the reign of a former Apracarāja named Viṣuvarma and his predecessor. Viṣuvarma first arises in a relic dedication made by a certain Loṇa (Skt. Lavaṇā), which is said to be from Charsadda, Pakistan, the location of Puṣkalāvātī, the ancient capital of Gandhara. It is undated but can on several palaeographic and historical grounds be placed quite firmly in the late 1st century BCE.¹

Reliquary Inscription of Loṇa (No. 7)

[1] The woman of the court of Prince Viṣuvarma, Loṇa, daughter of a householder, dedicates these relics of the Fortunate One, having worshipped all Buddhas, having worshipped all past, future and present Pratyekabuddhas, having worshipped all disciples of the Fortunate One, having worshipped Brahmā Sahāṃpatī, having worshipped Śakra,

¹ For discussion see, Richard Salomon, ‘A Kharoṣṭhī Reliquary Inscription of the Time of the Apraca Prince Viṣuvarma’, *South Asian Studies* 11 (1995): 27–32.

Lord of the Deities, having worshipped the Four Great Kings,
having worshipped all beings.

Loṇa identifies herself as a woman of the inner court (*antahpurikā*), a minor wife of Viṣuvarma (Skt. Viṣṇuvarma), who is here entitled prince (*kumāra*). His status as prince indicates that he is eligible to succeed the current Apracarāja ruler, who is neither named here nor elsewhere. Some have suggested this unknown ruler is the hypothetical Vijayamitra [I] discussed above,¹ placing Viṣuvarma therefore not long after Menander in the mid-2nd century BCE, but there exists no firm evidence to substantiate this position and such an early date is untenable, as we shall presently observe. All that can be concluded is that the Apraca dynasty predates all evidence we have for it, sometime in the early to mid 1st century BCE.

This inscription is also the only example to derive from the life of Viṣuvarma, of which nothing more is known. What knowledge we do possess of him derives from posthumous inscriptions dedicated by his wife Rukhuṇa, his son Indravarma I, and the latter's wife Utara, in which we learn that he later governed as Apracarāja towards the end of 1st century BCE. Unlike Vijayamitra, therefore, it is possible to determine with greater precision his position in the Apraca lineage.

The earliest of these inscriptions derives from Indravarma I, who recorded his dedication on a spherical schist container found in Bajaur, Pakistan:

Reliquary Inscription of Indravarma I (No. 14)

In the sixty-third 63 year of the Great King Azes who has passed, on the 16th day of the month Kārttika at this moment of *citra*, Prince Indravarma, son of the Apracarāja

¹ Salomon, 'Indo-Greek Era', 382; Baums, 'Catalog', 205fn13.

[Viṣuvarma] establishes this relic of the Fortunate One Śākyamuni at a permanent, deep, previously unestablished location. He produces Brahmā-merit along with [his] mother Rukhuṇaka, the one who has a living son and wife of the Apracarāja, along with [his] maternal uncle Ramaka, along with [his] maternal uncle's wife Daṣakā, along with his wives who are sisters, Vasavadata, Mahaveda, and Ṇika, and wife Utara. For the worship of [his] father Viṣuvarma, the Apracarāja. [His] brother Vaga the General, is worshipped as well as Vijayamitra the [current] Apracarāja. His maternal aunt Bhādata is worshipped. And having taken these relics from a Mauryan Period stupa they were established in a central location that is without danger, without trouble. *vasia* fifty.

Prince Indravarma I's dedication is dated to 73 Azes I (15/16 CE), who, we learn, is now deceased. The inscription documents that he took the relics from a Mauryan Period stupa: *ime ca śarire Muryakaliṇate thubute*. Thereafter, he re-established them at a previously unestablished location (*apratīḥavitapurvaṃmi pradeśaṃmi*)¹ in order that their safety is ensured. This situation is of course reminiscent of Vijayamitra's reasons for making his rededication and is again suggestive that the Apraca domain continued to meet with certain issues, perhaps due to conflict with the Indo-Scythians or Indo-Parthians. The location of both stupas is not known, though we may hazard that the former was located in Tramaṇa, a site which Salomon argues was the capital of the Apracarājas, and where we know from other inscriptions also that a

¹ This is a highly specific doctrinal formula known to Buddhist literature, see Chapter Fourteen: Eschatology and Brahma-Merit.

Dharmarājikā stupa associated with Aśoka was located.¹ His removal of relics from a stupa and rededication in a new location is a common practice among the Apracarājas and to a lesser extent among the Oḍirājas also. The doctrinal dimensions thereof—in particular the produce of Brahma-merit—are of significant import and shall be taken up later,² but it is important to note the potential political aspects of the ritual act, insofar as the Apracarājas defined their sphere of governance by means of relics and the monumental structures within which they were interred. Buddhism was therefore one, and indeed a central, medium of their political power.

The inscription also offers the first opportunity to begin to structure a genealogy of the Apraca family. Indravarma identifies himself as a prince and son of an Apracarāja (*apracarājaputra*), who, as we learn later, is his father, Apracarāja Viṣuvarma. He also names a number of participants in the instrumental case with whom (*sārdham*) the dedication was made; these include his mother (*mātr*) Rukhuṇaka, who bears the title ‘one who has a living son’ (*jīvaputrā*), his maternal uncle (*mātula*) Ramaka, his maternal uncle’s wife (*mātulānī*) Daṣaka, his ‘wives who are sisters’ (*svasṛdāra*)³, Vasavadata, Mahaveda and Ṇika,

¹ Salomon, ‘Dynastic and Institutional Connections in the Pre- and Early Kuṣāṇa Period: New Manuscript and Epigraphic Evidence’, 272–73.

² See Chapter Fourteen: Eschatology and Brahma-Merit and Chapter Fifteen: Stupa Destruction and Relic Theft.

³ The masc. inst. pl. as G. *śpasadarehi* has produced two interpretations. Most understand this to be a *dvandva*, i.e., ‘with sisters and wives’; see most recently Baums, ‘Catalog’, 208. In this case, we cannot determine who are Indravarma I’s sisters and who were his wives apart from Utara. Falk suggested it be construed as a *karmadhāraya*: ‘wives who were born as sisters...If this is correct the Apraca kings must have married a row of sisters. This would explain why one of them is given prominence as *gahini*, skt. *gr̥hīnī*, ‘lady of the house’. Being the chief wife her oldest son [i.e., Aśpavarma, see below] would be the first of the king’s male progeny to succeed the throne.’ Harry Falk, ‘Notes on Some Apraca Dedicatory Texts’, *Berliner Indologische Studien*

and his principal wife, the ‘lady of the house’ (*gr̥hiṇī*) Utara. These named participants, we can assume, were present at the dedication. Thereafter he stipulates the beneficiaries who are the object of worship (*pūjā*), including his father, his brother Vaga, who is named as a general (G. *stratega*, Gk. *στρατηγός*), the Apracarāja Viyayamitra, and finally his maternal aunt (*māṭṛsvasṛ*) Bhaḍdata.

A limited version of this situation finds itself repeated by Indravarma I’s wife, Utara, on an inscribed silver scroll:

Silver Scroll Inscription of Utara (No. 15)

All Buddhas are worshipped, all past, future, and present Pratyekabuddhas are worshipped, all Noble Ones are worshipped. Utara, the wife of the prince, establishes relics of the Fortunate One along with Prince Indravarma [I]. A stone pillar was erected...Sadaḍha, Ujīṃda... Utaraūta, Pupidrio, [and] Uṣaṃveo are worshipped, the mother of the

11/12 (1998): 100–101. Utara is named elsewhere as his wife (*bhāryā*) in hers and other’s dedications (see below), whereas the other three are not. The only argument against Falk’s view, forwarded by Salomon, is if Vasavadata is understood to be equivalent to another individual of the same name, found as a donor upon British Library Pot A from Haḍḍa, Afghanistan, who is named as the wife of a certain lord (*svāmin*) Suhasoma, CKI 369. In light of the fact the manuscripts found within this pot concern a figure of the Apracarāja dynasty, Aśpavarma (see below), the identity of the two is not impossible. Suhasoma in turn, is understood to be the same as another figure named Suhasoma who arises as an advisor (*aṇaṃkaya*, Gk. *ἀναγκᾶος*) to the Oḍirāja Seṇavarma, see Salomon, *Ancient Buddhist Scrolls from Gandhāra: The British Library Kharoṣṭhī Fragments*, 150–53. For reasons of chronology, the equation of these two figures named Suhasoma, appears untenable. Whereas the Reliquary Inscription of Indravarma I is dedicated to 15/16 CE, the Gold Scroll of Seṇavarma is much later, and likely to be attributed to the last quarter of the 1st century CE. Therefore approximately half a century separates the two inscriptions, which does not exclude the possibility the two figures were contemporaries and were indeed wed. This remains speculation however.

regional governor Śreṭha is worshipped, [her] father-in-law, Viṣuvarma the Apracarāja is worshipped, the one who has a living son, Rukhuṇaka is worshipped, General Vaga is worshipped, the Apracarāja Vijayamitra is worshipped, Dhramasena, the monk and overseer of new constructions are worshipped.

Utara identifies herself as the wife of the prince (*kumārabhāryā*), whom she names in a participatory role as Indravarma I. She too stipulates a list of beneficiaries who are to be worshipped: five figures—Sadaḍha, Ujīṃda, Utaraūto, Pupidrio, and Uṣaṃveo—bear no identification, whereafter a certain Śreṭha is given the title ‘mother of the regional governor’ (*meridarkhamātr*), perhaps the aforementioned District Governor Taravia, who is followed by Utara’s father-in-law (*śvaśura*), Apracarāja Viṣuvarma, the latter’s wife, *jīvaputrā* Rukhuṇakā, General Vaga, and finally Apracarāja Vijayamitra.

The presence of two Apracarājas, Viṣuvarma and Vijayamitra, in this inscription previously presented issues to scholars as they are named without explicit reference as to who was the current or the former (ruling out the situation in which they reigned concurrently). Initially, it was concluded that Vijayamitra was the former and Viṣuvarma his successor. That the reverse is the case shall become clear presently; however, there still remains the issue of Vijayamitra’s identity, which is not expressed in terms of a kinship relation.

The key to resolving the matter is to be found in Rukhuṇa’s title ‘one who has a living son’ (*jīvaputrā*). Although more widely applied in Sanskrit literature to men and women alike, in epigraphy from as early as the c. 2nd century BCE it was strictly used as a court title for female royalty who are either mother to a successor or mother to a current ruler

(Fig. 6.4).¹ Harry Falk argues that in the Indic Northwest the title was more restricted in its usage, denoting a widowed wife of a deceased ruler who is mother to a present ruler. This is true in the case of Uzamda, the still living (*tiṣṭhatā*) mother of the Oḍirāja Senavarma (No. 36), as it is made explicit that the latter's father, Ajidasena, is deceased (*adhvātīta*).² Applying this logic to the case of Rukhuṇa, Falk thus argues that her husband Viṣuvarma is deceased and that Vijayamitra is the living son to whom the title refers and the current ruler.³

¹ B. C. Chhabra, *Findings in Indian Archaeology* (Delhi: Sundeep Prakashan, 1991), 322–321.

² See below, The Oḍirāja Dynasty.

³ Falk, 'Notes on Some Apraca Dedicatory Texts', 95–97, 99.

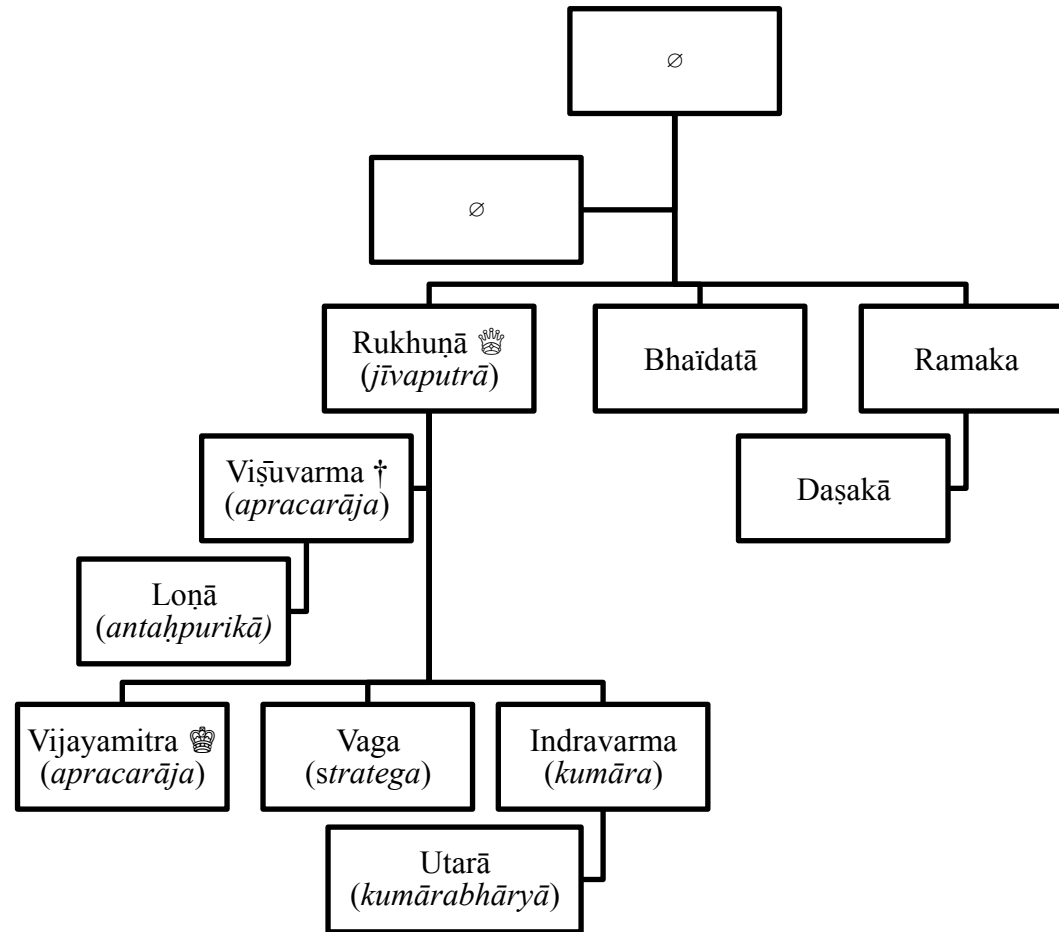


Fig. 6.3 The Apraca Dynasty before c. 30 CE

Fig. 6.4: *Jīvaputrā* ('one who has a living son')

B. Ch. Chhabra has conducted a comprehensive study of the title *jīvaputrā* and variations (e.g., *jīvasutā*) in both inscriptions and Sanskrit literature.¹ Whereas in literature, and already in the *Ṛgveda*, the term refers to both men and women, it was found that in epigraphy it is used exclusively in respect to queens who are either [1] the wife of a current ruler (i.e., mother to the successor) or [2] the mother of a current ruler. In a patrilineal system of hereditary kingship, a son is of central import to the furthering of a dynastic lineage and this title, therefore, is a marker of status applied to women to distinguish them as being those who are to forward the dynastic line.² The earliest instances fall into the former group. Two examples stem from the Indic North in the c. 2nd century BCE; including one from Mathura, which refers to a certain Yaśamatā as *jīvaputrā* and *rājābhāryā* ('wife of the king'),³ and another from Bodhgaya, which names a certain Kuraṅgī, who is the queen of Indrāgnimitra.⁴ Two later examples from the 3rd century CE also describe Khaṇḍuvulā, queen of the Ikṣvāku Ehavala Cāntamūla as 'not a widow' (*avidhāva*), implying her son is to be ruler,⁵ and another states that Śivaskandanāgaśrī, daughter of Viṣṇukaḍa Sātakarṇi, is mother of the 'heir apparent' (*yūvarāja*).⁶ One case, dating to the 2nd century CE, falls into the second group and gives the title to the mother of the Sātavāhana ruler Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi.⁷

¹ Chhabra, *Findings in Indian Archaeology*, 322–34.

² Meera Visvanathan, 'Before Genealogy? Marking Descent in the Inscriptions of Early Historic India', *Religions of South Asia* 5, no. 1/2 (2011): 224–25.

³ See *EI* 24, p. 199.

⁴ See LL 943–944.

⁵ See *EI* 29, p. 139.

⁶ See *EI* 34, p. 239–42.

⁷ See *EI* 8, p. 73.

This scenario would likely make Vijayamitra the first-born son of Viṣuvarma and Rukhuṇa and the brother of General Vaga and Prince Indravarma I. There is but one issue: at no point, neither here nor in another inscription is a paternal or filial relationship expressed between Vijayamitra and these respective individuals. There is therefore space for the argument to be made that General Vaga is the ‘living son’ of Viṣuvarma and Rukhuṇaka. In this second scenario, Vijayamitra could be the younger brother of Viṣuvarma,¹ and, being young, had not yet had any sons.

A decade later Rukhuṇa made here own dedication, dated according to three eras—27 Vijayamitra, 73 Azes and 201 Yoṇa (25/26 CE):

Reliquary Inscription of Rukhuṇa (No. 17)

In the twenty-seventh 27 year in the ruler of Lord Vijayamitra the Apracarāja, in the seventy-third 73 year of the one called Azes, in the two-hundred-and-first 201 year of the Greeks, on the eighth day of the month Śrāvaṇa. On this day a stupa was established by Rukhuṇā, wife of the Apracarāja, along with Vijayamitra the Apracarāja, Indravarma the General, and their wives and princes.

Unlike Indravarma I, she does not mention Viṣuvarma or Vaga, both of whom are presumably now deceased, confirming that Vijayamitra is the current ruler governing into his lengthy reign of 27 years. This is further confirmed by the series of participants she names in the instrumental case *with whom* the dedication was performed; these include the Apracarāja Vijayamitra, Indravarma I, who, adopting his brother’s

¹ A possibility already suggested twice (for different reasons) by Salomon, ‘The “Avaca” Inscription and the Origin of the Vikrama Era’, 60; Salomon, ‘Indo-Greek Era’, 380.

former role, now bears the title general. That he took this title is indication perhaps that sons of rulers in the Apraca dynasty would first be princes before adopting the position of general, once, presumably, they were of age.

Indeed, it seems that Indravarma I's elevation was celebrated, for his wife made another dedication near the Apracarāja capital, Tramaṇa. Therein she now names herself wife of the general (*strategabhāryā*):

Reliquary Inscription of Utara (No. 18)

Utara, wife of the General, establishes a stupa at a previously unestablished location in the region of Tramaṇa. All Buddhas are worshipped, all past and future Pratyekabuddhas are worshipped, [and] all Nobles Ones are worshipped.

The significance of Indravarma I now being general is not clear for the matter of succession. It is important to note that in her own inscription Rukhuṇa does not identify herself as *jīvaputrā* and only as wife to the Apracarāja (*apracarājabhāryā*). This lack of title could find an explanation in Chhabra's observation that 'Indian ladies *do not call themselves* as *jīvaputra*, but *are spoken of by others* as such, thereby implying a benediction—may she be blessed with children and may her heir live long!'¹ (A perhaps not dissimilar divergence in her self-identification is that she does not employ the diminutive form of her name, Rukhuṇa-ka, as is found in all other cases.) It could also be that General Vaga is now deceased and therefore she is no longer regarded as *jīvaputrā*. This, however, would only make sense if the implied purport of the expression 'along with wives and princes' (*G. sabharyehi sakumarehi*) can be regarded as qualifying both Indravarma I and Vijayamitra, meaning the latter had now produced an heir of his own

¹ Chhabra, *Findings in Indian Archaeology*, 323–24.

and that succession had, therefore, shifted from Viṣuvarma's to Vijayamitra's line.

Vijayamitra did indeed have two sons: Indravasu, who would later become Apracarāja, and Indragivarma.¹ The latter made his own relic dedication, which is not dated, but he must have been born some years before or after 25/26 CE, as he is not mentioned in Rukhuṇa's dedication. His dedicated reliquary also has no provenance but mentions a new location, Śpadi, whose whereabouts has not been identified.

Reliquary Inscription of Indragivarma (No. 19)

Prince Indragivarma, son of Apracarāja Vijayamitra, establishes relics in Śpadi at a previously unestablished location for the worship of all Buddhas.

In the three years after Rukhuṇa's dedication, other figures not immediately related to Apracarāja lineage also made a series of relic dedications. Two derive from Ramaka, a figure who is likely the same as the aforementioned maternal uncle of Indravarma I, i.e., the sister of Rukhuṇa, but only one is dated, to 74 Azes I (26/27 CE).

Reliquary Inscription of Ramaka (No. 20)

In the seventy-fourth 74 year of the Great King, the Great Azes, deceased, on the fourth day of the month Āśvayuj, [in conjunction] with the constellation Āśvayuj, on this auspicious day and under this auspicious constellation, Ramaka, son of Mahaśrava, and resident of the village Kutī, establishes at a previously unestablished location the relics of the Fortunate One at Kaihaka in Kalaretra, for the worship of

¹ Salomon suggests the names are equivalent, Salomon, 'Three Kharoṣṭhī Reliquary Inscriptions in the Institute of Silk Road Studies', 54.

all Buddhas and all Pratyekabuddhas, for the worship of [his] mother and father, [his] wife [Daṣaka], and [his] sons Mahavarma and Mahindra, [for the worship] of the beautiful daughters and sisters¹ of the wife [of] the satrap [11]..., for the worship of Yola-..., satrap of [...] -muñātra, [and] for the worship of all beings. In establishing these relics, what purpose may there be?—[It is] for the abandonment of arising, the cultivation of the path, the realisation of cessation, and the removal of suffering.

Reliquary Inscription of Ramaka and Uđita

The principal gift of Ramaka, son of Maḥāśravā. The relic of Ramaka, son of Maḥāśravā, resident of the village Kaṃti. These relics were established by Uđita [3] all those worthy of worship are worshipped.

These inscriptions afford us the opportunity to expand upon Rukhuṇa's specific lineage, providing the name of her father or mother Maḥāśrava, and the names of her nephews Mahaverma and Mahindra. The identity of the satrap mentioned as a beneficiary is unfortunately too fragmentary to enlighten us as to whom it may have been; we can only presume he served under Azes II at the very end of Indo-Scythian governance.

The place name Kaihaka and region Kalaretra are also unknown to other sources. Ramaka's dated dedication is said to have been uncovered in the village of Nuristan, in Bajaur, at the border with

¹ The interpretation, opted for here, of *s[u]kaṇikaśpa[pa]soṇa* (Skt. *sukanyakasvasṛṇāṃ*) as 'of the beautiful daughters' (or 'of the beautiful daughters who are sisters') is not certain, see Baums, 'Catalog', 215fn31. From the context it would be quite adequate that Ramaka would worship his own daughters and sisters; however, it appears the term is to be construed with *bharyae* (Skt. *bhāryāyāḥ*), which in turn should be qualified by *kṣatrapa*(*sa), although the latter *akṣara* is lost.

Afghanistan,¹ and it is likely the toponyms derive therefrom. In both inscriptions, Ramaka also states he is resident of another location, a village spelt Kutī and Kaṃṭi. This place is also unknown. However, a homophonically similar town Kuntī, named after the *yakṣiṇī* who dwells there, arises in the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya* in the passage concerning the Buddha's journey along the Northern Route. When at the town, the residents tell the Buddha:

‘For a long time Kuntī the *yakṣiṇī* was a rival to us who are without rival, harmful to us who wish no harm, and has carried off each generation of our offspring’.²

In the narrative, Kuntī is number 15 of 17 locations³ to be named on the Buddha's journey and is placed (moving southwards) in a row of locations which include Pālitakūṭa, Nandivardhana, Kutī and Kharjūrikā. The latter, in this enumeration, southernmost location, is the city of Peshawar. Of the two preceding, only Pālitakūṭa has been identified by Lamotte with Charbagh in Upper Swat.⁴ Kuntī must, therefore, lie between these two locations but no modern cognate of the name presents itself. One possible candidate arises in Xuanzang's travelogue. He records that 50 *li* 里 (approx. 161 km) to the northwest of Puṣkalāvati there was a stupa where the Buddha had converted the mother of demons, whom Samuel Beal equates with Hāritī and Alexander Soper with Kuntī, due, namely, to their both having an association with the

¹ Fussman, ‘Inscriptions kharoṣṭhī du Musée de Caboul’, 5–7.

² *kuntī yakṣiṇī asmākaṃ dīrgharātram asapatnānāṃ sapatnī adrugdhānāṃ drogdhrī jātāni jātāny apatyāni harati*. MSV 1. 2.

³ Étienne Lamotte, ‘Vajrapani in India [I]’, trans. Sara Boin-Webb, *Buddhist Studies Review* 20, no. 1 (2003): 25.

⁴ Lamotte, ‘Vajrapani in India [I]’, 24.

stealing of children.¹ However, this distance (as the crow flies) and direction would place it somewhere in the location of Dir or Bajaur, which, if indeed the location of Ramaka's inscriptions and these texts can be equated, would relate broadly to the find-spot.

Three years after Ramaka another Apraca figure named Śatruleka, made his own relic dedication in 77 Azes (29/30 CE) at another location called Aṭhayi.

Reliquary Inscription of Śatruleka (No. 23)

In the seventy-seventh year of the Great King Azes, deceased, on the twenty-fourth 24 day of the month Śrāvaṇa, by Śatruleka, Satrap, son of Subhutiḱā, and maternal nephew to the Apracarāja, relics of the Fortunate One Śākyamuni were established at a previously unestablished location in the village Aṭhayi, for the acceptance of the Kāśyapīya monks. All Buddhas are worshipped, all Pratyekabuddhas, Noble Ones, and Disciples are worshipped, [and] all worthy of worship are worshipped. These relics were established along with [his] wife Davili, [their] sons Indraseṇa and Menandra. And [his] mother and father are worshipped, [his] brother Indraseṇa, the Lord Vijayamitra Apracarāja, and Indravarma the General, Ruler of Gandhāra, are worshipped, Rukhuṇaka, one who has a living son, and all worthy of worship are worshipped. Patrulaśiśara bathes the relics.

Śatruleka bears the title satrap and 'maternal nephew of the Apracarāja' (*apracarājabhāgineya*), presumably Vijayamitra, and son of Subhutiḱa,

¹ Samuel Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World. Translated from the Chinese of Hiuen Tsiang (A.D: 629). Vol. I* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1884), 110–11; Alexander C. Soper, 'Aspects of Light Symbolism in Gandhāran Sculpture', *Artibus Asiae* 12, no. 4 (50 1949): 278.

who must, therefore, have been a sister to Vijayamitra. In the list of beneficiaries, he names his wife Davili, their two sons, Indraseṇa and Menandra, and his brother Indraseṇa. Finally, he names the Apracarāja Vijayamitra, General Indravarma I, who now bears the title Lord of Gandhra (*gandhārasvāmin*), and Rukhuṇaka, who is again named *jīvaputra*.

If Indravarma I had indeed become ‘Lord of Gandhāra’, this would indicate perhaps an expansion of the Apracarāja domain during the reign of Vijayamitra. Unfortunately, this dedication has no provenance and thus we cannot establish whence it derived. The location named as the village Aṭhayi is also not known but it must have stood near Tramaṇa as the Reliquary Inscription of Kopśakasa(?) (No. 29) likely took relics from the former location and established them in the latter.¹

¹ Bailey proposed a possible Skt. *āsthāya*. H. W. Bailey, ‘Two Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions’, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 1 (1982): 152. But G. *aṭha* more commonly is Skt. *aṣṭa* (‘eight’) and the *–ya* could be understood as vocalic glide with *–i*.

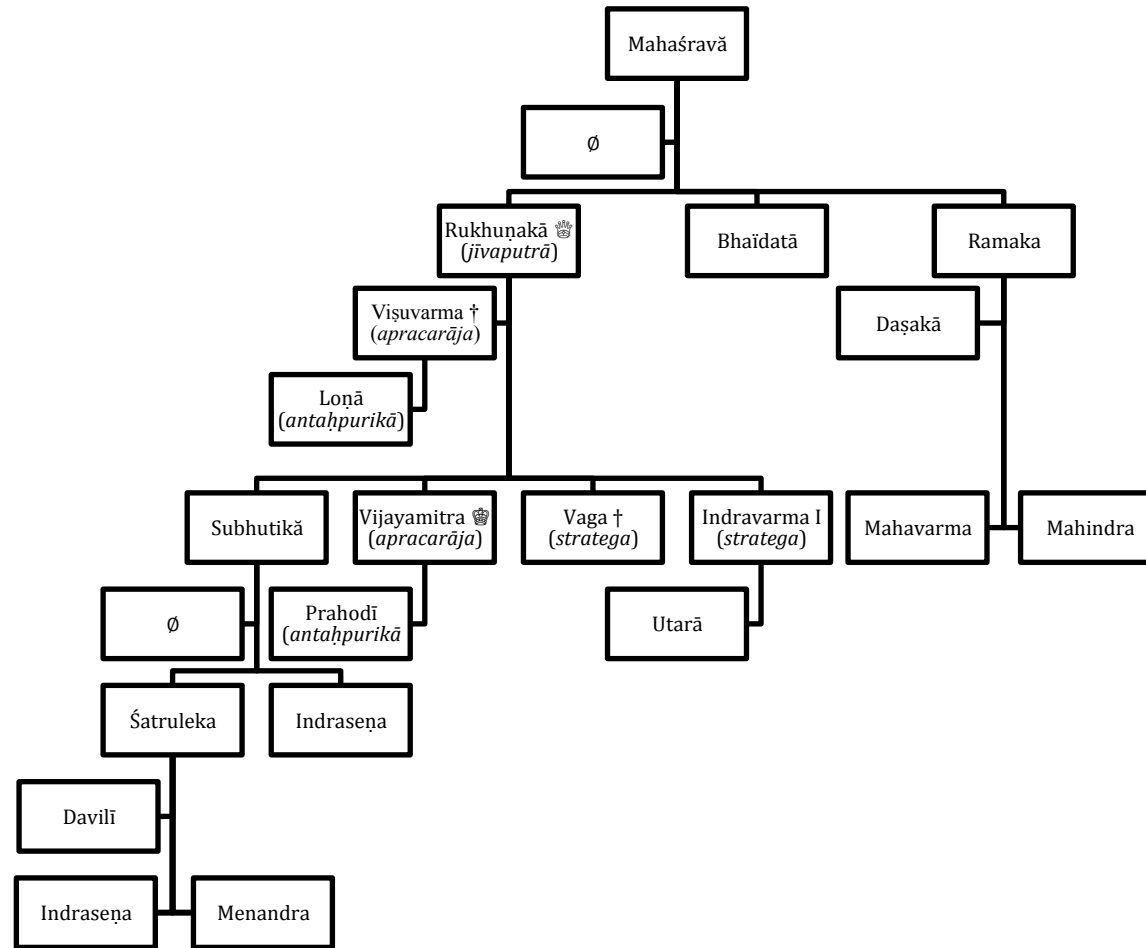


Fig. 6.5 The Apraca Dynasty c. 30 CE

The reoccurrence of Rukhuṇa in the role of *jīvaputra* suggests one of two scenarios. Either Indravarma I is now successor, following the death of Vaga, or Vijayamitra is indeed the ‘living son’, thereby substantiating Falk’s conclusions that the title refers to the widow of a once king and mother to the current. However, the appearance of Subhutika, a previously unknown sister of Vijayamitra, is notable for she is never mentioned as the sister of Vaga or Indravarma I; this could substantiate the former scenario that Vijayamitra is not fraternally related to the two just mentioned and perhaps, therefore, the brother of Viṣuvarma. Before deciding which is the more likely there are two final inscriptions that need to be considered.

The first was dedicated by Prahodi, the woman of the inner court (*antaḥpurikā*) of Vijayamitra, and is dated 32 Vijayamitra (30/31 CE).

Reliquary Inscription of Prahodi (No. 24)

These relics were established by the woman of the court named Prahodī in the thirty-second 32 year of the Lord Vijayamitra Apracarāja. The overseer of the stupa’s new construction, named Śirile, his Samadro and further his near dwelling pupil named Aśorakṣida, the overseer of new constructions.

This year represents in all likelihood one of Vijayamitra’s last as ruler, for the throne would subsequently be given to his son Indravasu who is first known in epigraphy from the following.

Reliquary Inscription of Indravarma II (No. 30)

Son of General Viśpavarma, Prince Indravarma [II] establishes these relics along with his wife in his personal stupa. General Viśpavarma and Śīśireṇa, wife of the general, are worshipped, Apracarāja Indravasu and *jīvaputrā*

Vasumitra are worshipped. General Indravarma [I] is worshipped, Utara, wife of the general, is worshipped, Apracarāja Vijayamitra along with his wife is worshipped, the entire community of relatives is worshipped, and all beings are worshipped. May all beings completely extinguish.

Interpreting this inscription is fraught with difficulties. It is undated and therefore we cannot know precisely when the dedication was made. It must postdate 30/31 CE because at that time Vijayamitra was still Apracarāja and here we learn of a new Apracarāja Indravasu.

We know from coinage that Indravasu is the son of Vijayamitra. This ruler was the first of the Apraca dynasty to issue a coin, the earliest of which is a heavily debased billion tetradrachm, struck with the King on Horseback motif and an illegible Greek legend on the obverse (which likely detailed the name of the ruler Azes II and his titles), and on the reverse, the Athena-with-Shield-and-Spear motif and a Kharoṣṭhī legend which reads: Vijayamitraputrasa Itravasu apracarajasa.¹ Azes II's reign is typically dated by numismatists to 15–30 CE; however, these dates perhaps need to be brought forward a little in light of the Reliquary Inscription of Prahodi, which postdates this estimation. How far exactly depends on when the Indo-Parthians had secured control over the Apraca kingdom. There is evidence they took Dir in 50/51 CE and Gandhāra in 55/56 CE² and we could therefore quite safely place Indravasu and Azes II in the third and perhaps the fourth decades of the 1st century CE in these regions. The later issues of Indravasu confirm this takeover. They utilise identical motifs, legends (the Greek is also

¹ Salomon, 'An Inscribed Silver Buddhist Reliquary of the Time of King Kharaosta and Prince Indravarman', 446. Originally read by Mitchiner as *Vijayamitrassa putrasa Itravarmassa apracarajasa*. This led him to presume that the father of Aśpavarma (i.e., Indravarma I) became *apracarāja*. Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, 601; 760, Types 897; 1135.

² See Chapter Five: The Indo-Parthians.

illegible), and major monograms, but with one change to the obverse, namely, the 𑀘 monogram, which is only found on coins, issued by and after the Indo-Parthian ruler Gondophares. On the basis of this piece of minutia, it is typically argued the Apracarājas shifted alliance from the Indo-Scythian suzerains to the Indo-Parthians. Indeed this may be confirmed by the occurrence of the Apraca General Aśpavarma within an inscription considered below, wherein he appears alongside Abdgases the nephew of the Indo-Parthian Gondophares.

In this inscription, Rukhuṇa is no longer mentioned and now another queen named Vasumitra is entitled *jīvaputrā*. Following the theory that the title denotes the widow of a ruler and mother to a successor, Falk argues that Vasumitra is the wife of Indravasu, who is already deceased, and that the Vijayamitra mentioned here along with his wife (*sabhārya*) is their son and a previously unknown Vijayamitra II (or Vijayamitra III if Salomon and Baums' model of succession were to be accepted). In light of the fact Rukhuṇa was still entitled *jīvaputrā* in 29/30 CE, this inscription must, therefore, have been composed after that time, which again argues in favour of dating Indravasu and Azes II a little later. Again, however, Falk's Vijayamitra II is not found elsewhere in any other source and his existence cannot be confirmed. Another possible scenario is that Vasumitra is the missing wife of Vijayamitra, now deceased, and that Indravasu is their living son. Although this would perhaps be unusual in so far as Vasumitra, in this case, would be mentioned for a second time as a beneficiary in the expression 'Vijyamitra along with his wife'.

One final possibility is that the living son of Indravasu and Vasumitra is General Viśpavarma. Yet, the identity of this figure too is hard to determine. Many previously argued that this General Viśpavarma is the same as Apracarāja Viṣuvarma and that the two

Indravarmas mentioned above are identical.¹ This is no longer maintained, for the two have distinct wives, Śīṣireṇa and Rukhuṇa respectively, and distinct sons, both of which are named Indravarma but distinguished quite clearly in the above inscription as General Indravarma I and Prince Indravarma II. Falk argued that Viśpavarma is the son of Indravarma I, on the basis of nominal affinities shared with another possible son of the latter, Aśpavarma. Salomon also noted that in the Reliquary Inscription of Indravarma II, the name Viśpavarma occurs in both sections of the inscription, which are repeated verbatim, but that in one section his name is corrected from an initial spelling of Aśpavarma.² This could imply the two are either identical or indeed closely related. If Viśpavarma were the son of Indravarma I, for example, his name could be viewed as a commemoration to the former's father, Viṣuvarma, with which it essentially synonymous. In this case, Viśpavarma could not be the living son of Vasumitra and Indravasu.

However, two additional pieces of evidence indirectly suggest Viśpavarma was more likely in the line of Indravasu. The first is an inscribed seal, which mentions an Apracarāja Indravarma. There is some debate as to whether he is Viṣuvarma's son, General Indravarma I, or Viśpavarma's son, Prince Indravarma II. That it is unlikely to be the former is substantiated by the second piece of evidence, the latest inscription to relate to the Apraca dynasty, dated 98 Azes (50/51 CE), in which Indravarma II and his son Aśpavarma are mentioned together.

¹ Neelis, *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade*, 118; Salomon, 'An Inscribed Silver Buddhist Reliquary of the Time of King Kharaosta and Prince Indravarman', 441.

² Salomon, 'An Inscribed Silver Buddhist Reliquary of the Time of King Kharaosta and Prince Indravarman', 424fn14.

Reliquary Inscription of Ariaśrava (No. 31)

[Inside of Bowl] In the ninety-eighth 98 year of the Great King, the Great Azes, on the fifteenth 15 day of the month Caitra. In the reign of Gondophares' nephew Avakaśa. In the reign of General Aśpavarma, son of Indravarma [II].

The individual mentioned here, as well as in coinage, as the father of Aśpavarma is Indravarma I, we must observe that he does not here bear the title Apracarāja and was therefore unlikely to ever have taken the throne if not at this late date. The same chronological issues do not present themselves if it is Indravarma II, son of Viśpavarma, who could well have become a ruler at this time. This would also mean that the succession had followed the line of Apracarāja Vijayamitra, through Apracarāja Indravasu, General Viśpavarma (who did not take the throne), to, finally, Apracarāja Indravarma II.

Aśpavarma jointly issued coinage with both Azes II and with the Indo-Parthians as General and son of Indravarma I, indicating that he had developed a high degree of power in the shift from Indo-Scythian to Indo-Parthian rule. The Indo-Parthian ruler Sasan being named in coinage as the paternal nephew of Aśpavarma substantiates this: maharajasa Aspabhrataputrasa tratarasa Sasasa. Aśpavarma's brother is not named, but it could potentially be Viśpavarma, if the theory of Falk is maintained and both he and Aśpavarma were sons of Indravarma I. Sasan also issued another two coins, in which he himself adopts the title Gondophares, becoming therefore the Indo-Parthian suzerain, immediately before the Kuṣāṇa ruler Kujula Kadhises.

Fig 6.6: Sources for the Apraca Dynasty

No.	Title	Provenance	Named Location	Date	Donation	Individuals		Ref.
						Name	Title	
1	Reliquary Inscription of Loṇa (No. 7)	Charsadda, Pakistan	—	—	<i>śarīra</i>	Loṇa Viṣuvarma	<i>antaḥpurikā kumāra</i>	CKI 247
2	Reliquary Inscription of Naganamda (No. 10)	Samarbagh, Pakistan	—	50 [Azes I] (2/3 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	Naganamda Taravia Vijayamitra	<i>bhārya meridarkh apracarāja</i>	CKI 454
3	Reliquary Inscription of Vijayamitra (No. 11)	Shinkhot, Bajaur Pakistan	—	5 Vijayamitra (3/4 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	Vijayamitra	<i>apracarāja</i>	CKI 176
4	Reliquary Inscription of Indravarma I (No. 14)	Unknown	—	63 Azes I (15/16 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	Indravarma I Rukhuṇaka Ramaka Daṣaka Vasavadatta Mahaveḍa Ṇika Utarā Viṣuvarma Vaga Vijayamitra Bhaḍdata	<i>kumāra jīvaputra mātula mātulāni dāra dāra dāra grhiṇī apracarāja stratega bhrātṛ apracarāja mātrsvasṛ</i>	CKI 242

5	Silver Scroll Inscription of Utara (No. 15)	Bajaur, Pakistan	—	—	<i>dhātu,</i> <i>śīlastambha</i>	Utarā Indravarma I Viṣuvarma Rukhuṇaka Vaga Vijayamitra Dharmaseṇa et al	<i>bhāryā</i> <i>kumāra</i> <i>apracarāja</i> <i>jīvaputra</i> <i>stratega</i> <i>apracarāja</i> <i>śrāvaka</i> <i>navakarmika</i>	CKI 265
6	Reliquary Inscription of Rukhuṇa (No. 17)	Bajaur, Pakistan	—	27 Vijayamitra 73 Azes 201 Yavana (25/26 CE)	stupa	Rukhuṇa Vijayamitra Indravarma I	<i>bhāryā</i> <i>apracarāja</i> <i>stratega</i>	CKI 405
7	Reliquary Inscription of Utara (No. 18)	Unknown	Tramaṇa	—	stupa	Utarā Indravarma I	<i>bhāryā</i> <i>stratega</i>	CKI 255
8	Kharoṣṭhī and Greek Seal of Indravarma I	Unknown	—	—	—	Kharoṣṭhī: Indravarma I Gk. Αλεξανδρου	Kharoṣṭhī: <i>stratega</i> Gk: στρατηγός	CKI 1035
9	Silver Scroll Inscription of Mahazada et al (No. 16)	Unknown	Tramaṇa	—	<i>śarīra,</i> <i>śīlastambha</i>	Mahazada et al	—	CKI 327
10	Gold Scroll Inscription of Mahazada et al (fake?)	Unknown	Tramaṇa	—	<i>śarīra,</i> <i>śīlastambha</i>	Mahazada et al	—	CKI 332
11	Reliquary Inscription of Ramaka (No. 20)	Bajaur, Pakistan	—	74 Azes (26/27 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	Ramaka Yola...	— <i>kṣatrapa</i>	CKI 251

12	Reliquary Inscription of Ramaka and Uḍita (No. 21)	Bajaur, Pakistan	—	—	<i>śarīra</i>	Ramaka Uḍita	—	CKI 243
13	Reliquary Inscription of Śatruleka (No. 23)	Bajaur Agency, Pakistan	Aṭhayi	77 Azes (29/30 CE)	<i>dhātu</i>	Śatruleka Vijayamitra Indravarma I Rukhuṇaka et al	<i>kṣatrapa</i> <i>apracarāja</i> <i>stratega,</i> <i>gandhāra-</i> <i>svāmin</i> <i>jīvaputra</i>	CKI 257
14	Kharoṣṭhī and Greek Seal of Śatruleka	Unknown	—	—	—	Kharoṣṭhī: Śatruleka Greek: Κατρολαῖος		CKI 943
15	Reliquary Inscription of Prahodi	Bajaur Agency, Pakistan	—	32 Vijayamitra (30/31 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	Prahodi Vijayamitra	<i>antaḥpurikā</i> <i>apracarāja</i>	CKI 359
16	Reliquary Inscription of Indragivarma	Unknown	Śpadi	—	<i>śarīra</i>	Indragivarma Vijayamitra	<i>kumāra, putra</i> <i>apracarāja</i>	CKI 402
17	Silver Saucer of Aśpavarma	Sirkap, Pakistan	Taxila,	—	—	Aśpavarma	<i>stratega</i>	CKI 190
18	Tetradrachm of Aśpavarma and Azes II	Malakand (Hoard); Sirsukh, Taxila (Mint), Pakistan	—	c. 16–30 CE	—	Aśpavarma Indravarma I Azes	Kharoṣṭhī: <i>stratega,</i> <i>jayata, putra</i>	CKC 235 ¹

¹ Typ. 898, Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, 602; No. 976, 977, Bopparachchi and ur Rahman, *Pre-Kushana Coins in Pakistan*, 200.

							Greek: <i>basileos</i> <i>basileon</i> <i>megalou</i>	
19	Drachm of Aśpavarma and Azes II	Sirsukh, Taxila (Mint), Pakistan	—	c. 16–30 CE	—	Aśpavarma Azes II	Kharoṣṭhī: <i>stratega,</i> <i>jayata</i> Greek: <i>basileos</i> <i>basileon</i> <i>megalou</i>	CKC 236 ¹
20	Reliquary Inscription of Dhramila et al	[Bajaur Agency, Pakistan]	Aṭhayi	83 Azes (35/36 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	Dhramila et al	—	CKI 266
21	Reliquary Inscription of Indravarma II	Unknown	—	—	<i>śarīra</i>	Indravarma II Viśpavarma Indravarma I Utara Vijayamitra Indravasu Vasumitra	<i>kumāra, putra</i> <i>stratega</i> <i>stratega</i> <i>bhāryā</i> <i>apracarāja</i> <i>apracarāja</i> <i>jīvaputrā</i>	CKI 241
22	Seal of Viśpavarma	Peshawar Bazar, Pakistan	—	—	—	Viśpavarma	—	CKI 470
23	Tetradrachm of Indravasu	Sirsukh, Taxila (Mint), Pakistan	—	—	—	Indravasu	Kharoṣṭhī: <i>apracarajasa,</i> <i>putrasa</i>	CKC 234, Typ. 897 ²

¹ Typ. 899, Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, 603.

² Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, Typ. 897.

						Vijayamitra	Greek: corrupted	
24	Tetradrachm of Indravasu	Sirsukh, Taxila (Mint), Pakistan	—	—	—	Indravasu	Kharoṣṭhī: <i>apracarajasa,</i> <i>putrasa</i>	Typ. 1135 ¹
						Vijayamitra	Greek: corrupted	
25	Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī Seal of Indravarma II	Annat Kalai, Bajaur, Pakistan	—	—	—	Indravarma II	Kharoṣṭhī: <i>iśpara</i> Brāhmī: <i>apracarāja</i>	CKI 364
26	Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī Seal of Indravarma II	Unknown	—	—	—	Indravarma II	Kharoṣṭhī: <i>iśpara</i> Brāhmī: <i>apracarāja</i>	CKI 930
27	Reliquary Inscription of Ariaśrava et al	Dir, Pakistan	—	98 Azes I (50/51 CE)	<i>dhātu</i>	Ariaśrava Avakaśa Gondophares Aśpavarma Indravarma I	<i>bhrātr̥putra</i> <i>stratega,</i> <i>putra</i>	CKI 358
28	Silver Saucer of Aśpavarma	Taxila, Pakistan	—	—	—	Aśpavarma	<i>stratega</i>	CKI 190
29	Drachm of Aśpavarma	Sirkap, Taxila (Mint), Pakistan	—	—	—	Aśpavarma	Kharoṣṭhī: <i>stratega,</i>	CKC 300 ²

¹ Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, Typ. 1135.

² Typ. 1124, Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, 755.

						Indravarma I	<i>putra</i> Greek: corrupted	
30	Tetradrachm of Aśpavarma	Sirsukh, (Mint Pakistan)	Taxila B),	—	—	Aśpavarma	Kharoṣṭhī: <i>strategasa,</i> <i>putrasa</i> <i>jayatasa,</i> <i>tratarasa</i>	Typ. 1136, Michael Mitchiner, <i>Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage</i> (London: Hawkins Publications, 1976), 760. Typ. 1136 ¹
						Indravarma I	Greek: corrupted	
31	Second Avadāna of Zadamitra	Haḍḍa, Afghanistan	—	—	—	Zadamitra		CKM 1, Av ^{L1}
						Aśpavarma	<i>stratega</i> (?)	v185–209
32	Drachm of Sasan	Bannu Pakistan	(Mint),	—	—	Sasan	Kharoṣṭhī: <i>maharajasa,</i> <i>tratarasa,</i> <i>Bhrataputrasa</i>	CKC 289 ²
						Aśpa[varma]	Greek: corrupted	

¹ Typ. 1136, Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, 760.

² Typ. 1104, Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, 746. Cf. CKC 301, Typ. 1125, Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, 755. Typ. 1137, Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, 761. Typ. 1138, Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, 761; No. 997, 998, Bopearachchi and ur Rahman, *Pre-Kushana Coins in Pakistan*, 204. Typ. 1139, Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, 763.

33	Reliquary Inscription of Kopśakasa(?)	Unknown	Tramaṇa	—	<i>dhātu</i>	Kopśakasa(?)	<i>mahārāja(?)</i>	CKI 266 Cf. No. 18
34	Aśoraya Buddha	Unknown	Trama	—	Buddha Statue	Mamadata Balasoma	<i>bhāryā</i> <i>suvarṇakāra</i>	CKI 256

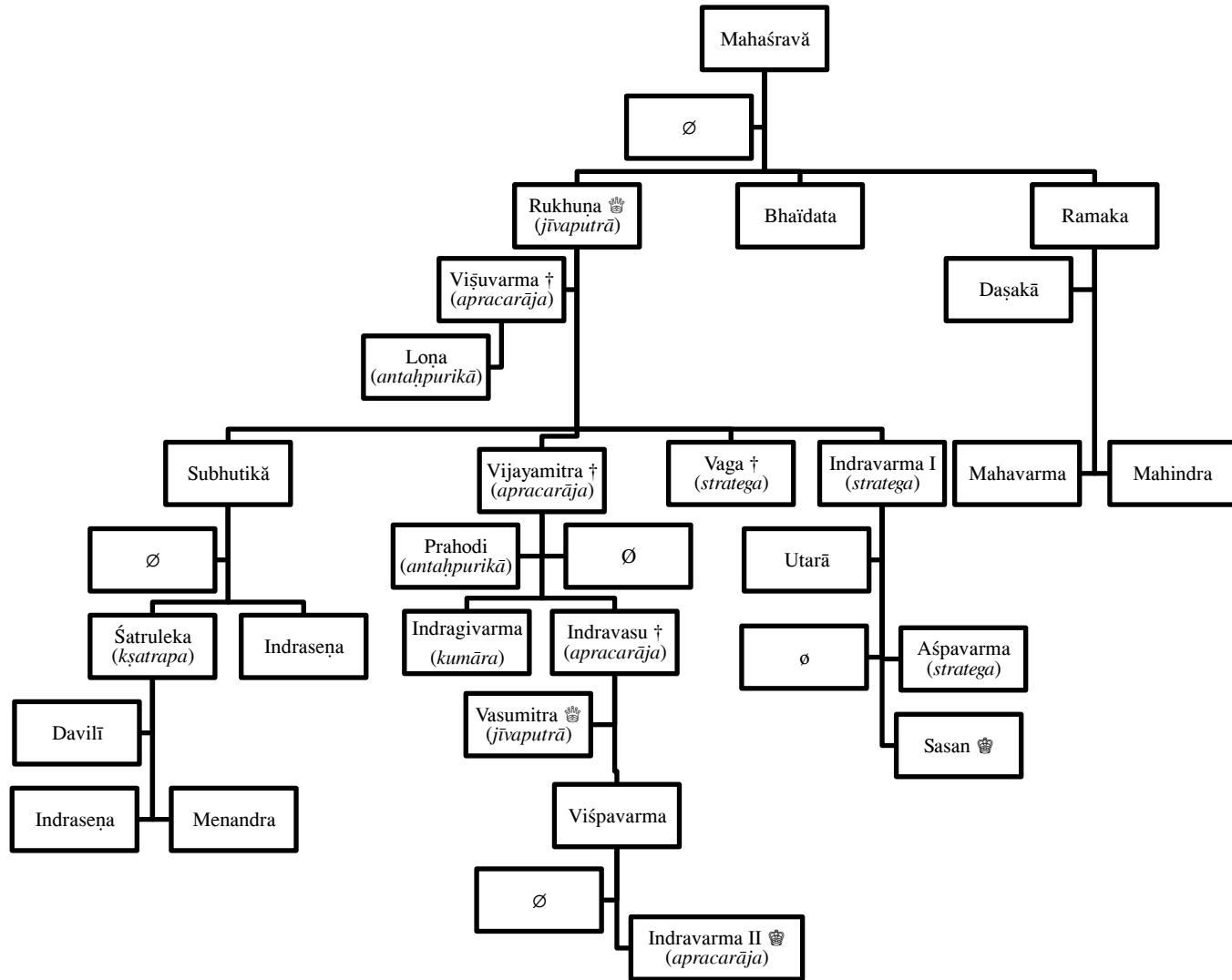


Fig. 6. 8 The Apraca Dynasty post 50 CE.

To summarise the Apraca dynasty as we see it. The earliest known ruler is Viṣṇuvarma, who first appears in inscriptions as prince, and later as a king and husband to Rukhuṇa at the very end of the 1st century BCE. He was succeeded in 2/1 BCE by Vijayamitra, who was either his son or his brother. This ruler reigned for around three decades until c. 32 CE. In the early part of his reign, he likely did not have a son, for which reasons the General Vaga and then Indravarma I were regarded as successors, indicated by Rukhuṇa's title 'one who has a living son'. Ultimately he was succeeded by his own progeny, Indravasu, at which point the line of succession shifted. Note that Indravarma I never appears to have become Apracarāja. At this point the succession becomes unclear. In Falk's model, we would have to account for three rulers (i.e, Indravasu, Viyamitra II, and Indravarma II) between c. 32–51 CE. This is not impossible but could only be the case if three rulers had passed away within a mere two decades. More likely is that Indravasu governed until c. 50 CE, whereafter he was succeeded by his grandson Indravarma II as ruler, who was followed by Sasan, towards the end of Indo-Parthian governance.

THE APRACARĀJAS AND BUDDHISM

The Reliquary Inscription of Loṇa (No. 7) is the earliest certain piece of evidence for Buddhist practice among the Apracarājas. However, on the basis of Loṇa's husband being named Prince Viṣṇuvarman's ('Defender of Viṣṇu'), it seems the Apracarājas were not specifically Buddhist but rather affiliated with a Vaiṣṇava cult, as observed above. Indeed, Viṣṇuvarma is not attested as the donor of any Buddhist activity. It seems, therefore, that the first to become patrons of Buddhism among this dynasty were their wives. This phenomenon was seemingly not

uncommon, as several Buddhist narratives specifically present such women of the inner court (*antaḥpurikā*) as either persuading their husbands to fund the establishment of stupas or as going against the wishes of non-Buddhist rulers to ensure the upkeep of stupas.¹ This means that, discursively, Buddhists were intent on persuading politically connected women of the merits of Buddhism.

The ‘conversion’ of the Apracarājas thus began with Vijayamitra’s rededication of relics in 3/4 CE initially dedicated during the reign of Menander in the mid 2nd century BCE, whereafter the practice of dedicating and rededicating relics in stupas and pillars (*śilāstambha*) became the defining practice of this group. Among all other ruling parties in the Northwest, the Apracarājas were by far the most prolific. Dedications arise in each generation and it is indeed to them that Buddhism’s institutional success is to be attributed. Moreover, establishing relics of the Buddha appears to be intimately connected to the political project of these rulers, for which there are two major patterns to be observed.

First, their donative enactments were conducted at a time when Indo-Scythian hegemony was waning and Indo-Parthian power rising. Notably, their joint governance with the Parthians arises in one inscription, the Reliquary inscription of Ariaśrava, indicating that such ritual forums were instrumental in performing such political alliances. However, it was in such a context that the rulers also achieved greater autonomy and their making relic dedications at previously unestablished locations (*apratīḥavitapurvaṃmi pradeśaṃmi*) throughout their domain is best understood in this light. Four such new sites are mentioned: the capital Trama, as well as Aṭhayi, Kuti, and Śpadia. Although not explicated in the inscriptions, the effort to construct stupas in new locations in their name could well be construed as a politically

¹ See Chapter Fifteen: Stupa Destruction and Relic Theft.

significant act of expansion and demarcation and a means to define the range of their geographical power. Second, donations were enacted at moments of political change within the dynasty. For instance, Indravarma I and his wife Utara together made several relic dedications that appear to have coincided broadly with the former's advancement within the dynastic hierarchy, from a prince, to general, and to the lord of Gandhara.

The significance of these rulers for Buddhism is confirmed by the fact General Aśpavarma arises in the second *Zadamitrāvadāna* of the British Library Collection of Kharoṣṭhī manuscripts:

[185.] And also a second avadāna of Zadamitra. [186.] Thus it was heard. Zadamitra. This should be done thus. [187–8.] The rainy-season residence was entered. Everyone was invited by Aśpavarma along with his commander¹ to take a comfortable seat.² 'When a disagreement with a worthy man was taken up, he said....' Three...I do not take...[191.] The venerable ...Zadamitra ...[192.] said to (*his) personal attendant...[193.] the welfare of the worthy man. [194.] Then

¹ Lenz proposes that Zadamitra is the *stratega* and that Aśpavarma could have been promoted to the level of *apracarāja*. Lenz, *Gandhāran Avadānas*, 87–88.

² There are stereotyped 'sitting formulas' found throughout Buddhist sources. For example in the *Yaśomitrāvadāna*:

atha bhagavān bhikṣugaṇaparivṛto bhikṣusaṃghapuraskṛto yena siṃhasya senāpater niveśanaṃ tenopasaṃkrāntaḥ. upasaṃkramya purastād bhikṣusaṃghasya prajñapta evāsane niṣaṇṇaḥ. atha yaśomatī dārikā sukhopaniṣaṇṇaṃ buddhapramukhaṃ bhikṣusaṃghaṃ viditvā śatarasenāhāreṇa svahastaṃ saṃtarpya. Avś 1. 8.

Then the Fortunate One approached the home of General Siṃha surrounded and attended by the community of monks. Having arrived he sat before the community of monks on the seat that had been prepared. When Yaśomatī the girl knew that the community of monks with the Buddha at its head were comfortably seated she satiated them with the foods of a hundred flavours with her own hand.

it was given. Zadamitra said...[195.] of the worthy man...[196–7.]...in that place. Expansion. [198.]...Then Aśpavarma...[199–200.]...no security for me. Then...[201.] Aśpavarma said...[202.] And the venerable one....the rain-retreat lodging...Aśpavarma...the worthy man....The complete expansion should be according to the model.¹

Here the two Apraca figures, Zadamitra and Aśpavarma, appear to have been involved in the construction of a monastic residence for the rainy season. It is common in textual sources for such figures to attend monastic complexes during the rainy season and in particular at the quadrimestral (*cāturmāsya*), introduction to monsoon (*varṣopanāyika*) festival that coincides with the full-moon day of the month Āṣāḍha.² Archaeologically also, the establishment of monastic complexes (*saṃghārāma*) and monasteries (*vihāra*) is highly attested in the domain of the Apracarājas of the early Common Era.³ Although not specified in

¹ 185. ○ *zadamitrasa cevo · bidige avadano* [186.] *evo ṣ[u]yadi · zadimitro karyam=(*)[do]* /// *(*ti va)*[187.] *ṣavaṣo · uvagado · aśpavarmāno sastra[d]///(*egeno)* [188.] *sarva suhasaneno nimatrīdo · yada sapuruṣasa* [189.] *vado ghi[-]nido · vacadi · [te]n. ? ?* /// *(*āṇa)*[190.] *[da]ro avadhādo tri na ghaha-nami · [va] ? ? ? ?* /// [191.] *[a]vi do · [ya] ? haḍo · so bhado · za[damitro] ? ?* /// [192.] + + + *[u]vaṭhayagasa matredi* /// [193.] *hi [hi]do sapuruṣasa yava d. th. ? ? ?* /// [194.] *ro yavi dīto zadamitro ma[tredi]* /// [195.] *da sapuruṣasa ma + + +* /// [196.] *deṣi vaṣu pi śaṣi yavi [gado]* /// [197.] *tatro pradeśami · vistar. + ? +* /// [198.] /// *ti · yavi āśpava[r]ma + + +* /// /// *mitro* /// [199.] + *di ? kic. + + +* /// [200.] *abhayo me na hi yavi + +* /// [201.] *[a]śpavarmo vacadi* /// [202.] *śano so co bhadato vaṣagro kara ?* [203.] ? *[a]śpavarmo sap[u]ru[ṣ]o ga ? .o* /// [204.] *[sa]r[vo vi]stare yaṣayupamano siya(*di) ? ? ? ?* ///

Av^{L1} 185–204. Translated in Lenz, *Gandhāran Avadānas*, 85.

² See Chapter Eleven: Upoṣadha. For a note on the quadrimestral festival in Brahmanical and Buddhist sources, see Georg Bühler, ‘Pillar Edicts of Aśoka’, *Epigraphia Indica* 2 (1894): 261ff.

³ See Chapter Twelve: Monasteries.

the above *Zadamitrāvadāna*, the practice of establishing such structures at ‘a previously unestablished location’, uniquely said to produce Brahma-merit (*brāhmaṇya*) in textual sources of this period,¹ is particularly attached to the donative activities of Apraca figures, which may well speak to the present context. However, any conclusions regarding this text must remain preliminary due to the uncertainties in this fragment.

Rather fundamentally, this *Avadāna*, in connection with other epigraphic and numismatic evidence, should be viewed as a distinct example of Buddhist propaganda, as evidence for a shift in the influence of the Buddhist institutions in the Northwest, which sought to narrate contemporary political figures as part of the history of Buddhism. This is not the form of imperial propaganda encountered elsewhere but a highly localised form substantiating in turn a localised history.

¹ See Chapter Fourteen: Eschatology and Brahma-Merit.

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE ODIRĀJAS

Exiled to the mountains by King Virūḍhaka, son of Prasenajit, one of four Śākyan descendants of the Ikṣvāku lineage found himself next to a *nāga*-lake in a foreign country. Wearied from travel, he spots a tree and decides to repose in its shade. While sleeping, an *nāga*-girl recognises him for a Śākya and, transforming herself into human form, caresses him to alleviate his fatigue. Grateful for her care, he falls in love and propositions her. She denies his request on grounds of her being an *nāga*. Not dissuaded, the Śākyan changes her into a human permanently through the power of his merit. They wed with the blessings of the *nāga*-king, who suggests to him that he depose the ruler of a nearby kingdom and assume rulership. In order to usurp the throne, he gives the Śākyan a sword hidden in a precious box, a gift for the king, and a stratagem in order that he may gain an audience and the chance to kill him. He does precisely this and subdues the entire kingdom with the *nāga*-king's sword.

The Śākyan and the *nāga*-girl bear a son and heir, whom they name Uttarasena. At the time of the latter's reign, the Buddha travels along the Northern Road and, having subdued the *nāga* Apalāla, visits with Uttarasena's mother in the palace at Dhānyapura, the capital of Uḍḍiyāna. Recognising

Uttarasena as his kin, he requests that the lady pass on a message to her son, informing him he should follow after the Buddha to Kuśinagara, where he is to enter *parinirvāṇa*, and claim a portion of the relics.

Later learning of the message, Uttarasena travels to Kuśinagara with all haste. But the Buddha had already entered *parinirvāṇa* and his relics had been apportioned among eight other rulers. He requests a share but the rulers refuse, rejecting him on the basis he comes from the border regions. Thereupon the gods inform the rulers of the Buddha's wish and they are compelled to gift Uttarasena his promised portion. Returning the relics to Uḍḍiyāna on a white elephant, upon arriving the elephant dies, turns to stone, and Uttarasena establishes the relics in a stupa.

This narrative recounting the founding of the kingdom of Uḍḍiyāna, today's Swat, Pakistan, is a composite and paraphrasis of a text which once may theoretically have existed under the name **Uttarasenāvadāna*. The existence of this narrative cycle is today attested by a single longer witness, upon which the above is primarily based, that is recorded in the travelogue of Xuanzang 玄奘 in the 7th century CE.¹ Fragmentary references are also found in the narrative cycle that centres on the Buddha's journey along the Northern Route from Mathura to Uḍḍiyāna, found in Mūlasarvāstivāda literature.² In particular, one section of the *Vinaya* retains an awareness of Uttarasena's 'conversion', stating that

¹ T 2087. 884a19–25. For a recent translation and discussion of this and associated passages, see Max Deeg, 'Secular Buddhist Lineages: The Śākyas and Their Royal Descendants in Local Buddhist Legitimation Strategies', *Religions of South Asia*, 2011, 5(1/2): 189–207 (esp. pp. 194–197).

² This story is known from several Mūlasarvāstivādin and other works, MSV 1. 1–2; T 125. 661c23–24, T 128. 839c5, T 1448. 41c6; Aś-av 2. For a detailed discussion, see Lamotte, 'Vajrapani in India [I]', 22ff.

when [the Buddha] reached Dhānyapura (‘town of rice’), where there was a [king called] Senarāja whom he converted’¹ This narrative is also situated by material evidence from as early as the 1st century BCE. The conversion of the *nāga* Apalāla, which, in the narrative, precedes that of the Uttarasena, is memorialised by a carving of the Buddha’s footprint on a rock, near Tirat, whose Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions reads, ‘the feet of the Buddha Śākyamuni: *bodhasa Śakamuṇisa padaṇi*;² and Uttarasena transporting the relics is also potentially retained in a single relief from the stupa at Saidu Sharif, Swat, dated to the c. 1st century CE, which depicts a figure atop an elephant.³ The purpose of the tale is two-fold: on the one hand, it is designed to establish a forceful relationship between this region of the Northwest and the Buddha, placing it firmly in the institutional embrace of the Buddhist institution; on the other, it seeks to provide legitimacy to the region’s rulers of the early Common Era, the Oḍirājas (‘Kings of Uḍḍiyāna’), as Śākyan inheritors of the Ikṣvāku lineage.

Although the narrative places these origins at the time of the Buddha, the Oḍirājas can only demonstrably be said to have governed in the 1st century CE on the basis of three inscriptions recording their dedications of the Buddha’s relics. The earliest is from the Oḍirāja Ajidasena (No. 34), who established relics in a great stupa at a previously unestablished location in a region east of the town Tira:

¹ *dhānyapuram anuprāptaḥ. dhānyapure senarājaḥ paramasatyēṣu pratiṣṭhāpitaḥ.* MSV 1. 2. On the basis of the Chinese and Tibetan parallels, Giuseppe Tucci suggested this passage read: *dhānya-pure uttarasenasya rājño māta satyēṣu pratiṣṭhāpita.* He situates Dhānyapura in present day town of Dangram, Swat, Giuseppe Tucci, ‘Preliminary Report on an Archaeological Survey in Swāt’, *East and West* 9 (1958): 327fn24.

² CKI 36.

³ Fragment S 241, Faccenna, *Il fregio figurato dello stūpa principale nell’area sacra buddhista di Saidu Sharif I (Swat, Pakistan)*, pp. 227–29, Tav. 20; Faccenna, ‘At the Origin of Gandharan Art’, p. 336.

[5.]...*dhadue pratiṭhaveli apratiṭhavitaprubami paḍhaviṭpradeśami Tirae mahathuba*[6.]*mi dhakṣiṇami bhagami*. The second is from Prince Ayadatta (No. 35), who also established relics at Tira, this time in a relic stupa: [2.] *dhodo thubo pradīṭhaveli bhagavado Śakamuṇisa dhadue i[śa] Tiraye atari ṇagarami*. Finally, the Oḍirājā Seṇavarma (No. 36) also re-established a relic and made enlargements to a stupa, named Ekaūḍa, which had been destroyed by lightning: [2.] *iśa Ekakuḍami vijuvapati tae dahiasa thuvasa vipariṇame kiḍe se me*. The inscription also mentions the first Kuṣāṇa ruler Kujula Kadphises and his son Sadaṣkaṇa, which enable Seṇavarma to be placed in the last quarter of the 1st century CE (Fig. 7.2).¹ However, nothing is known of the rulers before or after this period; they did not issue coins and therefore had no access to a mint, nor did they garner sufficient power to issue jointly with any Indo-Scythian, Indo-Parthian or Kuṣāṇa suzerain under whom they governed.

It is for the reason of their sudden appearance that Salomon and others have argued the rulers constructed their Buddhist ancestral identity in such terms to cloak their (as he sees it) Scythian heritage.² No doubt this narrative is to be construed as a form of propaganda, developed by the Oḍirājas in conjunction with Buddhist monastic institutions, and most likely the Sarvāstivādins.³ Indeed, the Oḍirājas are also, as was the case with the Apracarājas, to be credited with fostering the circumstances in Swat under which Buddhism prospered, as it is from the early Common Era in this region also that a vast number of stupas and monasteries emerge. That their Buddhist identity is constructed is therefore not to be contested and should be attributed to the widespread reification of Buddhist ideology and practice as a

¹ See Chapter Eight: Early Kuṣāṇa Period.

² Salomon, *The Buddhist Literature of Ancient Gandhāra: An Introduction with Selected Translations*, 30–31.

³ See Chapter Nine: Sarvāstivādins in the Northwest.

political tool that had already occurred throughout the North and Northwest. However, we find here repeated also the same ethno-linguistic arguments that were forwarded in the case of the Apracarājas under which their identity is understood through the lens of the empires under whom they governed and thence in terms of a process of ‘Indianisation’. In similar fashion also it is possible to forward evidence to the contrary.

IDENTIFYING THE OḌIRĀJAS

The existence of a kingdom called Uḍḍiyāna is known only to sources after the c. 3rd century BCE.¹ H. W. Bailey argues, for instance, that the Oḍrān mentioned by Kātyāyana (c. 3rd century BCE) refers to this locale, as does the Urdi of the later writer Patañjali (2nd century BCE).² However, the toponym occurs far more regularly in sources after the turn of the Common Era: Oḍrān is also named in the *Mahābhārata* among a list of peoples in the Indic Northwest and beyond, including the Chinese, Huns, Scythians, and Oḍrāns, who are said to dwell in the mountain regions,³ the same group are also likely mentioned in the *Apadāna* under the name Oḍḍaka,⁴ and in the Buddhist work of astronomy, the *Śārdūlakarnāvadāna*, they arise in the *vṛddhi* form Audaka (‘peoples of Odi’), where they are astrologically related to the constellation *viśākha*.⁵ Most often the term is found today in Chinese

¹ Tucci, ‘Preliminary Report on an Archaeological Survey in Swāt’, 288.

² H. W. Bailey, ‘A Kharoṣṭhī Inscription of Seṇavarma, King of Oḍi’, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1980, 25.

³ cīnān hūṇāñ śakān oḍrān parvatāntaravāsinaḥ. Mbh 2. 47. 19

⁴ Ap 359.

⁵ Śk-av 67.4.

translations from the 4th century CE under various transcriptions,¹ such as *uo-d'ian-nâ* 烏仗那.² However, in the Aśokan rock edicts from nearby Shāhbāzgarhī and Mānsehrā, although naming a number of distinct polities in the Northwest, such as Kamboja and Gandhara, Uḍḍiyāna is not mentioned and perhaps is implied only in the phrase ‘those other western borders’: *ye va pi aparanta*.³

It is only from the 1st century CE, however, that epigraphic remains attest to the existence of this kingdom. The three inscriptions associated with the Oḍirājas, all of which derive from Swat, are dated to the years 4 Ajidaseṇa, 5 Varmaseṇa and 14 Seṇavarma. As Salomon points out, there is some question as to whether the dates belong to regnal years of individual kings or continuous years of the dynasty⁴ and on the basis of such meagre information no firm solution can be arrived at. If they relate the years of a continuous era, then the reigns of the first two rulers are remarkably short: Ajidaseṇa would have ruled for four years of the era that he likely inaugurated and Varmaseṇa would have had a rather short reign of no more than nine years. This is not impossible and perhaps in view of the other dating systems, which are ubiquitously dynastic, one may not expect the Oḍirājas to diverge dramatically in this respect.

Thus, in a fashion akin to Apracarāja Vijayamitra who initiated an era in political response to the decline of the Indo-Scythian Empire, I would similarly argue that the Oḍirājas did just the same and the inauguration of their dynastic era was an attempt at political distinction and the affirmation of a local identity in the face of outside forces.

¹ See A. Charles Muller, ed., *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, 1995, www.buddhism-dict.net, s.v. 烏仗那.

² Bailey, ‘A Kharoṣṭhī Inscription of Seṇavarma, King of Oḍi’, 25.

³ CKI 5, 14, 19.

⁴ Salomon, ‘Three Kharoṣṭhī Reliquary Inscriptions in the Institute of Silk Road Studies’, 47–48.

Consequently, this demands we conclude that the Oḍirājas experienced a rapid succession of rulers. One possible reason for this occurring is that conflict with the Kuṣāṇas led to the deaths of two rulers, before Seṇavarma eventually capitulated. The dedications of the Oḍirājas are similar to those of the Apracarājas, insofar as the rulers each made their own relic-establishment at moments of political accession and Ajidaseṇa employs the donative formula to established relics at a previously unestablished location¹. It is evident therefore that Buddhism was a central form of their political media and that they engaged in these establishments at the transition of power from the Indo-Parthians to the Kuṣāṇas.

The precise geography and sites of the Oḍirāja domain is undetermined. Only the Gold Scroll of Ajidaseṇa and Silver Scroll of Ayadatta have provenance, the former is merely recorded as being from Swat, whereas the latter is said to come from Mata, Upper Swat. These two inscriptions also mention a city by the name of Tira, which could well correspond to modern day Tirat, where a carving of the Buddha's footprint was uncovered, indicating this site of Apalāla's conversion was of particular import to the Oḍirājas. The site of Seṇavarma's Ekaūḍa stupa, however, is unknown. In an unconfirmed report, this latter inscription is said to have come from the Toka Dara stupa at Najigram, which lies on the eastern side of the Swat River² and Salomon accepted this attribution on the basis that it is 'consistent with the hypothesis that the Oḍirājas ruled in lower Swat.'³

¹ See Chapter Fourteen: Eschatology and Brahma-Merit.

² On this site, see Domenico Faccenna and Piero Spagnesi, *Buddhist Architecture in the Swat Valley, Pakistan: Stupas, Viharas, a Dwelling Unit* (Istituto Italiano Per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 2015), 331ff.

³ Salomon, 'Dynastic and Institutional Connections in the Pre- and Early Kuṣāṇa Period: New Manuscript and Epigraphic Evidence', 276.

THE POLITICAL IDENTITY OF THE OḌIRĀJAS

An inspection of titles and epithets in Oḍirāja inscriptions reveals much as to the manner in which the rulers identified themselves, as well as to the layers of administration within their system of governance.

Gold Scroll Inscription of Ajidasena (No. 34)

[1] *rajasa Vijidasenasa kuṭadhipatisa p(*u)tre Ajidasena
Oḍiraja{sa} ṇavhapati...*

Of the son of the king Vijidasena, overlord of the fortress,
Ajidasena, the Oḍirāja and protector of the people...

In respect to the latter of Vijidasena's two titles, 'overlord of the fortress' (*kuṭadhipati*), H. W. Bailey first recognised that the first member of the compound, *kuṭa-* ('fortress'), is equivalent to a host of other variant terms (BHS. *koṭa*, Pkt. *kuṭṭa*, *kuṭa*; P. *kūṭa*, *kuḍḍa*)¹ in both ancient and modern Indo-Aryan and Dravidian languages, whose precise derivation is not to be traced to Sanskrit but more likely to Iranian linguistic influence in the Indic Northwest.² Thence the title spread throughout the Indic sphere and further epigraphic instantiations of synonymous titles (e.g., *koṭṭapāla*) attest to the title's wide usage in governmental organisation.³

¹ See R. L. Turner, *A Comparative Dictionary of the Indo-Aryan Languages* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 181–82. s.v. *kōṭṭa*, *kōṭṭapāla*.

² He proposes a base in Ir. *kap* ('enclose') [cf. Ir. **kauš* in Manfred Mayrhofer, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindoarischen. Band I* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universität Verlag, 1992), 404. s.v. *kośa*; *koṣṭha*] > *kauta* ('enclosed') > OIA. *kōṭa* ('enclosure'). H. W. Bailey, 'Kharoṣṭhī Kuṭadhipati and Ṇavhapati', in *Ratna-Chandrikā: Panorama of Oriental Studies. Shir R. C. Agrawala Festschrift*, ed. Devendral Handa and Ashvini Agrawal (New Delhi: Harman Publishing House, 1989), 65–66.

³ Sircar, *Indian Epigraphical Glossary*, 160–61.

Fig 7.1. *Koṭṭarāja*

The ‘ruler of a fortress’ is encountered many times in Buddhist literature; however, it seems that there was some uncertainty as to the precise purport of the term. In the Pali suttas, *kuḍḍarāja* occurs as part of a standard formula wherein the title is situated within the overarching system of Buddhist political philosophy: ‘The rulers of fortresses are all vassals to the wheel-turning ruler and the wheel-turning ruler is declared as foremost among them.’¹ The sense that the ‘ruler of a fortress’ is subordinate to the wheel-turning ruler, coupled with uncertainties in etymology, apparently gave rise to the variant reading *khuddakarāja*- (‘minor ruler’) in the Pali manuscript tradition.² Identical issues appear in the *Mahāsudassanasutta*, wherein Kusinārā is described as a ‘wattle-and-daub town’, i.e., a ‘minor fortress town’ (*kuḍḍanagaraka*) [cf. *khuddakanagaraka*], contrasted with the ‘great cities’ (*mahānagara*) of Campā, Rājagaha, Sāvatti, etc. For this reason, Ānanda implores the Buddha not to enter *parinibbāna* there, but the Buddha assures him of his choice, for formerly Kusinārā was the site of the capital (*rājadhāni*) Kusāvati of the wheel-turning ruler Mahāsudassana, a prosperous city extending 12 *yojanas* west to east and 7 north to south, and replete with seven ramparts (*pākāra*), four gateways and seven towering pillars, etc., variously made of precious substances.³ The same morphological

¹ *ye keci kuḍḍarājāno sabbe te rañño cakkavattissa anuyantā bhavanti rājā tesam cakkavatti aggam akkhāyati*. E.g., AN 3. 365.

² On this etymology, see Margaret Cone, *A Dictionary of Pāli* (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 2001), 705. s.v. *kuḍḍarāja(n)*. Alternatively the term has been related to *kuṭṭa*- (‘wattle and daub wall’), *kuṭṭarāja* producing, apparently, the sense of a ‘wattle and daub prince’; see Rhys-Davids and Stede, *The Pali Text Society’s Pali-English Dictionary*, 219. s.v. *kuṭṭa*. Similarly, *Jātaka* manuscripts have both *kuḍḍarāja* and *kuṭṭarāja*; the latter can only have the sense of ‘ruler of a fortress’; see, e.g., Ja 5. 106.

³ I.e., gold (*sovaṇṇa*), silver (*rūpin*), beryl (*veḷuriya*), crystal (*phalika*), ruby (*lohitaṅka*) and coral (*musāragalla*). DN 2. 169–70.

confusions do not occur in the Sanskrit manuscript tradition, wherein only *koṭṭarāja* ('ruler of a fortress')¹ occurs. As with the aforesaid, the title arises primarily as a regional subordinate of the wheel-turning ruler. Thus, in the narrative cycle of Mahāsudarśana, the wheel-turning ruler has a retinue of 84,000 rulers of fortresses² who succumbed to his military prowess and became satellite (*prātisīma*) states to the imperial centre at Kuśāvati.³ It also occurs in a commonly encountered simile of the Buddha in which he is said to be 'like a ruler of the fort surrounded by towns-folk [and] like a wheel-turning ruler surrounded by groups of councillors'.⁴

Whilst having no direct parallel in Indic literature, *kuṭadhipati* is perhaps to be related to the close synonym *koṭṭarāja* ('ruler of a fortress'), which occurs primarily in Buddhist sources. These passages indicate that the position was construed in terms of the imperial structure of a wheel-turning ruler. If this discursive context has bearing on Swat in the early Common Era, it would seem that, as king and overlord of the fortress, Vijidaseṇa was a minor ruler. Whether the limitations of his power should be related to the overarching imperial government of the Indo-Scythian rulers under whom he governed cannot be determined—neither he nor any other Oḍirāja adopted a title, as the Apracarājas did, indicative of their belonging to such a system. That Ajidaseṇa goes on to adopt two entirely different titles, Oḍirāja ('King of Uḍḍiyāna') and

¹ See Franklin Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 194. s.v. *koṭṭarāja*.

² MPS 34. 40–151; Msu-av 7.19, H. Matsumura, *The Mahāsudarśanāvadāna and Mahāsudarśanasūtra*, Bibliotheca Indo-Buddhica 47 (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1988). See also the future wheel-turning ruler Śāṅkha, Divy 3. 61.

³ See e.g., MSV 1.

⁴ *paurajanaparivṛtaḥ koṭṭarāja iva mantrigaṇaparivṛtaś cakravartīva*. E.g., Av-ś 1. 107.

navhapati ('protector of the people')¹, may well suggest that within a generation a transformation had occurred to how the Oḍirājas were able (or sought to) articulate their governance in terms of a regional identity. In using the title Oḍirāja, Ajidasena aims to reify the status of Uḍḍiyāna as a definable polity governed by a dedicated ruler under whom its people are protected.

The Gold Scroll of Seṇavarma (No. 36) affirms this political identity also. He too names himself Oḍirāja and protector of the people and mentions that he, as with the Apracarājas, has a minster (*anamkaya*, Gk. ἀναγκαστός), advising him. His titles, however, are contrasted starkly in this inscription with the relatively elevated titles awarded to the beneficiaries of the relic dedication, the Kuṣāṇas Kujula Kadphises, named Great King, Supreme King Among Kings, and the latter's son, Sadaṣkana, named Son of Gods: [8.]...*Maharajaratirayakuyulakataph[śp]aputro Sadaṣkaṇo devaputra*. Juxtaposed here with the titles of the Oḍirājas, those of the Kuṣāṇas hence represent some form of hierarchy—the relation of a suzerain to a local ruler. Whilst the subservience of the Oḍirājas to the Kuṣāṇas was likely manifest in political and military terms, this did not prevent them from making their own claims to familial and spiritual hierarchy, which was undoubtedly transferred into political power within their own sphere of rule in Uḍḍiyāna.

Seṇavarma further states that he and his ancestors were 'born to the Ikṣvāku lineage' (*I(*ṣma)horayakulasabhavo*), Ikṣvāku being the name of the mythic wheel-turning ruler. This affirmation is rather interesting and has been the subject of an article written by Richard Salomon and Stefan Baums, who demonstrated that G. *iṣmaho* is

¹ In Khotanese, *navha* denotes the 'head of the family'; it is a cognate with Iranian *nāfa* and OIA. *nābhi*, literally meaning 'navel' but used in the extended sense of 'kinsmen', 'family' and 'people'. Bailey, 'Kharoṣṭhī Kuṭadhipati and Navhapati', 66.

equivalent to the Skt. *ikṣvāku* and P. *okkāku*. Due to the fact the term *iṣmaho* had been found to only occur thrice, and was unique to the Seṇavarma Inscription, the exact meaning remained unclear and was long-held to be of non-Indic etymology; however, the discovery of a fourth occurrence in a fragmentary Kharoṣṭhī manuscript (c. 2nd century CE) of the *Bahubuddhasūtra* confirmed its Indic origins. This is to be found within a passage detailing the prediction (*vyākaraṇa*) of Śākyamuni's awakening:

[An] incalculable world-age from now, as the Śākya man-lion in the Iṣmaho lineage, you will cross over...gods and humans.¹

According to Buddhist tradition, the Śākyas, the ruling group to whom the historical Buddha Śākyamuni ('Sage of the Śākyas') belonged, are descendants of the wheel-turning ruler Ikṣvāku. The ramification for the present context is that the Oḍirājas, as inheritors of the Ikṣvāku lineage, claim to be direct blood descendants of the Buddha and to his line of ruling ancestors.²

¹ +++(*ka)//[p](*e) ido asakhae iṣmahovatsaṇaraśakasiho tariśasi devamaṇu(śa)?//+. Richard Salomon and Stefan Baums, 'Sanskrit Ikṣvāku, Pali Okkāka, and Gāndhārī Iṣmaho', *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 29 (2007): 202–3.

² Claims of belonging to the Ikṣvāku lineage are not unheard of within the Indic tradition. The appropriately named Ikṣvāku dynasty, which ruled over the eastern Deccan and Kṛṣṇā Valley in the 3rd century CE, made this claim. Moreover, both the Mauryans and Sri Lankan rulers are portrayed as such. Salomon and Baums, 'Sanskrit Ikṣvāku, Pali Okkāka, and Gāndhārī Iṣmaho', 217. The assertion of a kinship relation to the Buddha is a phenomenon found in several other instances also. It is a title used by a monk in Luoyang, China, named Vimokṣaprajña (516–543 CE), who is said to have come from the ruling family in Uḍḍiyāna, i.e., the descendants of the Oḍirājas, see Richard Cohen, 'Kinsmen of the Sun: Śākyabhikṣus and the Institutionalization of the Bodhisattva Ideal', *History of Religions* 40, no. 1 (2000): 11. It is notable that

The rulers, therefore, identified themselves with respect to their own political structure and not with regard for any imperial administration. No satraps are mentioned in their inscriptions and only a single district governor (Fig. 7.2) named Ṣaḍi, son of Sacaka, is named in Seṇavarma's dedication. Presumably, this distinct governor served under the Kuṣāṇas.

THE OḌIRĀJA DYNASTY

Scholars have made several attempts at determining the dynastic history and lineage of the Oḍirājas on the basis of the three inscriptions associated with them.¹ Many issues still remain, however, and below I present a slightly altered version.

the Ikṣvāku lineage is traced back further, as it were, to the sun god Sūrya and thus these claimants belong also to the 'line of the sun' (*sūryavaṃsa*). The depiction of the sun's personification Sūrya is often represented with a full halo or sat on a quadranga, the depiction of Sūrya riding a chariot drawn by four horses is a motif common to the art of the Northwest and is a feature used to indicate Śākyauni and lineage. Anna Maria Quagliotti, 'A Gandharan Bodhisattva with Sūrya on the Headdress', in *South Asian Archaeology 1997. Proceedings to the Fourteenth International Conference of the European Association of South Asian Archaeologists, Held in the Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente, Palazzo Brancaccio, Rome, 7-14 July 1997. Vol III* (Rome: Istituto Italiano Per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 2000), 1125–54; Doris Meth Srinivasan, 'Depiction of the Buddha's Genealogy in a Kuṣāṇa Relief and Related Sculpture', *Indian Museum Bulletin* 21 (1986): 62–65; Doris Meth Srinivasan, 'Genealogy of the Buddha in Early Indian Art', in *Eastern Approaches: Essays on Asian Art and Archaeology*, ed. T. S. Maxwell (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992), 38–44. The iconographical usage of Sūrya has also recently been associated with the royal ideology of the Turki Śāhis of the 7th–8th century. Anna Filigenzi, 'Sūrya, the Solar Kingship and the Turki Śāhis: New Acquisitions on the Cultural History of Swāt', *East and West* 53, no. 1–3 (2006): 195–203.

¹ Genealogies on the basis of the Gold Scroll of Seṇavarma alone can be found at Gérard Fussman, 'Documents épigraphiques kouchans III : l'inscription de

The latest Oḍirāja known is Seṇavarma. In his inscription (No. 36), dated 14 Oḍi (late 1st century CE), he states he had succeeded (*adikram*) his brother, the Oḍirāja Varmaseṇa: [1.] *me bhrat[e] [va][r]maseṇasa ṇama adikramami*. This, we later learn, was likely because his brother Varmaseṇa was now deceased: [9.] *bhrada adhvātido Varmaseṇo Oḍiraya*. This former ruler also appears in another inscription, the Silver Scroll of Ayadatta (No. 35), which is dated nine years prior to 5 Oḍirāja. Seṇavarma thus assumed the throne sometime in between these dates. He also names their father, the Oḍirāja Ajidaseṇa, who is deceased, and his still living mother Uzaṃda, who is entitled one who has a living son (Fig. 6.4), referring, in this case presumably, to Seṇavarma: [8.] *Uzaṃda jivaputra tiṭhata pida ca adhvādida Ayidaseṇo Oḍiraya*. The Gold Scroll of Ajidaseṇa (No. 34) demonstrates that this ruler also made a dedication, wherein he is named as the son of the ruler and lord of a fortress Vijidaseṇa: [1.] *rajasa Vijidaseṇasa kuṭadhipatisa p<*u>tre*. Seṇavarma also mentions his paternal great-grandfather Diaśaseṇa and several other figures. But beyond these four rulers, the Oḍirāja lineage both before and after becomes more complicated.

In both Prince Ayadatta and Oḍirāja Senavarma's inscriptions, three other princes (*kumāra*) are mentioned: Ayadata, Ayaseṇa, and Ajidavarma. Most likely they are descendants of Varmaseṇa or Seṇavarma,¹ however, their relationship to a ruler is not certain and depends on how we envisage naming patterns within this family. Falk

Senavarma, roi d'Oḍi, une nouvelle lecture', *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 71 (1982): 46; Salomon, 'Senavarma', 289. Another subsequently included the Gold Scroll of Ajidaseṇa, Gérard Fussman, 'Documents épigraphiques kouchans (IV): Ajitasena, père de Senavarma', *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 75 (1986): 7. And one attempt includes all three, Oskar von Hinüber, *Beiträge zur Erklärung der Senavarma-Inschrift* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2003), 30–33.

¹ Both possibilities are considered by Fussman, 'Documents épigraphiques kouchans (IV): Ajitasena, père de Senavarma', 7; Salomon, 'Senavarma', 289.

observed that families in the Northwest of this period typically ‘continue the back part of the compound through the generations’, i.e., Vijitaseṇa > Ajidaseṇa > Varmaseṇa.¹ But the situation is a little more complicated, as both Varmaseṇa and Seṇavarma took the latter and former components of their father’s name, simply reversed. Since Varmaseṇa was the earlier of the two rulers, then perhaps it is specifically first-born heirs who took the latter component of their father’s name. Following this logic, Prince Ayaseṇa would be the son of Varmaseṇa and Ajidavarma the son of Seṇavarma.

This scenario appears to be confirmed in Ayadatta’s inscription, as Ayaseṇa is placed between Varmaseṇa and Ajidaseṇa in a string of individuals to be worshipped, implying they belonged to one lineage: [3.] *rayo Rvarmas(*e)ṇo puyita Ayaseṇo kumaro puyi(*ta) + ? [lo]yo [Ayida](*se)ṇo rayo*. Notably, Seṇavarma is not named, which is unusual but may perhaps be explained by the lost 11 *akṣaras* in the third line of the inscription. Equally notable is that Seṇavarma does not mention Ayadatta in his inscription, who may have been seen as a challenger to the throne. Ayadatta therefore may be best understood as the brother of Varmaseṇa and Seṇavarma. Both Ayaseṇa and Ajidavarma arise in Seṇavarma’s inscription, however, there is some confusion over the assignment of titles to the figures, for it appears that Ajidavarma is described as living (*tiṣṭhant*), whilst Ayaseṇa is named only as a prince: [9.] *tiṭhata ca Ajidavarm[o] Ayaseṇo ca kumara puyita*. This could indicate that Ayaseṇa and Varmaseṇa are both in fact dead, that Ajidavarma, son of Seṇavarma, is still living, and that these latter two are therefore the succeeding line.

Seṇavarma also names a string of other rulers who preceded his grandfather Vijidaseṇa. He first refers to an inscription from a former

¹ Falk, ‘Annexe: names and Weights Inscribed on Some Vessels from the Silver Hoard’, 309. There is no evidence to corroborate this claim.

establishment of the Ekaüḍa stupa that was made by the Oḍirāja Vasuseṇa, son of Utaraseṇa, and member of the Ikṣvāku family: [2.] *tatra pratiṭhava[3.]ṇia lihitia Utaraseṇaputre Vasuseṇe Oḍiraya Iṣmahokulade se imo Ekaiüḍo pratiṭhaveti.* The identity of these two figures is entirely uncertain. The lack of a specified familial link led Fussman and Salomon to suggest that the Seṇavarma and Vasuseṇa were family rivals and that Utaraseṇa and Vasuseṇa were, therefore, approximate contemporaries of Seṇavarma or his immediate ancestors.¹ Oskar von Hinüber, however, proposed that the rulers governed before Seṇavarma's great grandfather Diśaseṇa on the basis of the following:

Gold Scroll of Seṇavarma (No. 36)

[9] *Bhadaseṇa raya upadae yava pravidamaha me Diśaseṇo*
*Oḍiraya sarva I{*ṣma}horayakulasabhavo [10] puyita*

All whose origins are in the Ikṣvāku lineage, including king Bhadaṣeṇa up to my paternal great-grandfather, Oḍirāja Diśaseṇa, are worshipped.

¹ Fussman, 'Documents épigraphiques kouchans III: l'inscription de Senavarma, roi d'Oḍi, une nouvelle lecture', 18; Salomon, 'Senavarma', 287.

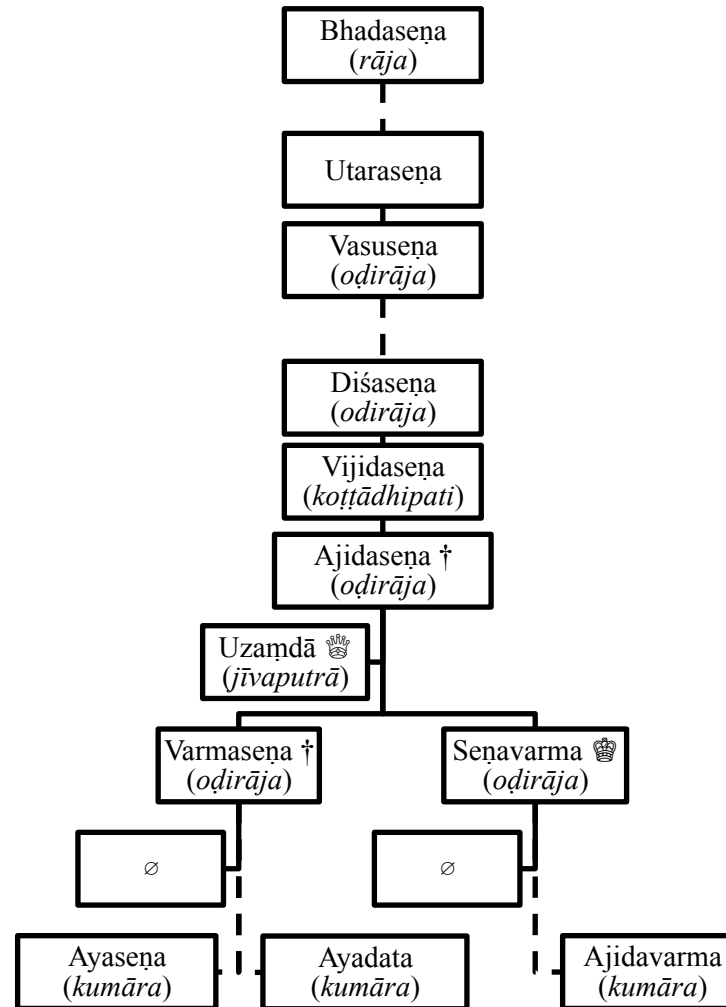


Fig. 7.2 The Oḍirāja Dynasty

Fig 7.3: Relic dedications of the Oḍirājas

No.	Title	Provenance	Named Location	Date	Donation	Individuals		Ref.
						Name	Title	
1	Quoted Inscription of Vasuseṇa	—	—	—	relics (śarīra)	Vasuseṇa Utaraseṇa	oḍirāja —	CKI 249
2	Gold Scroll of Ajidasēṇa	Mata, Swat, Pakistan	Tirā	4 [Oḍi], 10 Āṣāḍha	mahāstūpa relics (śarīra)	Ajidasēṇa Vijidasēṇa	oḍirāja, navhapati rāja, koṭṭādhpati	CKI 334
3	Silver Scroll of Ayadata	Swat, Pakistan	Tirā	5 [Oḍi],	stupa, relics (dhātu)	Ayadata Varmasēṇa Ayasēṇa Ajidasēṇa	kumāra oḍirāja, navhapati kumāra rāja	CKI 401
4	Gold Scroll of Seṇavarma	—	—	14 [Oḍi],	Ekaūḍastupa, relics (śarīra)	Seṇavarma Priamitra Varmasēṇa Ajidasēṇa Uzaṃḍa Kujula Kadphises Sadaṣkaṇa Suhasoma Ajidavarma	īśvara, oḍirāja, navhapati, kadama stūpapāla oḍirāja oḍirāja jīvaputra mahārāja, rājātirāja devaputra anaṃkaya kumāra	CKI 249

Ayasena	<i>kumāra</i>
Bhaḍasena	<i>rāja</i>
Diśasena	<i>oḍirāja</i>
Samghamitra	<i>anaṃkaya</i>
Lalia	<i>meridarkh</i>
Ṣaḍia	—
Sacaka	<i>tirata</i>
Baṭasara	<i>gṛhapati</i>
Prea	—
Valia	—
Makaḍaka	—

On the basis that Seṇavarma's worship is directed to all those of the Ikṣvāku lineage, from (*upādāya*) Bhaḍaseṇa up to (*yāvat*) Diśaseṇa, he argues that the former is likely the earliest remembered member of the Oḍirāja line. Utaraseṇa and Vasuseṇa's reigns, therefore, fall in between, which would produce eight generations of rulers, stretching back, he estimates, 160 years from Seṇavarma's reign in the late 1st century CE, on the basis that all rulers governed for 20 years each.¹ By this reckoning, Bhaḍaseṇa would have governed in the early 1st century BCE. One final possibility is that Utaraseṇa and Vasuseṇa were still earlier rulers.

EARLY OḌIRĀJAS AND BUDDHISM

On the basis of the evidence we have, up to four relic establishments can be associated with the Oḍirājas. Three, namely those of Ajidaseṇa, Ayadatta, and Seṇavarma, can be dated with fair certainty to the mid to late 1st century CE. The fourth Quoted Inscription of Vasuseṇa (No. 8) in the Gold Scroll of Seṇavarma, recording the initial establishment of the Ekaūḍa stupa, presents more difficulties. Hearsay reports point to the Tokar Dara stupa. But this structure does not fit the chronology demanded by details this inscription provides regarding the dynastic history of the Oḍirājas, for the stupa should predate the last four generations of the known Oḍirājas, from Diaśaseṇa up to Seṇavarma, or go further back still to before the reign of Bhaḍaseṇa. Logically, therefore, it should date either to the late 1st century BCE or earlier. However, none of the numerous stupa establishments and monastic

¹ Hinüber, *Beiträge zur Erklärung der Senavarma-Inschrift*, 31–33.

complexes excavated thus far appears to predate the mid 1st century CE.¹ There is only one exception, Butkara I in Mingora.

Archaeological excavations undertaken by the Italian Institute for African and the East (IsIAO) have shown that Mingora was the major urban centre of Swat, and likely the ancient capital.² The toponym Mingora appears to be of fair antiquity and is mentioned in several sources.³ Cunningham notes that in a list of geographical names, compiled by a certain Isidor of Kharax, Min arises as a city of Sakastene, on which basis he argues *min-* is as Scythian topographical prefix.⁴ This would indicate that Mingora in Swat was given its name due to the

¹ Faccenna and Spagnesi, *Buddhist Architecture in the Swat Valley, Pakistan: Stupas, Viharas, a Dwelling Unit*, 457.

² For reports of excavations, see Domenico Faccenna, 'Mingora: Site of Butkara I', in *Reports on the Campaigns 1956-1958 in Swat (Pakistan). Reports and Memoirs*, vol. I (Rome: Istituto Italiano Per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1962), 3-172; Domenico Faccenna, *Italian Archaeological Mission, (IsMEO) Pakistan, Swāt, 1956-1981: Documentary Exhibition* (Rome: Istituto Italiano Per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1982); Domenico Faccenna, *Il Fregio Figurato Dello Stūpa Principale Nell'Area Sacra Buddhista Di Saidu Sharif I (Swat, Pakistan)* (Rome: Istituto Italiano Per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 2001).

³ Both the *Periplus* of the c. 1st century CE and Ptolemy of the 2nd century CE mention two cities bearing the name Minnagara or Binagara respectively. The first is described as a 'metropolis' in connection with the Western Kṣatrapas, and as lying inland from Barbarikon and being under the governance of the Indo-Parthians; and the second as lying between the coastal port of Barygaza and Ujjayanī. See Peri 38. 13. 3, 41. 14. 8. For a translation see Lionel Casson, trans., *The Periplus Maris Erythraei. Text with Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 47; 189. On the sites mentioned by Ptolemy, see McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described by Ptolemy*, 152. Another Minagara is placed in the Gangetic Gulf on the eastern coast of India, McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described by Ptolemy*, 70-72.

⁴ Alexander Cunningham, *Ancient Geography of India I: The Buddhist Period Including the Campaigns of Alexander, and the Travels of Hwen-Thsang* (London: Trubner & Co., 1871), 288-94. Cf. Tarn, *The Greeks*, 235.

governance of the Indo-Scythians in the 1st century BCE. Arrian states that at the time of Alexander, in the polity of the Aśvaka¹ tribal confederacy, there was well fortified capital city called Massaga², which was situated east of the Guraeus River (Panjkora-Swat)³ and is today identified with Mingora.⁴ The issue, however, is that no inscriptions record the name of this site. If the Oḍirājas date back to a much earlier period of this region's history, as their inscriptions imply, then it is to this Aśvaka collective they should likely be traced and Mingora would perhaps have been their capital.

Evidence of Buddhism from this site dates back perhaps as early as the late Mauryan or early Indo-Greek periods. In particular, the main Butkara I stupa has been dated to these times. This stupa bears witness to several reconstructive phases during the late Mauryan, Indo-Greek, Indo-Scythian, and Kuṣāṇa Periods.⁵ Göbl has dated the earliest of these

¹ See Chapter Six: Proposed Antecedents of the Apracarājas for further discussion.

² Strabo reads Mesoga, Geo^s 15. 27.

³ Anab^A 4. 427–433.

⁴ Tucci, 'The Tombs of the Asvakayana-Assakenoi', 27. Cf. Cunningham, *Four Reports Made During the Years 1862-63-64-65*, Plate LV; Vincent A. Smith, *From the Sixth Century B.C to the Mohammedan Conquest Including the Invasion of Alexander the Great* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1987), 47.

⁵ The phases of construction are given in five stages. [1] In the c. 3rd century BCE (Gts. 1) a large dome of black schist was built atop a rising of a mound 'enclosed with a further cylindrical construction, built of broken pebbles and flakes.' In this stratum, a punch-marked coin of the late Mauryan period was found at stage Gts. 1 of the site, pointing to a *terminus post quem* of 3rd century BCE. [2.] In the 2nd century BCE (GTS. 2) a cylindrical structure replaces the mound; here a coin of Menander (c. 155–130 CE) was found, giving a date of the late 2nd century BCE. [3] In the 1st century BCE–1st century CE (Gts. 3) two circular stories are added with steps at the cardinal points. The usage of soapstone was introduced as the building material and additional decorations, such as pilasters, are made of green schist. [4] In the 2nd–3rd centuries CE increasing decorations were added, as well as an ambulatory with walls along

to the Mauryan Period on the basis of four coins from the site: a ‘punch-marked [silver]’ coin, a Taxila ‘walking elephant’ issue, and two issues depicting the ‘three-arched hill and crescent motif’ (the stacked ball and crescent motif mentioned above) and ‘taurine symbol’ on both faces.¹ The ‘punch-marked silver coin’ is widely accepted to be the earliest variety of Indic coinage, although no firm date range has been reached. Since this particular example was found in the earliest strata (F4) at the site of Butkara I, it may indicate an initial construction phase in the Mauryan period. However, there are several issues that render any conclusions rather doubtful.

Joe Cribb, for instance, notes the inherent difficulties in dealing with punch marked silver coins: the lack of a legend in addition marks on the face, although originally intended to indicate the authority, location of the mint, and time of the issue, are worn, and thus the coins are not fully understood or even identifiable as Mauryan.² Due to the punch marked silver coins at Butkara I being ‘extremely worn’, Elizabeth Errington also argues that they ‘circulated widely for a long

its perimeter, creating a corridor with green schist slabs on the walkway. The wall of the stupa was covered with successive plaster coating and stucco statues were added to the wall of the ambulatory. [5] In the 7th–8th centuries CE, simply reconstructive work was done to the stupa following its collapse (due to an earthquake). Domenico Faccenna and Giorgio Gullini, *Reports on the Campaigns 1956-1958 in Swat (Pakistan). Reports and Memoirs*, vol. I (Rome: Istituto Italiano Per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1962); Faccenna, *Italian Archaeological Mission, (IsMEO) Pakistan, Swāt, 1956-1981: Documentary Exhibition*, 36–37; Domenico Faccenna, ‘At the Origin of Gandharan Art. The Contribution of the IsIAO Italian Archaeological Mission in the Swat Valley Pakistan’, *Ancient Civilisations* 9, no. 3–4 (2003): 278ff; Falk, ‘The Introduction of Stūpa-Worship in Bajaur’, 83; David Jongeward, ‘Survey of Gandhāran Reliquaries’, in *Gandharan Buddhist Reliquaries*, by David Jongeward et al. (Seattle: Early Buddhist Manuscripts Project, 2012), 8.

¹ Göbl, *A Catalogue of Coins from Butkara I (Swāt, Pakistan)*, 11 no. 1-8, Pl. 1.

² Cribb, ‘Dating India’s Earliest Coins’, 536.

time' which 'suggests a date for the founding of the site at the end of the third century, or later'.¹ She also notes that die striking appears to have been introduced by the Indo-Greeks and that these coin issues are better related to another die-struck local issue of Agathocles (c. 190-180 BCE), which may support a date of the late 3rd century or early 2nd century BCE.² But the diminished state of a coin need not indicate its age. Göbl, for example, contrarily attributed the low quality of the coins and silver to their being 'no real money traffic' and to a 'picture of relative poverty' at this time in Swat.³ Errington's view has also been questioned more recently on other grounds by Domenico Faccenna, who follows Göbl's attribution since a date any later than the 3rd century BCE leaves 'hardly enough time for the subsequent events in the life of Gts1'.⁴ Butkara I was moreover understood by Buddhists in the early Common Era as a Dharmarājikā establishment of Aśoka.⁵

This evidence suggests that Butkara I underwent perhaps two reconstructive phases during the reign of the Oḍirājas in Swat, and, from the archaeological reports available, appears to have been the only stupa to evidence such work. Its unique feature in this regard corresponds to the account given in the Gold Scroll of Seṇavarma, insofar as it records the Ekaūḍa stupa was dug up (*ukeda*)⁶ by a certain Baṭasara and subsequently reconstructed with the sponsorship of Seṇavarma following its destruction by lightning. That both Butkara I and the Ekaūḍa stupa are currently the only stupas to predate the mid 1st century

¹ Errington, 'Numismatic Evidence for Dating Buddhist Remains', 191–92.

² Errington, 'Numismatic Evidence for Dating Buddhist Remains', 192.

³ Göbl, *A Catalogue of Coins from Butkara I (Swāt, Pakistan)*, 42.

⁴ Faccenna, 'At the Origin of Gandharan Art', 279. Cf. Spagnesi, Piero, 'Aspects of the Architecture of the Buddhist Sacred Areas in Swat', *East and West* 56, no. 1–3 (2006): 152.

⁵ See Luciano Petech, 'A Kharoṣṭhī Inscription from Butkara I (Swat)', *East and West* 16 (1966): 80–81.

⁶ Skt. *utkrta* ('dug').

CE and evidence phases of reconstruction may well be a coincidence. However, to add one further layer to the conjectural possibility of their identity, it is notable that the two share in the formal characteristic of being a central stupa surrounded by smaller stupas.¹ Seṇavarma states:

[1.]...*yada io ekaiiḍe dadhe tatra aṃṃa pi dadha* [2.] *mahia pidarapidamahaṇa mahaṃte adura gahathuva*

When the Ekaüda stupa was burned, there the other nearby great *gaha*-stupas² of [my] father and grandfather were burned.

The Tokar Dara stupa does not have any such stupas nearby.³ Thus, for architectural, chronological and epigraphic, reasons, the location of Vasuseṇa and Seṇavarma's Ekaüda could well be Butkara I, near the Oḍirāja capital, Mingora. One may expect that this site, representing the fulcrum of the region and the likely capital of Uḍḍiyāna, would be a good candidate for the location of these rulers' stupa establishments.

We must also recall that Vasuseṇa is named as the son of Utarasena and that an individual of the same name arises in the aforementioned origin story of the kingdom of Uḍḍiyāna recorded by Xuanzang. That Utaraseṇa does not belong to the time of the Buddha, as the narrative suggests, is self-evident. But this does not rule out that he served as the inspiration for the story; the possibility that he stands as the earliest known ruler to epigraphy does indeed present a somewhat tantalising possibility.

Unfortunately, there is little evidence that clarifies this important question. Local legend retained specific knowledge of an Utarasena-

¹ See the illustration in Faccenna, 'At the Origin of Gandharan Art', 285.

² See Chapter Fifteen: Types of Stupas.

³ Faccenna and Spagnesi, *Buddhist Architecture in the Swat Valley, Pakistan: Stupas, Viharas, a Dwelling Unit*, 331ff.

stupa, which was described by Xuanzang as being 60 feet in height and as standing on the eastern side of the Swat River (Skt. Śubhavastu, 蘇婆伐窣堵河)¹, 70 *li* 里 to the southwest of the capital city of Uḍḍiyāna, today named Mingora (*Mengqili* 夢揭釐).² Initially, V. de Saint-Martin identified this stupa with the Shankadar stupa at a site to the north of Mingora called Mangalawar³ and also found the elephant-shaped rock mentioned by Xuanzang, whose name is apparently retained in the valley Hatidarra (Skt. Hastidhāra) in which it lies.⁴ Giuseppe Tucci later questioned this view. He re-identified the city named by Xuanzang as Mingora, observing that Mangalawar offered very few archaeological findings, had only one major stupa and no evidence of an ancient city, indicating it was a site of minor importance in the ancient period. This led him to re-identify the location of the Uttarasena-stupa at a site lying just north of a village named Kota.⁵ Neither of the stupas suggested by Dean and Tucci as being the Uttarasena-stupa identified by Xuanzang correspond to the expected chronology, which, if the Uтарыseṇa, father of Vasuseṇa, is to be considered the same, should be dated no later than the late 1st century BCE. Indeed, archaeologists typically date them on

¹ On this identification, see Beal, *Buddhist Records. Vol. II*, 126; Cunningham, *Ancient Geography of India I: The Buddhist Period Including the Campaigns of Alexander, and the Travels of Hwen-Thsang*, 82.

² T 2087. 955b24.

³ See H. A. Deane, 'Note on Udyāna and Gandhāra', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1896, 656; M. A. Stein, *An Archaeological Tour in Upper Swāt and Adjacent Hill Tracts* (Calcutta: Government of India: General Publication Branch, 1930), 32; 47–49. For a survey and illustrations of this stupa, see Faccenna and Spagnesi, *Buddhist Architecture in the Swat Valley, Pakistan: Stupas, Viharas, a Dwelling Unit*, 143ff.

⁴ Deane, 'Note on Udyāna and Gandhāra', 660. For a photo of the elephant rock, see Stein, *An Archaeological Tour in Upper Swāt and Adjacent Hill Tracts* Fig. 24.

⁵ For a full discussion of his arguments for these re-locations, see Tucci, 'Preliminary Report on an Archaeological Survey in Swāt'.

architectural bases to the Kuṣāṇa Period of the 2nd century CE.¹ In any case, utilising the geography provided by Xuanzang to identify specific sites is rather haphazard.²

The riddle of the identities of Uтарыsena in narrative and epigraph must, therefore, remain unresolved. What the narrative does reveal is that the Oḍirājas identified themselves as the originators of this kingdom and that its history should be traced back to the Buddha, who himself served an intimate role in its development. This constructed history, no doubt, was designed for an audience in the early Common Era and represents, alongside the relic dedications of Ajidasena, Ayadatta and Senavarma, a central component of the means by which they secured power and constructed their political identity.

¹ See Heino Kottkamp, *Der Stupa als Repräsentation des buddhistischen Heilsweges: Untersuchung zur Entstehung und Entwicklung architektonischer Symbolik* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1992), 264–66; Spagnesi, Piero, ‘Aspects of the Architecture of the Buddhist Sacred Areas in Swat’, 157. One must point out that the archaeological work conducted on these stupas is quite sparse, unreliable, and very few conclusions can be deduced from the findings on the basis of these reports or subsequent studies. Evert Barger and Philip Wright and Aurel Stein also note, in similar dimensions, that the Uttarasena stupa was in a poor state when it was discovered, the locals having uncovered the foundations and used many of the bricks for construction, and recounts that a 15ft shaft had been dug from the top to the centre, in an attempt to reach the central deposit. Whether the ‘treasure seekers’ were successful or not, is not clear. Evert Barger and Philip Wright, *Excavations in Swat and Explorations in the Oxus Territories of Afghanistan*. (Calcutta: Government of India: General Publication Branch, 1941), 33; Stein, *An Archaeological Tour in Upper Swāt and Adjacent Hill Tracts*, 30–34.

² On these problems, see A. Foucher, *Notes on the Ancient Geography of Gandhara (A Commentary on a Chapter in Hiuan Tsang)*, trans. H. Hargreaves (Varanasi: Bhartiya Publishing House, 1974), 34.

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE KUṢĀNAS

Chinese annals relate that following a defeat at the hands of the Xiongnu 匈奴 in the present day region of Gansu, China, the nomadic Yuezhi 月氏 moved into Sogdiana and northern Bactria in the c. 2nd century BCE, assuming control of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom and displacing the Scythians who maintained control over southern Bactria.¹ In the 1st century BCE, they also crossed the Hindu Kush for the first time into the Paropamisadae and usurped the last Indo-Greek ruler Hermaeus (c. 90–70 BCE).² Established in these regions, this nomadic collective organised themselves into five separate groups, each headed by a governor (*yabgu*, 葉護).³ One such group, the Kuṣānas, became dominant and in the 1st century CE traversed the ‘suspended crossing’⁴ and moved into the Northwest, supplanting the remaining Indo-Scythian satrap Jihonika in Chhachh and Indo-Parthian rulers in the Punjab,

¹ See E Zürcher, ‘The Yüeh-Chih and Kaniška in Chinese Sources’, in *Papers on the Date of Kaniška: Submitted to the Conference on the Date of Kaniška, London, 20-22 April, 1960*, ed. A. L. Basham (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 367ff.

² Bopearachchi and ur Rahman, *Pre-Kushana Coins in Pakistan*, 37.

³ On the meaning of this title see, Narain, ‘The Five Yabgus and the Yüeh-Chih’, 176–77. For Chinese historical sources on the *yabgu*, see Harry Falk, ed., *Kushan Histories: Literary Sources and Selected Papers from a Symposium at Berlin, December 5 to 7, 2013* (Bremen: Hempen Verlag, 2015), 69ff.

⁴ Neelis, ‘Passages to India’, 60.

Peshawar and the Paropamisadae, as well as the Apracarājas and Oḍirājas in valleys to the north.

Unlike the fragmented political landscape characteristic of the centuries preceding them, the Kuṣāṇas are contrastingly held to have established a stable empire that lasted until the 3rd century CE and would fully integrate the regions of the North and Northwest. With that consolidation, it is argued that a hitherto unprecedented degree of economic stability and development was realised, which had broader implications for society as a whole. Naturally, the process by which the Kuṣāṇas secured and eventually lost total power was incremental, the nuances of which have been frequently outlined in scholarship and most recently detailed extensively by Michael Skinner, who identified three phases: ‘imperial initiation, imperial perpetuation, and imperial diminution’.¹ Whilst details of this history shan’t be fully reproduced here, in view of the broader goal of assessing Buddhism in the North and Northwest it is nonetheless necessary to consider some central points and attend specifically to the implications the Kuṣāṇa imperial endeavour had for Buddhist institutions, as reflected in their epigraphy and literature.

EARLY KUṢĀṆA PERIOD

...and he gave orders to make (images of) these kings: King Kujula Kadphises (his) great grandfather and King Vima Takhtu (his) grandfather and King Vima Kadphises (his) father, and himself, King Kanishka.²

¹ The scheme is introduced at Skinner, ‘Marks of Empire’, 16ff.

² Nicholas Sims-Williams, ‘Bactrian Historical Inscriptions of the Kushan Period’, *The Silk Road* 10 (2012): 77–78.

This Bactrian inscription from Rabatak lists the first four generations of Kuṣāṇa rulers in the Northwest. It was commissioned by Kaniṣka I in the sixth year of his reign (132/133 CE) to mark the achievement of his imperial domination over the North and Northwest, with an empire that now stretched as far as east as Pāṭaliputra on the Gangetic Plains, and to cement the now cultic position of his forebears, whose efforts had enabled that success.

The first of these Kuṣāṇa rulers was Kujula Kadphises (c. 60–90 CE). From coin finds he appears to have secured control over the entirety of the Northwest from the Indo-Scythians and Indo-Parthians in distinct locales. However, the process by which this occurred is not clear. Chinese sources state that the Indo-Parthians under Gondophares took control over the Paropamisadae from the Yuezhi 月氏, presumably in the fourth decade of the Common Era, and that Kujula Kadphises first invaded Kashmir and Gandhara around this time. On this basis, Joe Cribb argues that the ruler initially took regions much further to the east, including Kashmir and thereafter the satrapy of Cukhsa (Chhachh), to the northeast of Taxila, issuing overstrikes of the great satrap Jihoṇika who governed that region, in order that he could ‘outflank’ the Indo-Parthian rulers in Taxila and Peshawar.¹

If this chronology is accepted, it would challenge the view, proposed by several scholars, that the Prince (*erzuna*) Kapha mentioned in the hall donation inscription from Takht-i-Bahi of the year 103 Azes I and 26 Gondophares (55/56 CE) is in fact Kujula Kadphises.² That is unless, of course, the Indo-Parthians in Gandhara had already capitulated. Kujula Kaphises ultimately issued overstrikes of the Indo-

¹ Cribb, ‘The Early Kushan Kings: New Evidence for Chronology: Evidence from the Rabatak Inscription of Kanishka I’, 189.

² See Skinner, ‘Marks of Empire’, 51.

Parthian rulers Abdagases and Sasan's coins in these regions,¹ which presumably occurred after this date. Supposing that his issuing of coins is indicative of total control of a region, we would expect this not to have occurred whilst a prince, nor indeed during the course of an invasion.

Indeed, two relic dedications, likely made in the Orakzai region to the southwest of Peshawar, indicate that the Kuṣāṇas had yet to penetrate this far west. The first is a copper plate inscription (No. 33) of unknown provenance that is dated to 121 Azes (73/74 CE) and was dedicated by a certain Helaüta, a caravan guide (*arivagi*)². In the long list of beneficiaries, the donor stipulates donation should be for the welfare and happiness of the Satrap Tira, son of Lord (*bhaṭṭaraka*) Yodavharṇa, and two sons of the satrap, the princes (*guśura*)³ Khaṃdila and Gvaraza: [2-4.] *e puyae bhaṭṭarakasa Yodavharṇaputrassa Tirasa kṣatrapasa hidasuhadaye Khaṃdilasa Gvara*[2-5.] *zasa ca kṣatrapaputrāṇa guśuraṇa hidasuhadaye*. This Yodavharṇa is also known from another copper plate inscription, found at Rani Doab, Orakzai, which names him as satrap,⁴ on which basis we can say there was a satrapy governed by these individuals in the latter half of the 1st century CE. Their names are Iranian, and the inscription is dated to the Azes I Era, on which basis they could well be Indo-Scythians, or indeed the Indo-Parthians who were their contemporaries. However, no mention is made of these suzerains as governing, nor indeed of the Kuṣāṇas, with whom the Indo-Parthians were most likely in conflict.

¹ Bopearachchi and ur Rahman, *Pre-Kushana Coins in Pakistan*, 49; Errington and Curtis, 'Constructing the Past', 65.

² Supposedly equivalent to Skt. *arivargin*, derived from the Khotanese *arivaga* ('guide'), see Harry Falk, 'The First-Century Copper-Plates of Helagupta from Gandhāra Hailing Maitreya', *Annual Report of The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology* 17 (2014): 5–6.

³ OIA. *viśpur* ('son of a good family'), Falk, 'Copper-Plates of Helagupta', 10.

⁴ CKI 442.

It seems, therefore that Kujula Kadphises had yet to penetrate this far west by the last quarter of the 1st century CE. Indeed, epigraphic data leads one to conclude his power at this time remained in regions adjacent to the eastern fringes of Peshawar. Thus, Kujula Kadphises first arises as a great king (*mahārāja*) in a Śaivaite inscription found at Panjtar, Buner, which is dated to the year 122 [Azes I] (74/75 CE):

[1] *saṃ 1 100 20 1 1 Śravaṇasa masasa di praḍhame 1 maharayasa Guṣaṇasa raja[mi]* [2] *[Ka]suasa praca [deśo] Moike Urumujaputre karavide śivathale¹ tatra [ca] me [3] daṇami tar[u]ka 1 1 p(*u)ñakareṇeva amata śivathala rama...ma²*

Year 122, the first day 1 of the month Śravaṇa, during the reign of the Great King, the Kuṣāṇa, in the eastern region of Kasua, Moika, son of Urumuja³, has a ground for Śiva established. And there, as part of this gift, are two trees. By means of this meritorious act [...] immortal ground for Śiva...

In bearing the titles great king and Kuṣāṇa, we must understand this inscription as belonging to a period of his rule in which he was not yet suzerain in the sense of ‘supreme king among kings’ (*rājātirāja*). Indeed, he would neither give himself this title signifying total rule (Fig. 3.1) in coin nor be given it in inscriptions until much later it seems, following the same process of assimilation to local political articulations of imperialism that his Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian predecessors had done.

In the Reliquary Inscription of Priavaśa (No. 38), dated four years thereafter to 126 Azes I (78/79 CE) and during the reign of the

¹ Cf. ‘Shrine for Śiva’ in Sircar, *Indian Epigraphical Glossary*, s.v. śivasthāla.

² CKI 59.

³ Perhaps Skt. Urumuñja (‘long-reed’).

yabgu, he still bears the title of his status in respect to the greater Yuezhi 月氏 body: [A5] *yaiüasa ra[j]ami*. This correlates with his early coinage.¹ Although this reliquary of the Mahīśāsaka² monk Priavaśa has no provenance, one may conjecture it stems from the Apracarāja domain, as it stipulates that Azes I is deceased (*kālagata*)—a trait peculiar to Apracarāja date formulae—indicating an origin perhaps in the Dir or Bajaur valleys to the north of Peshawar. If accepted, this in turn would indicate Kujula Kapdphises extended the empire into these valley regions later, most likely in the second or third decade of his campaign.

This latter proposition is underpinned by the Gold Scroll of Seṇavarma (No. 36), another relic dedication enacted in this case by the Oḍirāja Seṇavarma who governed over Swat (Uḍḍiyāna) in the late 1st century CE.³ Here, Kujula Kadphises is referred to as a beneficiary with a full set of titles, namely, as the great king, supreme king among kings: [8] [*Maharajarayatirayakuyulakataph[śp]a*]. His being named as such can be correlated with his later coinage⁴ and with the process of adaptation to local political norms, as witnessed in the coinage of the Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian rulers before him (Fig. 3.1). His eventual dominion over Swat thus appears to coincide with his elevation to the status of autocrat. In the same line of the inscription, Seṇavarma also names the suzerain's son Sadaṣkana as 'son of gods' (*devaputra*). The identity of this figure is not known. The aforementioned inscription from Rabatak only names Vima Takhtu and some propose the two are the same but underwent a change of name upon assuming the throne.⁵ This, however, is mere conjecture.

¹ See Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, 680, 685, 687–88.

² See Chapter Nine: Mahīśāsakas

³ For further discussion, see Chapter Seven: The Oḍirājas.

⁴ Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, 690–93.

⁵ Falk, *Kushan Histories: Literary Sources and Selected Papers from a Symposium at Berlin, December 5 to 7, 2013*, 93–94.

Fig. 8.1: *Devaputra*

As a political epithet, ‘son of gods’ (*devaputra*) was first introduced to South Asia by the Kuṣāṇas. However, there is some to debate as to its origins. Many scholars of the 20th century assumed the title should be traced to the Chinese equivalent *tianzi* 天子, due to the Yuezhi 月氏 having originated in northwest China. But, as F. W. Thomas points out, the notion of divine sovereignty or that gods had fostered a ruler is to be found in respect to several figures across the Ancient World, such as Ptolemy VI in Egypt, the Parthians Mithridates II and III Arsaces, amongst many others, which makes the potential source unclear.¹ Indeed, more recently Falk has suggested the title was inspired by Augustus’ (27 BCE–14 CE) *L. divus filius*, on the basis that Kujula Kaphises issued copies of the Roman Emperor’s coins.² That the title was not an innovation of the Kuṣāṇas is clear, for it was not used in the earliest phases of their reign. But, in a fashion akin to the notion of a supreme king among kings (see Fig. 3.1), could it not be that *devaputra* was employed for its relevance and applicability to Indic contexts? It is known as early even as the *Ṛgveda*, where it occurs as an epithet for the goddess Nana, i.e., ‘one whose sons are gods’.³ In this regard, it is notable that the Kuṣāṇas directly drew their sovereign power, no doubt coincidentally, from this deity in the Zoroastrian pantheon, as we learn in the Rabatak Inscription.⁴ Moreover, *devaputra* is also found widely in

¹ F. W. Thomas, ‘Devaputra’, in *B. C. Law Volume Part II.*, ed. D. R. Bhandarkar et al. (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1946), 305–6.

² Falk, ‘Names and Titles’, 77–78.

³ RV 10. 62. 4

⁴ Sims-Williams, ‘Bactrian Historical Inscriptions of the Kushan Period’, 77.

early Buddhist Brāhmī inscriptions from Bharhut¹ as well as in texts as a designation given to several deities of the Buddhist pantheon.² Whatever its origins, we may presume it was also selected for its intelligibility to the Indic populace.³

One final inscription to mention this ruler is the Silver Scroll of Urasaka (No. 40), a Bactrian who made a relic dedication in the year 134 Azes (88/89 CE), at the Dharmarājikā stupa and monastic complex of the Sarvāstivādins, near Taxila. This dedication too names the ruler in the role of a beneficiary, wishing that the great king, supreme king among kings, the son of gods, the Kuṣāṇa be rewarded with good health: [3] *maharajasa rajatirajasa devaputrasa Khuṣāṇasa arogadakṣiṇae*. Whether this refers to Kujula Kadphises is not certain, for both he and his sons Sadāṣkaṇa and Vima Takto bear the title Kuṣāṇa. John Marshall argued for the former position, due to the same monograms appearing on this engraved scroll of Urasaka as well as Kujula Kadphises' coins.⁴ Indeed, this conclusion is in all likelihood the more preferable of the two, because the title Kuṣāṇa is *only* known to coins of Kujula Kadphises and his grandson Vima Kadphises' issues commemorating his grandfather.⁵ Moreover, Urasaka's concerned wish for the 'reward of health' (*ārogyadakṣiṇā*) could well be indicative of Kujula Kadphises' poor condition, an issue his younger successor was less likely to have had, and to therefore derive from the end of his incumbency.

¹ LL 774, 814.

² For a list of such texts, see Thomas, 'Devaputra', 306–10.

³ See most recently, Arcana Sharma, 'Devaputra Kushan', in *Glory of the Kushans: Recent Discoveries and Interpretations*, ed. Vidula Jayaswal (New Delhi: Aryan Books International, 2012), 223–30.

⁴ Marshall, 'The Date of Kaniška', 977–78.

⁵ Osmund Bopearachchi, 'Chronology of the Early Kushans: New Evidence', in *Glory of the Kushans: Recent Discoveries and Interpretations*, ed. Vidula Jayaswal (New Delhi: Aryan Books International, 2012), 129.

During the reign of the latter's son, Vima Takto (c. 90–115 CE), the Kuṣāṇa Empire was now firmly established in the Northwest, from regions in eastern Afghanistan in the west to Punjab in the east. Now it began to expand southwards to locales in the North. Several of Vima Takto's *Soter Megas*¹ coins are the first of the Kuṣāṇas to have been found in Mathura², a matter corroborated also by several inscriptions to name him as ruler there.

The earliest potential, though uncertain, piece of evidence for the ruler governing at Mathura is found on an inscribed slab recording the donation of a certain Gotamī, dated most likely to 270 [Yavana] (95/96 CE):

[1] /// varṣa /// [2] mahārājasya 200 70 bh[ū] /// [3] gotamiye
balānā[sya] [4] tu[mā] /// [5] baladhikāsya bh[ū] /// [6]
bhāryaye dānaṃ sa[r]va /// [7] [dha] pūcaye sap[itu]-
m[aduna] ///³

...year...270 of the Great King...the gift of Gotamī, the...of
Balāna [and] wife of Bhū[...], the army commander; for the
worship of all...along with [her] father and mother.

¹ The identity of the so entitled *Soter Megas* and Vima Takto was proposed by Joe Cribb, following the publication of the Rabatak Inscription, which identified the latter as the son of Kujula Kadphises, and whose reign coincided with the issuing of *Soter Megas* coins, Cribb, 'The Early Kushan Kings: New Evidence for Chronology: Evidence from the Rabatak Inscription of Kanishka I', 181ff. However, this remains a matter of debate. Some regard the title to be associated with an unnamed Kuṣāṇa ruler, who rivaled Vima Takto; see the discussion in Osmund Bopearachchi, 'Some Observations on the Chronology of the Early Kushans', in *Des Indo-Grecs aux Sassanides: donnes pour l'histoire et la géographie historique*, ed. Rika Gyselen (Bures-sur-Yvette: Group pour l'Étude de la Civilisation du Moyen-Orient, 2007), 42–46.

² Cribb, 'The Early Kushan Kings: New Evidence for Chronology: Evidence from the Rabatak Inscription of Kanishka I', 189.

³ § 123.

Due to the highly fragmentary nature of the inscription, its true value remains unclear and historians often exclude it from their analyses. However, there are certain tenets that demand its inclusion. First, it is dated to the year 270, of what, due to the high numeral, can only be the Indo-Greek Era, in what we must understand as being the reign of a great king (*mahārāja*), whose name and other potential titles are missing.¹ Since this ruler is unlikely to be any of the satraps² known from coinage to have governed immediately before the Kuṣāṇas, Vima Takto remains the only possible figure. If it is to be accepted that the date formula indeed refers to this ruler, it would place him in Mathura likely within the first decade after his succession. That this inscription stems from an early phase of his military conquest is perhaps indicated by the title of the donor Gotamī's husband, who is named 'army commander' (*balādhika*), most likely a variation of *balādhikṛta*.³

Mathura had yet to come fully under the sway of an empire extending from the Northwest. As we saw above, it is not clear to what extent the Indo-Greeks governed here, and immediately before the Kuṣāṇas it was Indo-Scythian and other satraps who ruled over the region, apparently apart from an imperial administration. It is therefore of interest to observe how the Kuṣāṇas now affirmed their own system within the region as suzerains. The cementation of Vima Takto's rule

¹ In the Kharoṣṭhī legend of his coins, Vima Takto bears the titles *mahārāja rājātirāja devaputra*. A Kharoṣṭhī seal, reedited by Harry Falk indicates he also used a more limited set also: [1] *maharaja devaputra* [2] *(*Ve)ma-Takhtuasa*. CKI 1073. For discussion of these materials, see Harry Falk, 'The Name of Vema Takhtu', in *Exegisti monumenta: Festschrift in Honour of Nicholas Sims-Williams*, ed. Werner Sundermann, Almut Hintze, and François de Blois (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009), 106ff.

² See Chapter Four: Satraps in the North and Northwest.

³ Heinrich Lüders takes it in this sense, due to comparable titles found in other inscriptions from across the Indic sphere, Lüders, *Mathurā Inscriptions*, 163. See also Sircar, *Indian Epigraphical Glossary*, s.v. *balādhikṛta*.

finds exemplification in an inscribed statue of the ruler himself from Maṭ, Mathura:

[1] *mahārājo rājātirājo devaputro* [2] *kuṣāṇaputr[o ṣā]hi*
[vema] ta[kṣu]masya [3] *bakanapatina hu[maṣpal.na]*
devakula[m] kāritā [4] *ārāmo puṣkarīṇi udapān[am] ca*
*sa[bh]ā dārakoṭhako*¹

Humiṣpala, the official in charge of the temples of the great king, supreme king among kings, son of the Kuṣāṇas, the Ṣāhi, Vima Takto, had a temple for the gods constructed, in addition to a garden, lotus pond, well, hall and gateway.

This inscription attests to the Kuṣāṇa practice of establishing dynastic cultic centres for themselves, which they did elsewhere at two other temple sites, one in Rabatak, where rulers' images were positioned alongside those of other deities such as Nana, from whom the rulers obtained their right to sovereignty,² and another at nearby Surkh Kotal, in Afghanistan. Whilst we know nothing of how such temple sites were received in Indic society—Rosenfield suggests that only Kuṣāṇa officials would pay homage there³—it seems that Vima Takto had the innovation of materially manifesting their status as sons of gods (*devaputra*), which we must assume was a strategy of imperialism.⁴ That

¹ § 98.

² See the Rabatak Inscription in Sims-Williams, 'Bactrian Historical Inscriptions of the Kushan Period', 77. On the iconographical elements of Nana's depictions in coins and their relation to political discourse, see Harry Falk, ed., 'Kushan Rule Granted by Nana: The Background of a Heavenly Legitimation', in *Kushan Histories: Literary Sources and Selected Papers from a Symposium at Berlin, December 5 to 7, 2013* (Bremen: Hemen Verlag, 2015), 265–99.

³ Rosenfield, *Dynastic Arts of the Kushans*, 51.

⁴ Rosenfield, *Dynastic Arts of the Kushans*, 154ff. For some counter arguments for the dynastic cult at Maṭ, see Giovanni Verardi, 'The Kuṣāṇa Emperors as

such endeavours were indeed central to their administration is confirmed by their having a dedicated ‘official in charge of temples’ (*bakanapati*)¹—a title found in connection with other such constructions commissioned by subsequent rulers.²

The final inscription to mention Vima Takto is a highly fragmentary document from Dasht-e Nāwūr, southern Afghanistan, written in the Bactrian, Kharoṣṭhī and an as yet undeciphered script, and dated to 279 [Yoṇa] (104/105 CE).³ Unlike the former, Skinner points out that this inscription was not found near an urban centre but on the borders of Arachosia and the Paropamisadae, and saw in it a parallel to the multilingual Aśokan Edicts as demarcating the border of the newly extended regions of the Kuṣāṇa Empire.⁴

It is not known when Vima Takto was succeeded by his son Vima Kapdhises (c. 110–126 CE), as there is only one inscription to mention this latter ruler. This is an inscribed stone, potentially established by the ruler himself at Khalatse, Ladakh, on the eastern

Cakravartins. *Dynastic Art and Cults in India and Central Asia: History of a Theory, Clarifications and Refutations*, *East and West* 33, no. 1–4 (1983): 236ff.

¹ Following H. W. Bailey’s proposition, where *bakana-* is derived from the Ir. *baga* (‘god’) to produce the adjectival form *bagana* (‘connected with the god’) and Ir. *-pati* in the sense of ‘official in charge of’, see H. W. Bailey, ‘Kusanica’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 14, no. 3 (1955): 29. This sense has been adopted by Harry Falk, who translates ‘supervisor of religious affairs’, Falk, *Kushan Histories: Literary Sources and Selected Papers from a Symposium at Berlin, December 5 to 7, 2013*, 107.

² Another temple was constructed by a *bakanapati* for a Brahmin community in Mathura in 28 [Kaniṣka I] (154/155 CE), during the reign of Vima Takto. For the most recent edition, see Falk, *Kushan Histories: Literary Sources and Selected Papers from a Symposium at Berlin, December 5 to 7, 2013*, 120–121.

³ For an edition of the Kharoṣṭhī, see CKI 231. On the archaeological context of the inscription, see Gérard Fussman, ‘Documents épigraphiques kouchans’, *Bulletin de l’École française d’Extrême-Orient* 61 (1974): 1–66.

⁴ Skinner, ‘Marks of Empire’, 59–60.

fringes of the Kuṣāṇa Empire. It is written in the Kharoṣṭhī script and dated to 287 [Yoṇa] (112/113 CE).

[1] *deva[pu]ta maharajasa Uvimo Kavthisasa* [2] *sa 2 100 20*
*20 20 20 4 1 1 1*¹

Year 287 of the son of gods, the great king, Vima Kadphises

Contrary to a lack of epigraphic evidence, Vima Kadphises' coins are widespread, found across the North and Northwest as well as farther to the east along the Gangetic Plains. He is famed for being the first ruler to issue a gold coin after the Roman *denarius* (Skt. *dīnāra*) weight standard² and these coins are also unique for being referenced in several Buddhist texts.³ Akin to Kujula Kadphises, for whom he had commemorative issues struck, these coins depict Śaiva iconography but they further attribute certain Śaiva titles to him, in addition to the usual epithets, including 'lord of the entire world, great lord': *maharajasa rajadirajasa sarvaloga-iśvaraḥ mahiśvaraḥ*.⁴ As several scholars have pointed out, the new, high quality minting system signifies a shift in the imperial project of the Kuṣāṇas under Vima Kadphises, a triumphant moment in the cementation of their rule.⁵

A total of 23 dated inscriptions arise in the period of early Kuṣāṇa rule, 50–125 CE (Fig. 8.2). Of these 14 are Buddhist, three imperial, one Brahmanical, one Jain, one cultic, and two of unknown

¹ CKI 62.

² Bopearachchi, 'Some Observations on the Chronology of the Early Kushans', 42–44.

³ Avś 2. 84, Abhidh-k-vy 4. 14d. Discussed above in Chapter Thirteen: Avadāna Literature.

⁴ Frantz Grenet, 'Zoroastrianism among the Kushans', in *Kushan Histories: Literary Sources and Selected Papers from a Symposium at Berlin, December 5 to 7, 2013*, ed. Harry Falk (Bremen: Hempen Verlag, 2015), 207.

⁵ Most notably, Rosenfield, *Dynastic Arts of the Kushans*, 67.

affiliation. The majority of these were donated by individuals, who do not bear a specific title and therefore their status in society cannot be determined. Of those who do, we find mercantile individuals as well as local political figures, such as satraps (*kṣatrapa*) and lords (*bhāṭṭara*). As we have seen, very few of these are to be related explicitly to the Kuṣāṇa suzerains themselves.

A maximum of four from the Northwest mention Kujula Kadphises, of which three are Buddhist and one Brahmanical. The Buddhist donations are all relic establishments, and the Kuṣāṇa ruler appears not in the active role of a donor but rather in the passive role of a beneficiary, which nonetheless implies his participation. But this is a drastic change in the degree of political engagement Buddhist institutions had hitherto received. No longer, was it exclusively local satraps and rulers that served as ritual donors and participants but rather a suzerain. Buddhist institutions had thus by the mid 1st century CE—most notably due to the support of the Apracarājas and Oḍirājas—become sufficient a force in society to warrant notice from the invading Kuṣāṇa and he drew on this power in an effort, it seems, to install his own. His strategy was not only focused on Buddhism, however, as shown by Moika's donation of a 'ground for Śiva' or 'Śiva temple' (*śivasthāla*). This document provides strong evidence for the existence of a Śiva cult in Gandhara in the late 1st century CE, which was moreover powerful enough to garner the interest of the new Kuṣāṇa incumbent.

From the sources available, the same conclusions cannot be drawn for Vima Takto and Vima Kadphises. Their donations, rather, are evidence of a type of discourse and practice unrelated to the religious institutions of the society they governed. Most notable among these of course is the establishment of dynastic cult sites centred on themselves, which is an innovation to the landscape of the North and Northwest, whose ramifications for wider social practices are not abundantly clear.

Fig. 8.2 Dated Inscriptions of the Early Kuṣāṇa Period

No.	Title	Provenance	Date	Donation	Ruling Group	Individuals		Ref.
						Name	Title	
1	Hall Donation of Balasami Boyaṇa	Takht-i-Bahi, Pakistan	103 Azes, 26 Gondophares (55/56 CE)	<i>parivāra</i>	Indo-Parthian Kuṣāṇa	Balasami Boyaṇa Kapha	— <i>erzuṇa</i>	CKI 54
2	Bridge Donation of Unknown Donor	Saddo, Malakand, Pakistan	104 [Azes] (56/57 CE)	<i>setu</i>	—	—	—	CKI 38
3	Lotus Pond of Thaïdora	Kaldarra Nadi, Pakistan	113 [Azes] (65/66 CE)	<i>puṣkariṇī</i>	—	Thaïdora Datia	<i>putra</i> —	CKI 57
4	Reliquary Inscription of Unknown Donor from Rani Dab	Rani Doab, Orazkai, Pakistan	—	—	—	— Buddhatmitra Yodavharṇa	<i>putra</i> — <i>kṣatrapa</i>	CKI 442
5	Reliquary Inscription of Helaüta	—	121 Azes (73/74 CE)	<i>dhātu</i>	—	Helaüta et al Tira Todavharṇa Khamdila Gvaraza	<i>ariavagi</i> <i>kṣatrapa</i> <i>putra</i> <i>bhaṭṭakara</i> <i>guśura</i> <i>kṣatrapaputra</i>	CKI 564
6	Inscription of Moika	Salimpur, Pakistan	122 [Azes] (74/75 CE)	<i>śivathāla</i>	Kuṣāṇa	Moika Urumja —	<i>putra</i> — <i>mahārāja,</i> <i>kuṣāṇa</i>	CKI 59
7	Reliquary Inscription of Priavaśa	—	126 Azes (78/79 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	Kuṣāṇa	Priavaśa —	<i>śramaṇa</i> <i>yabgu</i> <i>mahārāja</i>	CKI 331

8	Gold Scroll of Seṅavarma	Swat, Pakistan(?)	10 Oḍi	<i>dhātu</i>	Oḍirāja Kuṣāṇa	Seṅavarma et al Sadaṣkaṇa Kujula Kapdhises	<i>oḍirāja</i> <i>iśvara</i> <i>ṇahvpati</i> <i>īkṣvaku</i> <i>devaputra</i> <i>putra</i> <i>mahārāja</i> <i>rājātirāja</i>	CKI 249
9	Reliquary Inscription of Candrabhi	Kalawan, Taxila, Pakistan	134 Azes (86/87 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	—	Caṃbrabhi	<i>upāsikā</i>	CKI 172
10	Reliquary Inscription of Urasaka	Dharmarājikā, Taxila, Pakistan	136 Azes (88/89 CE)	<i>dhātu</i>	Kuṣāṇa	Urasaka	<i>bāhlika</i>	CKI 60
11	Reliquary Inscription of Unknown Donor	—	139 Azes (91/92 CE)	<i>dhātu</i>	—	—	—	CKI 563
12	Donation of Gotamī	Giridharpur Ṭiḷā, Mathurā	270 [Yavana]	<i>dāna</i>	—	Gotamī Valāna	<i>bhāryā</i> <i>balādhika</i>	§ 123
13	Reliquary Inscription of Dhamavaadaṭa	—	147 [Azes] (99/100 CE)	<i>dānamukha</i>	—	Dhamavaadaṭa	<i>bhaṭṭara</i>	CKI 536
14	Box Inscription of Śaribha	Swat, Pakistan	276 [Yoṇa] (100/101 CE)	—	—	Śaribha	—	CKI 538
15	Trilingual Inscription of Vima Takhtu	Dasht-e-Nawur, Ghazni, Afghanistan	279 [Yoṇa] (104/105 CE)	—	Kuṣāṇa	Vima Takto	<i>rājātirāja</i> , <i>dharmika</i>	CKI 236
16	Reliquary Inscription of Sataṣaka	—	156 [Azes] (108/109 CE)	<i>stupa</i>	—	Sataṣaka Hirma	<i>putra</i> —	CKI 328
17	Reliquary Inscription of Khadadata	—	157 [Azes] (109/110 CE)	<i>stupa</i>	—	Khadata Utara	<i>duhitṛ</i>	CKI 225

18	Reliquary Inscription of Utaraya	—	157 [Azes] (109/110 CE)	<i>dhātu</i>	—	Utara	<i>bhikṣuṇī</i>	CKI 226
19	Donation of Humṣpala	Maṭ, Mathura, India	—	<i>devakula, puṣkarinī, ārāma, sabhā, udapāna dāra- koṣṭhaka</i>	Kuṣāṇa	Humaṣapala Vima Takto	<i>bakanapati mahārāja rājātirāja, devaputra, kuṣāṇa, śāhi</i>	§ 98
20	Edict of Vima Kadphises	Khalatse, Jammu and Kashmir, India	287 [Yoṇa] (112/113 CE)	—	Kuṣāṇa	Vima Kadphises	<i>mahārāja, devaputra</i>	CKI 62
21	Hārītī Statue of Unknown Donor	Spinvari, Pakistan	291 [Yoṇa] (115/116 CE)	—	—	—	—	CKI 133
22	Well Donation of Travaśakura Corporation	—	168 [Azes] (120/121 CE)	<i>dānamukha</i>	—	Travaśakura	<i>sahaya</i>	CKI 61
23	Mahavīra of Okhārikā	Mathura, India	299 [Yavana] (124/125 CE)	<i>pratimā, devakula</i>	—	Okārikā Ukatikā Okhā et al	— — <i>śrāvikā</i>	Qu 20

KANIṢKA I

In the year one there was proclaimed to India, to the cities of the kṣatriyas (or kṣatrapas?), the capture(?) of [...]adra(g)o and ōzopo and Sāketa and Kauśāmbī and Pāṭaliputra, as far as Śrī-Campā; whatever (cities) he and the other generals(?) reached(?), (he) submitted (them) to (his) will, and he submitted all India to (his) will....And the king, the son of the gods, was pacifying(?) all India from the year one to the year six(?).¹

Building on the foundations of his father Vima Kadphises' reign in the North and Northwest, Kaniṣka I (c. 127–151 CE) informs us in his Rabatak Inscription that the first six years of his reign were occupied with military expansion into the more easterly regions of the Gangetic Plains, as far as Kauśāmbī² and Pāṭaliputra. However, the strategies by which the ruler secured power in these new domains and throughout the empire as whole were not exclusively martial, as his record implies. On the one hand, he continued already established forms of imperial practice, installing a statue of himself in the dynastic cult complex at Maṭ, Mathura, whereupon he is named 'great king, supreme king among kings, son of the gods: *mahārājā rājātirājā devaputro kāniṣko*.³ But he would also innovate upon these strategies of power. Notably, he

¹ Sims-Williams, 'Bactrian Historical Inscriptions of the Kushan Period', 77.

² A clay seal inscribed in Brāhmī characters was also found here, attesting to the presence of Kuṣāṇa administration under Kaniṣka I: [1.] *maharajasya rājāti*[2.]*rajāsya devaputrasya* [3.] *kan[i]ṣkasya prayo*[4.]*ga*. Sh 3.

³ § 97.

renamed the city of Puruṣapura (Peshawar) as Kaniṣkanagara,¹ and he also drew on two entirely new forms of media: [1] the inauguration of his own era in 126/127 CE to mark his rule² and [2] the ensured application of that era in the donative inscriptions of Buddhist and other religious institutions in the Indic North.

The conjunctive working of these two diktats is revealed in particular by a chronological and geographical concordance exhibited between the dates of conquest given in the Rabatak Inscription and those of several inscribed, colossal, standing Bodhisattva statues. These inscriptions (No. 48–50) stem from the third year of Kaniṣka I's reign, constituting the earliest instantiations of his era, and were erected at key locations under conquest, including Śrāvastī, Sarnath, and Kauśāmbī, by two monastic figures, the nun Buddhāmitrā and the monk Bala, both of whom are illustriously named as 'Bearers of the Three Baskets' (*trepitākā, trepitāka*)³. One inscription of the latter individual from Sarnath, found on the parasol shaft and pedestal of a Bodhisattva, is of particular significance:

Parasol Shaft and Bodhisattva of Bala (No. 49):

[Parasol shaft] [1.] *mahārājasya Kaniṣkasya saṃ 3 he 3 di 22*
 [2.] *etaye purvaye bhikṣusya Puṣyavuddhisya saddhyevi-*
 [3.] *hārisya bhikṣusya Balasya trepitākasya* [4.] *bodhisatva*
chatrayasti ca pratiṣṭhāpito [5.] *Bārāṇasiye bhagavato*
caṃkame sahā mā[tā][6.]pitihi sahā upadhyāyacarehi
saddhyevihāri[7.]hi aṃtevāsikehi ca sahā Buddhāmitraye tre-
pitāka[8.]ye sahā kṣatrapena Vanasparena Kharapallā-

¹ Discussed further below.

² See Chapter Two: The Era of Kaniṣka I.

³ On this title, see Chapter Ten: Pundits, Pedagogues and Specialists.

[9.] *na ca sahā ca ca[tu]hi pariṣāhi sarvasatvanaṃ* [10.]
hitasukhārtthaṃ.

Year 3 of the Great King Kaniṣka, month 3 of winter, day 22:
On this previous day, a Bodhisattva, in addition to a parasol
and shaft, of the monk Puṣyavuddhi's co-resident, the monk
Bala, Bearer of the Three Baskets, was established at
Varanasi on the walkway of the Fortunate One, along with
[his] mother and father, along with [his] instructors, co-
residents, and pupils, along with Buddhamitrā, Bearer of the
Three Baskets, along with the satrap Vanaṣpara and
Kharapallāna, along with the four assemblies, for the sake of
all beings' welfare and happiness.

[Pedestal] [1.] *bhikṣusya Balasya treṣṭakasya bodhisatvo*
pratiṣṭhāpito [sahā] [2.] *mahākṣatrapena Kharapallānena*
sahā kṣatrapena Vanaṣparena

A Bodhisattva of the monk Bala, Bearer of the Three Baskets,
along with the great satrap Kharapalla, along with the satrap
Vanaṣpara

As Gregory Schopen points out, both Bala and Buddhamitrā must have
been distinguished figures in being Bearers of the Three Baskets
(implying their total command of Buddhist ideology), wealthy enough to
fund these large donations, and, as he puts it, 'friends of kings', in their
specifying the great satrap Kharapalla¹ and satrap Vanaṣpara as

¹ An individual of the same name appears to have given his name to a forest
monastery, the location of relic dedication made by a certain Utaraya (No. 42)
in the Northwest, around two decades prior (c. 120 CE): *Kharavalamahavane*
rañe. 'At the monastery in the great forest of Kharavala.' Naturally, this name
could also pertain to a location rather than a donor, itself a common practice.
But if the Kharapalla and Kharavala of the respective Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī

participants.¹ But the import of what is to be derived from the inscription is decidedly more than this.

These two figures are the earliest satraps known to the Kuṣāṇa Empire and thence the first indication of the local forms of governance Kaniṣka I installed in his administration. The great satrap Kharapalla and (what is most likely his son) satrap Vanaṣpara should thus be viewed as the local potentates of the Kuṣāṇa suzerain in a newly formed satrapy in the region of Sarnath. Further, we can only understand their participation in the donation of Bala as part of a coordinated effort, utilising the knowledge of the distinguished Sarvāstivādin² and his institution as a means to a broader political end. Indeed, there is here discernible an ideological exchange between the two parties: In dating the inscription to the still young era of Kaniṣka I, Bala and his compatriots were quite evidently informed of, and indeed conformed to, the calendric norm established by this suzerain, presupposing a direct line of communication between imperial administration and this monastic institution in the early years of Kaniṣka I's conquest. Moreover, in selecting the image of the Bodhisattva, Bala provided the ideological and practical possibility for this at once meritorious and political act to occur.

inscriptions are indeed the same, this would suggest the satrap of the latter, governing in the reign of Vima Kadhises, had subsequently moved with Kaniṣka I to govern over a satrapy in the region of Sarnath. That a Mahāvana was known to Northwest is confirmed by the *Divyāvadāna*, where it is located in the vicinity of Kashmir or, according to some, Swat. Divy 399. 12. See Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, s.v. mahāvana.

¹ Gregory Schopen, 'On Monks, Nuns and "Vulgar" Practices: The Introduction of the Image Cult into Indian Buddhism', *Artibus Asiae* 49 (89 1988): 160–61.

² That he was a Sarvāstivādin is evidenced by another inscribed Bodhisattva statue donated by Bala at Śrāvastī (No. 50).

Anthropomorphic depictions of Bodhisattva and Buddhas were an innovation among Buddhists around the turn of the Common Era and these donations of Bala and Buddhāmitrā are the earliest *dated*¹ examples. Legal precedent for the fashioning of Bodhisattva images *per se* is known to several *Vinayas*² but significantly the **Sarvāstivāda-vinaya* 十誦律, indicating that the definition of the rule is to be attributed to the turn of the Common Era, whence material evidence for such images first arises in the North and Northwest:

‘World Honoured One! Since one should not make representation of the Buddha’s body, I hope the Buddha allows me to make an image of the attendant³ Bodhisattva.’
The Buddha said, I allow [this] to be made.’⁴

¹ Other such representations of Bodhisattvas are dated on archaeological and stylistic grounds to the 1st century BCE, both in Swat and Mathura; see Faccenna, ‘At the Origin of Gandharan Art’; Prudence Myer, ‘Bodhisattvas and Buddhas: Early Buddhist Images from Mathurā’, *Artibus Asiae* 47, no. 2 (1986): 107–42; J. E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, ‘New Evidence with Regard to the Origin of the Buddha Image’, in *South Asian Archaeology 1979: Papers from the Fifth International Conference on the Association of South Asian Archaeologists in Western Europe Held in the Museum für Indische Kunst der staatlichen Museen preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin.*, ed. Herbert Härtel (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1981), 377–400.

² See the *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya*, T 1425. 498b.

³ It has been suggested that the radical of 侍 be corrected to 時, which would produce a meaning of ‘image of the time of the Bodhisattva’ as opposed to the time of a Buddha, for discussion see Juhyung Rhi, ‘From Bodhisattva to Buddha: The Beginning of Iconic Representation in Buddhist Art’, *Artibus Asiae* 54, no. 3/4 (1994): 221.

⁴ 世尊！如佛身像不應作，願佛聽我作菩薩侍像者善。佛言：聽作。T 1435. 352a8–9.

Juhyung Rhi¹ has already highlighted the doctrinal import of this passage in connection with the inscribed Bodhisattvas of Bala and Buddhāmitrā for the wider debate concerning the shift from aniconism and the emergence of anthropomorphism in the origin of the Bodhisattva and Buddha image.² This debate is, as Herbert Härtel put it, something of an ‘old hat’,³ the dimensions of which shall not be treated here in full. However, it is not quite yet time to hang it up. For the significance here of the insertion of new regulations into the *Vinaya*, justifying the very possibility of fashioning an image of the Bodhisattva, and these early examples of Bodhisattva statues, are not exclusively of significance to a Buddhist history of ideas but additionally communicate something quite quintessential about Buddhism’s political ideology at this specific moment in its history.

Buddhism’s imperialist discourse, as noted above,⁴ is to be characterised as an ideological conflation of the Buddha as an ideal being and the wheel-turning ruler as the ideal political figure. In this regard, many have argued that these Bodhisattva images were designed to somatically depict the intermingling of these two ideals, manifest in certain physical traits such as the turban (*uṣṇīṣa*), and other paraphernalia associated with sovereignty, such as the umbrella

¹ Rhi, ‘From Bodhisattva to Buddha: The Beginning of Iconic Representation in Buddhist Art’, esp. 220–221.

² This debate originates in the 20th century with an exchange between Alfred Foucher and Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, who respectively saw a Northwestern ‘Hellenistic’ or Northern ‘Indian’ source for the innovation of anthropomorphism, cf. A. Foucher, ‘The Beginnings of Buddhist Art’, in *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art and Other Essays in Indian and Central-Asian Archaeology*, trans. L. A. Thomas and F. W. Thomas (London: Humphrey Milford, 1917), 1–28; Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, ‘The Origin of the Buddha Image’, *The Art Bulletin* 9, no. 4 (1927): 292ff.

³ Härtel, ‘The Concept of the Kapardin Buddha Type of Mathura’, 654.

⁴ See Chapter Two: Buddhism, Empires, and Kingdoms.

(*chattra*).¹ That these images were intended as such, that is, to depict both the soteriological and political ideals, thence becomes more patent in light of the historical context in which they were fabricated. Indeed, it is in these images that we find the first evidence for a historical instantiation of the imperial political ideology that permeates much of Buddhist discourse in an imperial act.

The possibility that these images were conceived, in part, as a political medium to support Kaniṣka I's imperial ambitions is further substantiated by the ruler famously being the first to incorporate Buddhist imagery directly into coinage. One copper issue of the ruler depicts a cross-legged Maitreya Buddha, named in the Bactrian legend as ΜΗΤΡΑΓΟ ΒΟΥΔΟ.² And two others, one in copper and another in gold, depict a standing Śākyamuni Buddha, named respectively as ΚΑΚΑΜΑΝ..Ο ΒΟΥΔΟ and ΒΟΔΔΟ.³ Joe Cribb describes quite precisely the occurrence of Buddha images in coinage as Kuṣāṇa 'official iconography' and suggests that they are perhaps to be considered as reflections of the ruler's religious dispositions.⁴ More

¹ See Härtel, 'The Concept of the Kapardin Buddha Type of Mathura', 677–78; Harry Falk, 'Small Scale Buddhism', in *Devadattīyam. Johannes Bronkhorst Felicitation Volume*, ed. François Voegeli (Bern: Peter Lang, 2012), 492–94. More widely the images are regarded as depicting the Bodhisattva before his enlightenment, Rhi, 'From Bodhisattva to Buddha: The Beginning of Iconic Representation in Buddhist Art', 210.

² On this reading and the image's iconography, see John C. Huntington, 'A Re-Examination of a Kaniṣka Period Tetradrachm Coin Type with an Image of Mētrago/Maitreya on the Reverse (Göbl 793.1) and a Brief Notice on the Importance of the Inscription Relative to Bactro-Gandhāran Buddhist Iconography of the Period', *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 16, no. 2 (1993): 355–74.

³ On these readings and the images' iconography, see Joe Cribb, 'Kaniṣka's Buddha Coins—The Official Iconography of Śākyamuni and Maitreya', *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 3, no. 2 (1980): 79–88.

⁴ Cribb, 'Kaniṣka's Buddha Coins—The Official Iconography of Śākyamuni and Maitreya', 84.

likely is that they constitute but one element of a broader project aimed at including and in some cases ‘syncretising’ other Hellenistic, Indic, and Zoroastrian deities of relevance to the ruler’s entire populace.¹ Whatever the personal beliefs of the ruler may have been, and these no doubt coincide specifically with Zoroastrianism as the majority of his coins² and the Rabatak Inscription would suggest, it may nonetheless be incontrovertibly stated that Buddhism, or rather the Sarvāstivādins, under Kaniṣka I had become a tool of imperial power, aiding in the affirmation and continuation of this ruler’s governance.

A total of 33 dated inscriptions can be tentatively placed within the reign of Kaniṣka I (127–152 CE), whose date formulas either retain a year from 3–24 of what is in most cases likely to be the era of Kaniṣka I, or which are dated to Indo-Greek and Azes I Eras in years that fall within this period (Fig. 8.3). 22 two of those dated to his era are certain, 14 are uncertain and could be placed within either the era of Kaniṣka I or a hundred years later to Kaniṣka II, one is dated to the era of Azes I and two to the Indo-Greek Era. These are constituted of 36 Buddhist donations, including relic dedications and Bodhisattva statue establishments, etc., which for the most part were made by monastic figures, two inscriptions of uncertain affiliation and another dedicated as part of a Nāga or Kubera cult. It is notable that Jains are entirely unrepresented in this period. In fact, there are several potential inscriptions that are dated to years to fall within this period, however, for art-historical reasons Skinner has dated all to the era of Kaniṣka II.³

¹ On religious syncretism under the Kuṣāṇas, see Rosenfield, *Dynastic Arts of the Kushans*, 69.

² Bracey, Robert, ‘Policy, Patronage, and the Shrinking Pantheon of the Kushans’, in *Glory of the Kushans: Recent Discoveries and Interpretations*, ed. Vidula Jayaswal (New Delhi: Aryan Books International, 2012), 202–3.

³ Skinner, ‘Marks of Empire’, 317ff.

The ruler himself is not directly associated with any Buddhist donative inscriptions, namely, in the role of a donor, participant, or beneficiary. However, there are certain correlations to be made with certain moments in his reign, which may indicate his distant involvement. For example, Michael Skinner has recently shown a correlation between the early phases of Kaniṣka I's reign and a rise in donative inscriptions to mention the era of the ruler, arguing on this basis that increased activity is to be related directly to the ruler's influence as well as to wider economic trends, themselves related to a well functioning empire.¹ But it is not possible to affirm such nexuses in all cases.

¹ For a graphic representation of dated inscriptions during the reign of Kaniṣka I, see Skinner, 'Marks of Empire', 78.

Fig. 8.3. Dated Inscriptions from the reign of Kaniṣka I

No.	Title	Provenance	Date	Donation	Ruling Group	Individuals		Ref.
						Name	Title	
1	Copied Reliquary Inscription of Macayameṇa	Charsadda, Peshawar, Pakistan	303 [Yona] (127/128 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	—	Macayamaṇa	—	CKI 178
2	Bodhisattva Statue of Buddhāmitrā	Kauśāmbī, India	3 Kaniṣka I (129/130 CE)	<i>bodhisattva</i>	—	Buddhamitrā	<i>bhikṣuṇī, trepiṭakā</i>	Sk 17
3	Bodhisattva Statue of Buddhāmitrā	Kauśāmbī, India	3 Kaniṣka I (129/130 CE)	<i>bodhisattva</i>	—	Buddhamitrā	<i>bhikṣuṇī, trepiṭakā</i>	Sk 18
4	Bodhisattva Statue of Buddhāmitrā	Kauśāmbī, India	—	<i>bodhisattva</i>	—	Buddhamitrā	<i>bhikṣuṇī, trepiṭakā</i>	Sk 19
5	Bodhisattva Statue, Parasol Shaft and Umbrella of Bala	Sarnath, India	3 Kaniṣka I (129/130 CE)	<i>bodhisattva, yaṣṭi, chattra</i>	—	Bala Puṣyavuddi Buddhāmitrā Vanaspara Kharapalla	<i>bhikṣu, trepiṭaka, sārdhaṇ-vihārin bhikṣu bhikṣuṇī, trepiṭakā kṣatrapa mahākṣatrapa</i>	Sk 20
6	Bodhisattva Statue, Parasol Shaft and Umbrella of Bala	Śrāvastī	—	<i>bodhisattva, daṇḍa, chattra</i>	—	Bala Puṣyavuddi	<i>bhikṣu, trepiṭaka, sārdhaṇ-vihārin bhikṣu</i>	Sk 21
7	Bodhisattva Statue of Unknown Donor	Mathura	3 Kaniṣka I (129/130 CE)	—	—	—	—	§ 143
8	Buddha Statue of Vasumitra	Mathura	3 [Kaniṣka I] (129/130 CE)	—	—	Vasumitra	<i>ārya</i>	Sh 11

9	Pedestal of Deva[...]	Mathura, India	4 [Kaniṣka I] (130/131 CE)	—	—	Deva[...]	—	Sh 16
10	Bodhisattva Statue of Dharmanandi	Mathura, India	4 Kaniṣka I (130/131 CE)	<i>bodhisattva</i>	—	Dharmanandi	<i>bhadanta sārdhaṃ- vihārin bhikṣu</i>	Sk 25
11	Bodhisattva Statue of Bh[...]	Mathura, India	4 Kaniṣka I (130/131 CE)	<i>dāna</i>	—	Bh[...]	<i>sārdhaṃ- vihārin bhikṣu dharma- kathika mahādaṇḍa- nāyaka</i>	Sh 17
12	Bodhisattva Statue of Dhaṇyabhavā	Mathura, India	4 Kaniṣka I (130/131 CE)	—	—	Dhaṇyabhavā Bhavaśiri	<i>kutuṃbinī sārvavāha</i>	§ 172
13	Buddhist Statue of Unknown Donor	Mathura, India	5 Kaniṣka I (131/132 CE)	—	—	—	—	Sk 27
14	Dharmacakra of Gijava's Daughter	—	5 Kaniṣka I (131/132 CE)	—	—	Gijava	<i>duhitṛ</i> —	CKI 236
15	Nāga Pedestal of Unknown Donor	Mathura, India	8 Kaniṣka I (134/135 CE)	<i>puṣkarinī ārāma</i>	—	—	<i>niyavaḍaki</i>	Sk 28
16	Bodhisattva of Sihaka	Palikhera, Mathura, India	8 Kaniṣka I (134/135 CE)	<i>dāna</i>	—	Sihaka	—	§ 128
17	Buddha of Buddhadāsī	Mathura, India	8 [Kaniṣka I] (134/135 CE)	<i>dhātu</i>	—	Buddhadāsī	<i>bhikṣuṇī</i>	Sk 30
18	Bodhisattva of Buddharakṣita	—	8 Kaniṣka I (134/135 CE)	<i>bodhisattva</i>	—	Buddharakṣita Sihaka	<i>bhikṣu sārdhaṃ- vihārin bhikṣu</i>	Sk 31

19	Temple of Unknown Donor	Mathura	10 Kaniška I (136/137 CE)	<i>harmyā</i>		Vima Kadphises	<i>mahārāja, devaputra</i>	Sk 32
20	Pot of Rohaṇa	—	12 [Kaniška I] (138/139 CE)	—	—	Rohaṇa Masumatra	<i>putra</i> —	CKI 245
21	Pillar of Unknown Donor	Govind Nagar, Mathura, India	12 Kaniška I (138/139 CE)	—	—	—	—	Sk 33
22	Well of Bhadra	—	14 [Kaniška I] (140/131 CE)	<i>dānamukha</i>	—	Bhadra Tejamitra	<i>putra</i> —	CKI 832
23	Well of Śreṣṭha	—	14 [Kaniška I] (140/131 CE)	<i>prāpa, dānamukha</i>	—	Seṭha	—	CKI 833
24	Bodhisattva of Nāgadatta	—	16 Kaniška I (142/143 CE)	<i>dāna, pratimā</i>	—	Nāgadatta	<i>bhikṣu, vihārin</i>	§ 157
25	Pillar of Unknown Monk	Dura, India	16 Kaniška I (142/143 CE)	<i>staṃbha</i>	—	—	<i>bhikṣu</i>	Sk 35
26	Bodhisattva of Nāgapiyā	—	17 [Kaniška I] (143/144 CE)	<i>bodhisattva</i>	—	Nāgapiyā	<i>upāsikā, kutuṃbinī</i>	§ 150
27	Pedestal of Buddhaghoṣa	Loriyan Tangai, Malakand, Pakistan	318 [Yoṇa] (143/144 CE)	<i>dānamukha</i>	—	Buddhaghoṣa Saghoruma	<i>sārdhaṃ- vihārin</i> —	CKI 111
28	Reliquary Inscription of Gotama	Afghanistan	18 [Kaniška I] (144/145 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	—	Gotama	<i>śramaṇa</i>	CKI 152
29	Reliquary Inscription of Lala	Manikyala, Punjab, Pakistan	18 Kaniška I (144/145 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	Kuṣāṇa	Lala	<i>kuṣāṇavaśa- saṃvardhaka, daṇḍanāyaka horamurta</i>	CKI 149

						Veśpaśi Buddhila Burita	<i>kṣatrapa navakarmika vihāarakaraka</i>	
30	Buddha of Unknown <i>Vinayadhara</i>	—	19 Kaniṣka I (145/146 CE)	—	—	—	<i>bhikṣu vinayadhara</i>	Sk 38
31	Donation of Buṭhavaruma	Garhi Matani, Attock, Pakistan	20 Kaniṣka I (146/147 CE)	—	—	Buṭhavaruma et al	<i>śramaṇa putra</i>	CKI 246
32	Reliquary of Unknown Donor from Jalalabad	Jalalabad, Afghanistan	20 [Kaniṣka I] (146/147 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	—	Mitravarma	—	CKI 368
33	Reliquary Inscription of Śveḍvarma	Kurram, Pakistan	20 [Kaniṣka I] (146/147 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	—	Śveḍavarma Yaśa	<i>putra —</i>	CKI 153
34	Bodhisattva Statue of Aśvadatta	Mathura, India	20 Kaniṣka I (146/147 CE)	<i>dāna pratimā</i>	—	Aśvadatta	<i>bhikṣu</i>	Sk 39
35	Bodhisattva Statue of Devalā	Mathura, India	20 Kaniṣka I (146/147 CE)	<i>bodhisattva</i>	—	Devalā	—	Sk 40
36	Kubera of Unknown Donor	Palikhera, Mathura, India	20 [Kaniṣka I] (146/147 CE)	—	—	—	—	Sk 41
37	Bodhisattva of Puśyadattā	Sonkh, Mathura, India	23 Kaniṣka I (149/150 CE)	<i>bodhisattva</i>	—	Puśyadattā Gunda	<i>duhitṛ vihārasvāmin</i>	§ 136
38	Incense Burner of Dharmaguptakas	Jalalabad, Afghanistan	24 [Kaniṣka I] (150/151 CE)	—	—	—	—	CKI 460

Eleven inscriptions derive from the years 3 and 5, eight of which include the aforementioned Bodhisattvas of Buddhāmitrā and Bala, in addition to two others donated by an unknown individual and a certain an Ārya Vasumitra. As discussed above, only one dedication enacted by Bala specifies the participation of political figures, in this case, two satraps, and we may, due to their shared iconography and circumstances of their donation, potentially associate the others donated by Bala and Buddhāmitrā with this strictly political context. Another dedication of a Bodhisattva image (No. 52) from Mathura, dated to year 4 of an unspecified era¹ is to be construed in a similar vein:

[1.]...*dha[r]mmanand[is]ya dha[r]mma[kathi]kasya sadhy-
avihārisya [bh.] ///* [2.] *pratiṣṭhāpayati mahādaṇḍa-n[ā]yaka
hummiyaka vedyāṃ <sa>kkavihāre*

...[Bh...], co-resident of Dharmmanandi the Dharma-teacher, establishes [a Bodhisattva] on the platform of the Great General Hummiyaka at the Sakkavihāra.

Whether or not the image and platform were dedicated concurrently is not clear, but the inscriptions could well reflect another moment of coordination between an important pedagogue of the Buddhist institution and a key judicial and military figure in the Kuṣāṇa Empire. Besides these examples, only two other inscriptions can be deemed as related directly to imperial concerns. These arise much later, towards the end of Kaniṣka I's governance.

The first is the Reliquary Inscription of Lala (No. 54), dedicated in 18 Kaniṣka I (144/145 CE) at Manikyala, Punjab.² It records the donation of Lala, who is named as a forwarder of the Kuṣāṇa lineage of

¹ Skinner dates this object to the era of Kaniṣka II, see Skinner, 'Marks of Empire', 317. Also discussed in Chapter One: The Era of Kaniṣka I.

² On the dating of this inscription, see Chapter One: The Era of Kaniṣka I.

the Great King Kanīṣka, a General (*daṇḍanāyaka*), and master of donations for the satrap Veśpaṣi: [1.]...*maharajasa Kaṇe*[2.]*ṣkasa Guṣaṇa-vaśasaṃvardhaka Lala* [3.] *daḍaṇayago Veśpaṣisa kṣatrapasa* [4.] *horamurt[o]*. Here, two local administrators governing under Kanīṣka I were intimately related to the Buddhist institution at this site and situate their relic dedication quite firmly within a political agenda. Namely, this donation was regarded as aiding in the propagation of the Kuṣāṇa dynasty.

It seems that Lala also served a specific ritual function within the Buddhist institutions as a master of donations (Ir. *horamurta*)¹. Several scholars have regarded this Iranian title as an equivalent to Skt. *dānapati* and, as Heinrich Lüders argues, as ‘a term denoting some lay official in connection with the administration of the Vihāra’.² He notes that the title also arises in the portmanteau ‘retinue of masters of donations’ (*horakaparivara*) in the Mathura Lion Capital (No. 25) and therefore in association with the donor Yasi, highest queen of the great satrap Rajuvula. That it occurs in the donations of two rulers, the one Indo-Scythian and the other Kuṣāṇa, likely indicates the title belongs to a cultural and linguistic sphere shared by these once nomads of the Central Asian steppe. It could, therefore, be regarded not as a monastic title and rather as another governmental position for a figure dedicated to organising ritual practices among different religious institutions. To that extent, it could be related to the narrower Kuṣāṇa ‘official in charge of temples’ (*bakanapati*), discussed above. In either case, the title evidences that donative practice was structured and organised by

¹ Argued as being specifically from the Scytho-Iranian or Khotanese *hora* (‘gift’); the second component *murta* is unattested in the sense of Skt. *-pati* and otherwise means ‘man’, see Lüders, *Mathurā Inscriptions*, 96. The term *hora* also occurs in the Reliquary Inscription of Sataṣaka (No. 41).

² Heinrich Lüders, ‘The Manikiala Inscription’, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1909, 650–51.

specific individuals or groups, which, in this case, was to the benefit of the Buddhists at Manikyala and Mathura in the early Common Era.

The second is a Bodhisattva statue (No. 56), dated 20 Kaniṣka I (146/147 CE), that was dedicated by a Mahāsāṃghika monk in Mathura and specifically within the area of an unnamed great satrap (*mahākṣatrapavardhamāne*).¹ Harry Falk took this expression to mean ‘that even under Kaniṣka a memory was preserved of the preceding Kṣatrapa dynasty’.² But the reference to a great satrap need not be a hearkening back to the Indo-Scythians, who had been usurped almost a century prior. Indeed, Kaniṣka I also used the satrapy system in the structure of his empire, as shown above, and we must presume therefore that the great satrap referred to here is most likely another figure in the suzerain’s administration. In this case, we can only assume that the plot of land where the dedication was made, was itself gifted or arranged for the Mahāsāṃghikas to use.

On the basis of this corpus of inscriptions, it is therefore difficult to derive any conclusions about the extent and forms of Kaniṣka I’s political engagement with Buddhism. In the few cases considered here, we find that where such activity did occur, it involved individuals governing for the ruler within individual locales. Moreover, it is not abundantly clear in all cases, whether these donations were the product of an imperially organised effort to patronise Buddhist institutions, excluding perhaps the Bodhisattva images of Buddhamitrā and Bala, whose historical and ideological contexts lend quite strongly to such a view. The majority of inscriptions in the table above were dedicated quite apart from any political context and only symbolically (and indeed far from uniformly) reference the ruler by way of his date formula. Yet,

¹ On *vardhamāna* in the sense of ‘area’, see Harry Falk, ‘Some Inscribed Images from Mathurā Revisited’, *Indo-Asiatische Zeitschrift* 6/7 (2003 2002): 39–40.

² Falk, ‘Some Inscribed Images from Mathurā Revisited’, 41.

from his coinage and coordinated establishments of Bodhisattva statues, he no doubt drew on Buddhism's ideology and institutional power in the formation of his empire.

This is further indicated by a single Kharoṣṭhī inscription to postdate his reign (No. 57) from a stupa at Shah-ji-ki-Dheri, Peshawar,¹ which implies an act of significant patronage on the ruler's part. Therein, it is stated that a fragrance box, functioning here as a reliquary, was established for the Sarvāstivādins, within the Kaniṣkavihāra at Kaniṣkanagara²—evidencing that the ruler had given his name to a monastery and indeed re-named the city of Peshawar (Skt. Puruṣapura) after himself: [2.] *Kaniṣ[kapu]re ṇagare [a]yaṃ gaṃdha[ka]raṃḍe + t. (*mahara)jasa Kaṇi[4.]ṣkasa vihare.*

The stupa itself has also been associated with the ruler on the basis of a narrative cycle dedicated to him—Kaniṣka I is of course well known for his frequent occurrence in Buddhist literature—of which several witnesses state he made such an establishment in Peshawar. Thus, in the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* of the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*:

The Fortunate One reached Kharjūrikā³, where he saw young boys playing with piles of dirt. Seeing the young boys

¹ A report on the excavation of this stupa is to be found in D. B. Spooner, 'Excavations at Shāh-Jī-Kī-Dhērī', in *Annual Report 1908-9*, Archaeological Survey of India (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, India, 1912), 38–59.

² A Kaniṣkapura 罽尼吒城 (discussed below) also occurs in the *Kalpanāmaṇḍitikā* 大莊嚴論經, see T 201. 272a20.

³ Lit. 'Place of the silver date palm', the *phoenix sylvestris*, see Renate Syed, 'Die Flora Altindiens in Literatur und Kunst' (PhD, München, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, 1990), 269–73. It is transcribed in the Chinese witness as *keshuoluo* 渴樹羅, T 1448. 41b25. The version of the narrative preserved in the travelogue of Faxian transcribes *Fulousha guo* 弗樓沙國 (Skt. Puruṣapura), T 2085. 858b12; this is homophonous to Xuanzang's *Fuloushafuluo* 富婁沙富羅, T 2087. 379c15.

playing with the piles of dirt he then addressed the *yakṣa* Vajrapāṇi, ‘Do you see, Vajrapāṇi, the young boys playing with piles of dirt?’ ‘Yes sir.’ ‘Four hundred years after I have completely extinguished, Vajrapāṇi, in the Kuṣāṇa lineage there will be a king called Kaniṣka. He shall establish a stupa at this place and it shall be named the Kaniṣka stupa. Since I have completely ceased, it is he that shall perform the duty of a Buddha.’¹

This motive is based upon the same encountered in the *Aśokāvadāna*, wherein the Buddha also predicts the reign of Aśoka, when he is seen making a stupa out of dirt.² Unlike the latter, however, Kaniṣka is here said to perform the ‘duty of a Buddha’ (*buddhakārya*).

This expression is typically found in three contexts: [1] a formula that states a Buddha only enters *parinirvāṇa* once this duty has been performed,³ [2] in the context of similar predictions which give the duty

¹ *bhagavān kharjūrikām anuprāptaḥ. khajūrikāyāṃ bāladārakān pāmsustūpakaiḥ krīdato ‘drākṣīt. bhagavānbāladārakān pāmsustūpakaiḥ krīdato drṣṭvā ca punar vajrapāṇiṃ yakṣam āmantrayate. paśyasi tvaṃ vajrapāṇe bāladārakān pāmsustūpakaiḥ krīdataḥ. evaṃ bhadanta. eṣa caturvarṣaśata-parinirvṛtasya mama vajrapāṇe kuṣanavaṃśyaḥ kaniṣko nāma rājā bhaviṣyati. so ‘smin pradeśe stūpaṃ pratiṣṭhāpayati. tasya kaniṣkastūpa itī saṃjñā bhaviṣyati. mayi ca parinirvṛte buddhakāryaṃ kariṣyati.* MSV 1. 2–3. Faxian 法顯 records a similar story, T 2085. 858.

² Max Deeg, ‘Aśoka—Model Ruler without Name?’, in *Reimagining Aśoka: Memory and History*, ed. Patrick Olivelle, Janice Leoshko, and Himanshu Prabha Ray (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012), 360.

³ *yāvad vipaśyī samyaksaṃbuddho buddhakāryaṃ kṛtvā indhanakṣayād ivāgnir nirupadhiśeṣe nirvāṇadhātau parinirvṛtaḥ.* Avś 1. 237. ‘When Vipāśyin, the Perfectly Awakened Buddha, had performed the duty of a Buddha, he, like a fire without kindling, completely extinguished in the sphere of *nirvāṇa* without remainder.’

to another—often a ruler—once a Buddha has entered *parinirvāṇa*,¹ and [3] finally as an act attributed to Upagupta, the Sarvāstivādin patriarch,² a contemporary of Aśoka, and a ‘buddha without qualities’ (*buddhālakṣaṇa*).³ What it means to have performed the duty of a Buddha is explicated in other textual passages, which enumerate several actions, such as instructing others in the Dharma, predicting a future Buddha, and converting one’s mother and father.⁴ Assessing the ramifications of these passages for the figure of Kaniṣka I is difficult. One must recall the malaise among Buddhists in understanding the Dharma was disappearing during this period due to violent invasions from Central Asia, and perhaps Kaniṣka I’s narrative representation is therefore to be construed in this context. The Buddhists, namely, sought to present this ruler, as they had Aśoka, as a propagator of the Dharma.

Indeed, this is the picture gleaned from several other sources to mention Kaniṣka I. Max Deeg has systematically shown certain parallelisms between motives in several texts which once belonged to a hypothetical **Kaniṣkāvadāna* and the various versions of the **Aśokāvadāna*, or rather the Aśoka narrative cycle, indicating the two cycles developed concurrently in the early Common Era.⁵ These include their [1] prophecy of rulership (as seen above) [2] representation as a

¹ See, e.g., Sum-av 12, Yutaka Iwamoto, ed., *Sumāghadhāvadāna* (Kyoto: Hozokan Verlag, 1968).

² The import of this figure is elaborated upon extensively by John Strong, *The Legend and Cult of Upagupta* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

³ MSV 1. 4; Divy 26. 350; 356; 27. 384; SC 2378/48rb. The Chinese translation of the *Mūlasarvāstivāyinaya* passage reads: 雖無相好化導如佛。T 2042. 102b18. ‘Although [Upagupta] is without the characteristics, he practices like a Buddha.’

⁴ See Divy 150; Mv 1. 50–51.

⁵ Max Deeg, ‘Aśoka—Model Ruler without Name?’, in Patrick Olivelle, Janice Leoschko, and Himanshu Prabha Ray (eds), *Reimagining Aśoka: Memory and History*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 362–79 (p. 359ff); Deeg, ‘From the Iron Wheel to Bodhisattvahood’, pp. 13–14.

violent ruler, [3] subsequent conversion to Buddhism, [4] receiving a teaching from a Buddhist patriarch, [5] pilgrimage to Buddhist sites, [6] acquisition¹ and [7] dedication of the Buddhas relics in stupas, [8] organisation of a Buddhist council, and [9] representation as a wheel-turning ruler.²

That both Aśoka and Kanīṣka I initially engaged in destructive acts is signified by their respectively being first named as ‘fierce’ (*caṇḍa*). The former, for instance, is first named Caṇḍāśoka and later named Dharmāśoka, once he had established relic stupas.³ Similarly, in one narrative of the *Kalpanāmaṇḍitikā* 大莊嚴論經⁴, the latter is also first named Caṇḍakanīṣka 真檀迦膩吒⁵ of the Jusha 拘沙⁶ before inexplicably destroying a Jain stupa through the power of his worship—which a local explains was due to the stupa not having Buddha relics—

¹ See Chapter Fifteen: Stupa Destruction and Relic Theft.

² Deeg, ‘Aśoka’, 357.

³ Aś-av 55.

⁴ Translated into Chinese by Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (344–413 CE) and attributed in the colophon to Aśvaghosa 馬鳴 (c. 2nd century CE). No full Skt. manuscript of the work is extant. However several fragments were identified in Central Asia, Heinrich Lüders, ed., *Bruchstücke der Kalpanāmaṇḍitikā des Kumāralāta*, Kleinere Sanskrittexte (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1926). More recently Timothy Lenz has identified certain parallels between some Gāndhārī Avadānas and the Chinese translation, Timothy Lenz, ‘The British Library Kharoṣṭhī Fragments: Behind the Birch Bark Curtain’, in *Women in Early Indian Buddhism: Comparative Textual Studies*, ed. Alice Collett, South Asia Research (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 46–61.

⁵ This same epithet is also given in the **Samyuktaratnapīṭakasūtra* 雜寶藏經, for a translation see Willems, *The Storehouse of Sundry Valuables. Translated from the Chinese of Kikkāya and Liu Hsiao-Piao (Compiled by T’an-Yao) Taishō, Volume 4, Number 203*, 93ff.

⁶ Presumably, an alternative transcription of the term represented otherwise by Yuezhi 月支.

and being named only Kaniṣka 伽膩吒王 after he had fully acquired faith in the Buddha's Dharma.¹

Where Aśoka acquired relics from the eight Droṇa stupas and established them in Dharmarājikā stupas, in other narratives Kaniṣka 吒王², ruler of the smaller Yuezhi 小月氏, is also described as having invaded Madhyadeśa in order to acquire the Buddha's alms-bowl—a *pāribhogika* ('item of use') or 'secondary' relic—and kidnapping Aśvaghoṣa, in order that both may be appropriated for his kingdom in Gandhara.³

His import as a Buddhist ruler is most prominently attached to the Indic Northwest and specifically to the Sarvāstivādins, who claim that five hundred years after the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*, the ruler organised a council in Kashmir to determine scholastic orthodoxy within this monastic institution, which had become fragmented. The product of this council is said to be the *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣāśāstra* 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論⁴, in which regard Xuanzang 玄奘 records that the newly determined tenets of the orthodoxy were engraved on copper plates and interred within a stupa. However, it is generally maintained among scholars that the association of Kaniṣka I with the council is fanciful and that the production of the summarial Abhidharma work is to be dated later.⁵

¹ T 201 287a21–288a19.

² Skt. Caṇḍakaniṣka, see Deeg, 'Aśoka', 362.

³ See the *Maming pusa zhuan* 馬鳴菩薩傳, T 2046. 183c17–184a; and *Fufazang yinyuan zhuan* 付法藏因緣傳, T 2058. 315b10–11. For a discussion and translation of the relevant passages, see Shoshin Kuwayama, *Across the Hindukush of the First Millenium. A Collection of the Papers*, Kyoto: Institute for Research in Humanities, Kyoto University, 2002, pp. 32–33.

⁴ T 1545. 593a15.

⁵ For lengthy discussion, see Charles Willemsen, Bart Dessein, and Collett Cox, *Sarvāstivāda Buddhist Scholasticism* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 116–21; Cf.

Although it is nowhere stated that Kaniṣka I was regarded as a wheel-turning ruler, his elevation to this status is implied in a letter purportedly written by Mātṛceṭa, a Buddhist poet of the c. 2nd century CE, to the ruler, in which he is credited with pursuing the Buddhist path to liberation, with fashioning Buddhist images and temple sites, and:

Born into the lineage of the Kuṣāṇas, as having been instructed according to the (teaching of the) self-arising Buddhas, must see to it that the religious system of the solar race, your noble lineage, does not degenerate.¹

The attribution of this poetic letter to Mātṛceṭa is not certain. Nonetheless, it alerts us to the fact the ruler was regarded, most likely sometime after his rule, as the embodiment of Buddhism's political ideology as a soteriologically distinguished devotee and kin to the solar lineage of wheel-turning rulers, who trace their origins to Ikṣvāku. Such an association is something of a banality among rulers, however, and many would make the same claim, such as the Oḍirājas.

HUVIṢKA

Huviṣka succeeded Kaniṣka I in the year 26 (152/153 CE) of the latter's era, or the year prior, and reigned for almost four decades, with his last known date occurring in the year 62 (188/189). During his reign, donative activity among several religious institutions would substantially increase and the demographic of donors also changes quite

Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, 585ff; Zürcher, 'The Yüeh-Chih and Kaniṣka in Chinese Sources', 390.

¹ Hahn, Michael, trans., *Invitation to Enlightenment. Letter to the King Kaniṣka by Mātṛceṭa and Letter to a Disciple by Candragomin* (Dharma Publishing, 1997), 30–31.

radically. Moreover, even though Kanīṣka I is lauded most prominently in Buddhist literature, it appears that Buddhist institutions were enabled to spread more widely during the reign of his son Huviṣka (c. 152–187), as attested by the wide spread of his coins at Buddhist sites,¹ and by the movement of peoples, monks, and Buddhist literature along the Silk Roads to China.

A total of 56² inscriptions can be placed within his reign (Fig. 8.3): 33 can be dated with certainty to the Kanīṣka I Era, with years given in the reign of Huviṣka. One inscription, dated to the Indo-Greek Era, can also be placed within his reign. However, 22 remain uncertain, specifying only a numeral which most likely falls within this period but again could be donated a century later to the Kanīṣka II Era. Donations during in this period are, unlike former centuries, not entirely dominated by the Buddhists. Of these 56 inscriptions, 28 are Buddhist, 17 Jain, three imperial, two related to Nāga cults, one Brahmanical and five of unknown affiliation. This diversification is also reflected in the social groupings of individuals found as donors and participants in these inscriptions.

The ruler himself was involved with only three donations, in the role of beneficiary: [1] as recipient of merit accrued through the donation, organised by one of the ruler's 'official in charge of temples' (*bakanapati*), of a perpetual endowment (*akṣayanīvi*) to the merit hall (*puṇyaśāla*) of a Brahmin community at Mahura, close to the advent of Huviṣka's reign in 28 Huviṣka (154/155 CE); [2] that his life and strength may increase as the result of repairs made to an apparently dilapidated dynastic temple, organised by one of his great general (*mahādaṇḍanāyaka*) at Maṭ, Mathura; [3] as the beneficiary of a relic

¹ Errington and Curtis, 'Constructing the Past', 131.

² For more conservative statistics, excluding most inscriptions that cannot be dated with certainty to the period of Huviṣka's reign, see Skinner, 'Marks of Empire', 100–103.

donation (No. 62), made by a member of the influential Marega family in Wardak, Afghanistan, who shall be considered further below. His patronage was therefore not focused on a single community and was given in support of Brahmins, his dynasty's cult in Mathura, as well as to the Buddhists at the northwestern fringes of his empire.

Moreover, several of his officials were involved in such activity across the empire and within various institutional contexts. One Buddhist inscription from Spinwam, Waziristan, recording the donation of a well by Apahaka, can only be tentatively dated to 39 [Huviṣka] (165/166 CE) and its reading remains problematic. However, several figures in the inscription bear titles worth noting. First, the donor who had the well dug is named as the Satrap Anacapahaka, and he is related to a lord (*bhaṭṭarasvāmin*) and great general of the Kuṣāṇas, whose name is not obvious: [2.]...*bhaṭarakaṣami* [3.] [*yo?*] *kuṣaṇasa dadāṇayadaṣa ana[ca?][4.]pahakeṇa kṣatrapeṇa kuḍura* [5.] *khanavito*.¹

¹ Readings of this inscription differ. The passage cited here is based on Harry Falk, 'The Pious Donations of Wells in Gandhāra', in *Prajñādhara: Essays on Asian History, Epigraphy and Culture in Honour of Gouriswar Bhattacharya*, ed. Gerd Mevissen and Arundhati Banerji (New Delhi: Kaveri Books, 2009), 29. For an alternative reading, see CKI 244, Richard Salomon, 'The Spinwam (North Waziristan) Kharoṣṭhī Inscription', *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik* 7 (1981): 11–20.

Fig. 8.4 Dated Inscriptions from the Reign of Huviṣka

No.	Title	Provenance	Date	Donation	Ruling Group	Individuals		Ref.
						Name	Title	
1	Amitābha Buddha of Nāgarakṣita	Govind Nagar, Mathura India	26 Huviṣka (152/153 CE)	<i>pratimā</i>	—	Nāgarakṣita Satvaka Balakatta	<i>pautra sārthavāha śreṣṭhin</i>	Sk 49
2	Perpetual Endowment of Unknown Bakanapati	Mathura, India	28 Huviṣka (154/155 CE)	<i>akṣayanīvi</i>	Huviṣka	— Huviṣka	<i>Kharāsalerapati Bakanapati devaputra, śāhi</i>	Sk 50
3	Reliquary Donation of Saṃghamitra	Haḍḍa, Afghanistan	28 [Huviṣka] (154/155 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	—	Saṃghamitra	<i>navakarmika</i>	CKI 155
4	Maitreya of Dharmaguptaka Nun	Mathura, India	29 Huviṣka (155/156 CE)	—	—	—	<i>bhikṣuṇī</i>	Sk 51
5	Jina Statue of Bodhinandi	—	29 Huviṣka (155/156 CE)	<i>pratimā</i>	—	Bodhinandi al	<i>kutuṃbinī</i>	Sk 52
6	Jina of Migaka	—	— Huviṣka	—	—	Migaka	<i>śiṣya</i>	Sk 53
7	Jina of Unknown Donor	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathurā, India	— Huviṣka	—	—	—	—	Sk 44
8	Bodhisattva of Buddhiśarma	Mathura, India	31 Huviṣka (157/158 CE)	<i>pratimā, dāna</i>	—	Buddhiśarma Mama	<i>bhikṣu, sārdhaṃvihārin bhikṣu</i>	Sk 54
9	Buddha of Khuḍā	Mathura, India	31 Huviṣka (157/158 CE)	<i>dāna</i>	—	Khuḍā Dinnā	<i>āntevāsinī</i> —	§ 103
10	Bodhisattva of Dharmapriya	Mathura	— Huviṣka	<i>dāna, bodhisattva</i>	—	Dharmapriya Śramaṇa	<i>bhikṣu, sārdhaṃvihārin bhikṣu</i>	Sk 46

						Dharmadatta	<i>ācārya</i>	
11	Temple Renovation of Unknown General	Maṭ, Mathura, India	— Huviṣka	<i>devakula talaka</i>	Kuṣāṇa	— Huviṣka	<i>mahādaṇḍa-nāyaka satyadharmasthita, mahārāja rājātirāja, devaputra</i>	Sk 45
12	Buddha of Viraṇa	Ahicchatrā, Madhya Pradesh, India	32 Huviṣka (158/159 CE)	<i>dāna</i>	—	Viraṇa	<i>bhikṣu</i>	Sk 56
13	Bodhisattva of Dhanavatī	Caubara Mound, Mathura, India	33 Huviṣka (159/160 CE)	<i>bodhisattva</i>	—	Dhanavatī Buddhamitrā Bala	<i>bhikṣuṇī, bhāgīneyī bhikṣuṇī trepiṭakā antevāsinī bhikṣu trepiṭaka</i>	Sk 57
14	Pillar Base of Buddharakṣita and Dharmarakṣita, 1	Mathur, India	33 Huviṣka (159/160 CE)	<i>kumbhaka, dāna</i>		Buddharakṣita Dharmarakṣita Soma	<i>upāsaka brāhmaṇa takṣaśīlaka bhrātṛ putra upāsaka brāhmaṇa takṣaśīlaka putra</i> —	Sk 58

15	Pillar Base of Buddharakṣita and Dharmarakṣita, 1	Mathura, India	33 Huviṣka (159/160 CE)	<i>kumbhaka,</i> <i>dāna</i>		Buddharakṣita Dharmarakṣita Soma	Same as above	Sk 59
16	Jina Statue of Unknown Teacher	Mohalla, Mathura, India	33 [Huviṣka] (159/160 CE)	—	—	—	<i>vācaka</i> <i>ārya</i>	Sh 17
17	Bodhisattva Statue of Unknown Monk	Mathura, India	34 Huviṣka (160/161 CE)	<i>bodhisattva</i>	—	—	<i>sārdhaṃ-</i> <i>vihārin</i> <i>bhikṣu</i>	Sk 60
18.	Buddha Statue of Saṃghila	Peshawar, Pakistan	35 [Huviṣka] (161/162 CE)	—	—	Aśvadatta Saṃghila	<i>upadhyāya</i>	Sk 61
19	Bodhisattva of Unknown Donor from Lakhnu	Lakhnu, Aligarha, India	35 Huviṣka (161/162 CE)	—	—	—	—	Sh 82
20	Jina of Kumārabhaṭi	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	35 [Huviṣka] (161/162 CE)	<i>pratimā</i>	—	Kumārabhaṭi et al	<i>gahaka</i>	Sh 79
21	Jina of Unknown Donor from Mathura	Mathura, India	35 [Huviṣka] (161/162 CE)	—	—	—	—	Sh 80
22	Buddha of King Yasaga	Mathura, India	36 [Huviṣka] (162/163)	—	—	Yasaga	<i>rāja</i>	Sh. 83
23	Bodhisattva of Budhadevā	Palikhera, Mathura, India	39 Huviṣka (165/166 CE)	<i>bodhisattva</i>	—	Buddhadevā Puśahathini	<i>bhikṣuṇī</i> <i>antevāsinī</i> —	Sk 63
24	Elephant Capital of Rudrasena	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	39 Huviṣka (165/166 CE)	<i>nandiviśāla</i>	—	Rudrasena Śivadāsa	<i>śreṣṭhin</i> <i>putra</i> <i>śreṣṭhin</i>	Sk 64
25	Well of Apahaka	Spinwam, North Waziristan, Pakistan	39 [Huviṣka] (165/166 CE)	<i>kūpa</i>	Kuṣāṇa	Apahaka —	<i>kṣatrapa</i> <i>koṣṭharāja</i> <i>daṇḍanāyaka</i> <i>kuṣāṇa</i>	CKI 244

26	Nāga of Senahasti and Bhoṇḍaka	Mathura, India	40 Huviṣka (166/167) CE	<i>nāga puṣkariṇī</i>	—	Senahasti Bhoṇḍaka Piṇḍapaya et al	<i>putra putra</i> —	Sk 65
27	Well Donation of Maṇava	Swabi, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan	40 [Huviṣka] (166/167) CE	<i>kūpa</i>	—	Maṇava Khaevaṇa	<i>putra</i> —	CKI 830
28	Well of Tradevaḍa Corporation	Shakardara, Attock, Pakistan	40 [Huviṣka] (166/167) CE	<i>kūpa, dānamukha</i>	—	Tradevaḍa	<i>sahaya</i>	CKI 156
29	Reliquary Inscription of Buddhapriya et al	Jalalabad, Afghanistan	44 [Huviṣka] (170/171 CE)	—	—	Buddhapriya Zaṃḍasa Bhaṭamudaya Budhavarma	— <i>vihārasvāmin</i> — —	CKI 511
30	Buddha of Kvasicā	—	45 Huviṣka (172/173 CE)	<i>bhagavat</i>	—	Kvasicā	<i>upāsikā</i>	Sk 66
31	Jina of Dharmavṛddhā	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	45 [Huviṣka] (171/171 CE)	—	—	Dharmavṛddhi Buddhi	<i>vadhu</i> —	Sk 67
32	Bodhisattva of Saṃghadāsa	Mathura, India	46 [Huviṣka] (172/173 CE)	<i>bodhisattva, dāna</i>	—	Saṃghadāsa	— <i>mahādaṇḍa-nāyaka</i>	Sk 68
33	Jina of Puṣyadina's Mother	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	47 [Huviṣka] (173/174 CE)	—	—	— Puṣyadinā et al	<i>māṭṛ kutuṃbinī vadhu</i> —	Sk 69
34	Jina of Yaśā	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	48 Huviṣka (174/175 CE)	<i>pratimā</i>	—	Yaśā Śavatrāta et al	<i>pautrī vadhu</i> —	§ 14

35	Jina of Unknown Donor	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	48 Huviṣka (174/175 CE)	—	—	—	—	Sk 71
36	Jina of Dinā	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	49 [Huviṣka] (175/1776CE)	<i>pratimā,</i> <i>dāna</i>	—	Dinā	<i>śrāvaka</i> <i>kutuṃbinī</i>	Sk 72
37	Slab of Purohaśalaka	Mathura, India	50 Huviṣka (176/177 CE)	—	—	Purohaśalaka Indrabala et al	<i>putra</i> <i>sārthavāha</i>	Sk 73
38	Jina of Yudhadina's Daughter	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	50 Huviṣka (176/177 CE)	—	—	— Yugadina at al	<i>duhitṛ</i> —	Sk 74
39	Buddha of Unknown Donor	Mathura, India	50 Huviṣka (176/177 CE)	—	—	—	—	Sk 75
40	Donation of Raha	Mathura, India	50 Huviṣka (177/178 CE)	—	—	Raha Bahuvīrā	— <i>halikā</i>	Sh 114
41	Bodhisattva Pedestal of Unknown Donor	Mathura, India	51 Huviṣka (177/178 CE)	<i>bodhisattva</i>	—	—	—	§ 134
42	Buddha Statue of Buddhavarma	Mathura, India	51 Huviṣka (177/178 CE)	<i>bhagavat</i>	—	Buddhavarma	<i>bhikṣu</i>	Sk 77
43	Reliquary Inscription of Vagamarega	Wardak, Afghanistan	51 Huviṣka (177/178 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	Kuṣāṇa	Vagamarega Kamagulya Huviṣka et al	<i>putra</i> — <i>mahārāja</i> <i>rājātirāja,</i> <i>deva putra</i>	CKI 159
44	Reliquary Inscription of Vagamarega's Daughter	Wardak, Afghanistan	51 Huviṣka (177/178 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	—	— Vagamarega et al	<i>duhitṛ</i> —	CKI 159
45	Stone Bowl of Vāira	Charsadda, Pakistan	51 [Huviṣka] (177/178 CE)	<i>dānamukha</i>	—	Vaira Ṣavea	— <i>upadhyāya</i>	CKI 367
46	Nāga of Unknown Donor	Mathura, India	52 [Huviṣka] (178/179 CE)	—	—	—	—	Sk 80

47	Female Figure of Goṭṭika	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	52 [Huviṣka] (178/179 CE)	<i>dāna</i>	—	Goṭṭika et al	<i>lohikakāra</i>	Sk 81
48.	Buddha Statue Pedestal of Saṃghasena	Mathura, India	53 Huviṣka (179/180 CE)	<i>dāna</i>	—	Saṃghasena	—	Sk 82
49	Sarasvatī Statue of Gova	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	54 [Huviṣka] (180/181 CE)	<i>dāna</i>	—	Gova et al	<i>lohikakāra</i>	Sk 83
50	Nude Figure of Unknown Donor	Mathura, India	57 [Huviṣka] (183/184 CE)	—	—	—	—	Sh 122
51	Donation of Potaka	Jamālgaṛhī, Mardan	359 [Yoṇa] (183/184 CE)	—	—	Potaka	<i>śrāvaka</i>	CKI 116
52	Jina of Nāgasena	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	58 Huviṣka (184/185 CE)	<i>dāna</i>	—	Nāgasena Haganandi et al	<i>śiṣya vācaka</i>	Sk 84
53	Jina of Dattā	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	60 Huviṣka (186/187 CE)	<i>dānadharma</i>	—	Dattā Vr.dhumitaka	<i>kutuṃbinī kārṇāsaka</i>	Sk 85
54	Well Donation of Savira Corporation	Und, Swabi, Pakistan	61 [Huviṣka] (187/188 CE)	—	—	Savira	<i>sahaya</i>	CKI 160
55	Jina at Request of Grahabala	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	62 [Huviṣka] (188/189 CE)	—	—	Grahabala et al	<i>śiṣya</i>	Sk 86
56	Jina Statue of Vihikā	Mathura, India	62 [Huviṣka] (188/189 CE)	<i>datti</i>	—	Vihikā et al	—	Sk 87

Another Bodhisattva statue donated by a monk Saṃghadāsa also states it was established in the monastery of an unnamed great general: (*bodhi)///[sa]casa pratime mahadaṇḍanayakasa vihare.¹ But the vast majority of donors in inscriptions of this period are monastic figures, related either to Buddhist or Jain institutions. Many individuals do not identify themselves with a title indicative of their position in society, however, unlike former periods, several figures employ titles of occupation, including mercantile figures, such as caravan leaders (*sāṛthavāha*) and guildsmen (*śreṣṭhin*), as well as other trades including ironsmiths (*lohakāraka*) and cotton traders (*kārpārsaka*). It is here, for the first time, that we witness an expansion of the social demographic in patronage.

Two related factors may be forwarded to account for greater diversity within donative inscriptions: [1] a larger slice of the population now had access to wealth—this hitherto confined to political and monastic institutions—and [2] that the cost of the items and labour required to establish a stupa, have an image fashioned, etc., was no longer prohibitive to more people. Such circumstance could no doubt be attributed to economic stability and an increase in labour output across society at large.

However, in his analysis, Skinner contrasts this diversity with some apparent difficulties Huviṣka faced at the beginning of his reign. This is reflected by a reduction in the quality of coins, a military loss on the northwestern frontier, as related by an imperial inscription from Surkh Kotal², dated most likely to the year 31 of Huviṣka's reign (158/159 CE), and the need for an unnamed 'official in charge of temples' (*bakanapati*) to make repairs to the dynastic cult site at Maṭ, which he suggests is to be related to slump that occurred in donative

¹ Sk 68.

² Sims-Williams, 'Bactrian Historical Inscriptions of the Kushan Period', 78–79.

inscriptions between the year 36 and 44 (163–171 CE).¹ These observations may be correct, although it is hard to extrapolate broader economic issues from the frequency of donative inscriptions, when in most years only one or two occur. Indeed, Indo-Scythian satraps and Apracarājas actually increased their activity at such times of strife and this broader demographic of donors would also suggest otherwise.

Of particular interest in this latter regard are the two relic dedications made by Vagamarega (No. 62) and his daughter (No. 63) at Wardak, Afghanistan, in the year 51 (177/178 CE). Both records state that relics of the Buddha were established in honour of Vagamarega's brother Haṣṭhuṇaḥmarega, within stupas at what is most likely the same monastery, named respectively as Kadalayigavagamaregavihara and Kamagulyaputravagamaregavihara, in this case for the Mahāsāṃghikas. It seems therefore that this Marega family had a large amount of expendable wealth and indeed influence, for in the list of beneficiaries they also state the donation is for the 'highest share of the Great King, Supreme King Among Kings, Huviṣka': [2.] *Maharajaratiraja-huveṣkaṣa agrabhagae bhavatu.*

The prominence of this Marega family is further attested by several other inscriptions of the 2nd–3rd centuries CE, which were found at various points along the Silk Road. These include an inscribed stele from Peshawar donated by Miramarega,² a piece of 'graffito' written by a Budhamarega in Hunza, Pakistan,³ and much further east also, the same name crops up on two wooden tablets and a silken bag from Niya, Krorayina (Shanshan 鄯鄯), in the c. 3rd century CE,⁴ as well as on a

¹ See Skinner, 'Marks of Empire', 101–2, 116–17.

² CKI 325, see Domenico Faccenna, 'An Inscribed Stele from Peshawar', *Journal of Central Asia* 8 (1985): 93–104.

³ CKI 502, see Neelis, *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade*, 228–29.

⁴ For editions, see A. M. Boyer et al., *Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions Discovered by Sir Aurel Stein in Chinese Turkestan* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1920), 156–

Buddha statue, inscribed in the Kharoṣṭhī script, that was found at the Shi Fo Temple 石佛寺 in the town of Huang-liang 黄良公社, China.¹ Lin Meicun has traced the movement of the Maregas from Afghanistan along the Southern Silk Road and as far east as modern day Luoyang 洛阳. This ‘famous’ family, according to Lin, hail from the broad Yuezhi 月支 group and were an important social force during the early centuries of the Common Era. He argues that members of this family emigrated with other Kuṣāṇas to China in the 2nd century, during the reign of Huviṣka, and settled in regions of the Tarim Basin. This movement, in turn, is evidenced by certain translators of Buddhist literature, such as Zhiqian 支謙 (223–53 CE), whose name identifies him as a Yuezhi 月支, and who operated primarily in Luoyang.

Indeed, certain other Kuṣāṇa exports are to be found in the Niya documents. Notably, the rulers of Krorayina in the c. 3rd century CE adopted the title *devaputra* (Fig. 8.1) and they also, unlike any rulers in Indic spheres, adopt the title *pracakṣābodhisatva* (‘present Bodhisatva’)²

57, 281. Translations can be found in T. Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharoṣṭhī Documents from Chinese Turkestan* (London: The Royal Asiatic Society, 1940), 87–88.

¹ For an edition and discussion, see Lin Meicun, ‘A Kharoṣṭhī Inscription from Chang’an’, in *Jì Xiànlín Jiàoshòu Bāshí Huádàn Jiniàn Lùn Wénjí* 季羨林教授八十华诞纪念论文集 (Nánchāng 南昌: Jiāngxī rénmín chūbǎnshè 江西人民出版社, 1991), 119–31. Stylistically the image is dated to the Sixteen States Period 十六國時期 (304–439 CE) and the inscription is near illegible. For this reason, Kim suggests ‘these Kharosthi examples might be the result of a mere graphic imitation of the foreign inscriptions by those “Chinese” who did not understand the language but wanted to invoke some magical power by means of copying arcane talismans. If so, we may well need to reformulate our foreign demographic-based assumptions about who used these inscriptions.’ Minku Kim, ‘The Genesis of Image Worship: Epigraphic Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China’ (Los Angeles, University of California Los Angeles, 2011), 7fn6.

² Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharoṣṭhī Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 51–52.

and state they have gone forth on the Mahāyāna.¹ However, this same claim is also made of Huviṣka in a Brāhmī fragment of an *Avadāna* from Afghanistan, which most likely states ‘Huviṣka has set forth in the Mahāyāna’: *yā[nasa]mprasthito huveṣko*. Whilst this asseveration, as Salomon points out, does not suggest that Huviṣka was actually a follower of the Mahāyāna, it does indicate a particular view, current in the minds of at least some Mahāyāna followers of a close historical context, that Huviṣka served some role for this soteriologically distinct movement.²

Gregory Schopen has demonstrated on several epigraphic grounds that the advent of Mahāyāna as a social movement should be located in the period of Huviṣka’s reign: the Amitābha Buddha of Nāgarakṣita (No. 58), dated 26 Huviṣka (153/154 CE) represents the earliest such evidence, and certain epigraphic formulas that bear relation with passages only found in Mahāyānasūtra literature also begin to appear in rare cases at this time.³ We may suggest therefore that this soteriology—and more specifically the equation between soteriological status and rulership—was a phenomenon disseminated from the Kuṣāṇa sphere during the reign of Huviṣka or slightly thereafter.

Whilst his being a Mahāyāna practitioner cannot be independently confirmed, it is clear that Huviṣka was a patron of Buddhism, establishing a monastery at Jamalpur, Mathura, in his name. This occurred sometime before 51 Huviṣka (177/178 CE), as an

¹ Richard Salomon, ‘A Stone Inscription in Central Asian Gāndhārī from Endere (Xinjiang)’, *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 13 (1999): 3–4.

² The fragment is written in Sanskrit and a Brāhmī Gupta script, attributed to 3rd–4th century CE. For an edition and discussion, see Richard Salomon, ‘A Fragment of a Collection of Buddhist Legends, with a Reference to Huviṣka as a Follower of the Mahāyāna’, in *Buddhist Manuscripts Vol II.*, ed. Jens Braarvig et al. (Oslo: Hermes Academic Publishing, 2002), 253; 256; 260–61.

³ Gregory Schopen, *Figments and Fragments of Mahāyāna Buddhism: More Collected Papers*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), 223ff; 247ff.

inscribed Buddha statue (No. 65), dedicated by a monk Buddhavarma, records it was established within the Mahārājadevaputravihāra. Another much later inscription, dated 77 [Vasudeva] (204/205 CE) also records the name of a Huviṣkavihāra at the same site, which presumably refers to the same monastery:

*saṃ 70 7 gr 4 di 4 mahārājasya rājātirājasya devapūtrasya
hūv[i]ṣkasya v[i]hāre dānaṃ bh[i]kṣusya jivakasya oḍi-
yanakasya kumbhako 20 5 sarvvasatvahita-sukha bhavatu ◡
saghe c[ā]turdiṣe¹*

Year 77, month 4 of summer, day 4. In the monastery of the Great King, Supreme King among Kings, Son of Gods, Huviṣka, may the gift, pillar 25, of the monk Jivaka from Uḍḍiyāna be for the welfare and happiness of all beings; for the community of the four directions.

This site at Jamalpur underwent significant changes in its history, being home to different cults and religious institutions.² However, it is from the reign of Huviṣka that it quite evidently becomes an exclusively Buddhist site, a domination which, in part, is to be attributed to the patronage of this Kuṣāṇa ruler.

VĀSUDEVA

Vāsudeva (190–226 CE) governed for just shy of 40 years. He adopted a flourishing empire, indicated by his issuing of high standard gold and copper coinage, as well as by the fact an unprecedented 71 donations

¹ Sk 96.

² Lüders, *Mathurā Inscriptions*, 57ff.

were made during his reign, by a variety of individuals, including perfume traders (*gandhika*), cloak makers (*pravārika*), monastic scribes (*kāyastha*), goldsmiths (*hiraṇyakara*) and guildswomen (*śreṣṭhīnī*). A large number of these inscriptions do not mention the ruler's name in their date formula. However, due to the years being late in the first century of the era of Kaniṣka I, exceeding all dates in the era of Kaniṣka II (which do not extend past year 40), all inscriptions can be securely dated to within his reign. However, another conclusion is to be drawn from his name's absence; namely, donors, for the most part, now saw no need to state the era of ruler. Thus, of the 71 donations, a mere 6 stipulate a year in the reign of Vāsudeva and the remainder simply give the year, in addition to one other dated to the Indo-Greek Era. Buddhists again represent the majority, with a total of 47 donations, a large number of 21 Jain donations are also found, as well as a single imperial, Nāga cult and Brahmanical donation each.

The ruler is only explicitly mentioned in one Buddhist donation at the monastic complex in Ranigat, Pakistan, which is dated 85 Vāsudeva (212/213 CE), and wishes that the donation may be for the highest share of the ruler: *Vasudeva maharaja devaputraṣa agrabhagapadīhaṃśadae bhava(*tu)*¹. However, several Kuṣāṇa officials governing under him do appear sporadically in mostly Buddhist inscriptions.

Most notable among these are figures related to what was likely a wealthy and politically influential family named Mihira. The name first

¹ CKI 336. For an edition and the archaeological context, see Odani, 'New Discoveries from the Excavations at Rānigāt, Pakistan', in *South Asian Archaeology 1997: Proceedings of the Fourteenth International Conference of the European Association of South Asian Archaeologists, Held in the Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente, Palazzo Brancaccio, Rome, 7–14 July 1997*, ed. Maurizio Taddei and Giuseppe de Marco, vol. 90, Serie Orientale Roma (Rome: Istituto Italiano Per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 2000), 831–34.

arises as the title of a monastery, the Mihiravihāra, on an inscribed Buddha statue (No. 69) from Kaman, Mathura, which was donated by the monk Nandika in 74 [Vāsudeva] (201/202 CE), into the possession of the Sarvāstivādin teachers: *bhikṣusya namndikasya dānaṃ bhagavato śakyamuninā pratimā mihiravihāre ac[ār]yyaṇāṃ sarvvastivādīnāṃ parigrahe*. In the same year, another likely member of this family, the Great General (*mahādaṇḍanāyaka*) Kṣaṇḍamihira, arises as the co-donor of a stone tablet (No. 68), co-donated with another Great General Valāna, who in this case explicitly state a year in the era of the Great King, Supreme King among King, Son of Gods, Vāsudeva. This tablet was found at Jamalpur, Mathura, where Huviṣka had formerly established his own Huviṣkavihāra. And this is significant because several other members of the Mihira family are encountered in other inscribed architectural pieces from this site, implying they were collectively responsible for the sponsorship of two major Buddhist monastic complexes in the vicinity of Mathura, one at Kaman and the other at Jamalpur.

Fig. 8.5 Dated Inscriptions from the reign of Vāsudeva

No.	Title	Provenance	Date	Donation	Ruling Group	Individuals		Ref.
						Name	Title	
1	Buddha of Guṇṣenā	Palikhera Mathura, India	64/67 Vāsudeva (191–95 CE)	<i>pratimā,</i> <i>gṛha</i>	—	Guṇasenā	<i>kutum̐binī</i>	Sk 88
2	Jina of Munaśimitā	Ahichchatra, India	71 [Vāsudeva] (198/199 CE)	—	—	Munaśimitā Suṣoṭī Hemadeva	<i>duhitṛ</i> — —	Sk 89
3	Standing ‘Scythian’ Statue	Mathura, India	72 [Vāsudeva] (199/200 CE)	—	—	—	—	§ 107
4	Jina Statue of Jayadevī	—	72 [Vāsudeva] (199/200 CE)	—	—	Jayadevī	—	Sk 90
5	Gift of Buddhazia and Buddhadeva	Begram, Afghanistan	74 [Vāsudeva] (201/202 CE)	<i>dāna-</i> <i>mukha</i>	—	Buddhazia Buddhadeva	— —	CKI 557
6	Jina of Dharavalā	Ahichchatra, India	74 [Vāsudeva] (201/202 CE)	<i>datti</i>	—	Dharavalā [...]deva et al	<i>kutum̐binī</i> —	Sk 92
7	Buddha of Nandika	—	74 [Vāsudeva] (201/202 CE)	<i>bhagavat</i> <i>dāna</i>	—	Nandika	<i>bhikṣu</i>	Sk 93
8	Slab of Valāna and Kṣaṇḍamihira	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	74 Vāsudeva (201/202 CE)	—	—	Valāna Kṣaṇḍamihira	<i>mahādaṇḍa-</i> <i>nāya</i> <i>mahādaṇḍa-</i> <i>nāya</i>	Sk 94
9	Buddha of Balā	Caubara, Mathura, India	75 [Vāsudeva] (202/203 CE)	<i>bhagavat</i> <i>dāna</i>	—	Balā Hitaka	<i>duhitṛ</i> <i>vihārasvāmin</i>	Sk 95
10	Torus of Jivaka	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	77 [Vāsudeva] (204/205 CE)	<i>kuṃbhaka</i> <i>dāna</i>	—	Jivaka	<i>bhikṣu</i> <i>oḍinayaka</i>	Sk 96

11	Pillar Base of Unknown Donor	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	77 [Vāsudeva] (204/205 CE)	—	—	—	<i>bhikṣu</i>	Sk 97
12	Torus and Pillar of Buddhīśreṣṭha	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	77 [Vāsudeva] (204/205 CE)	<i>dāna</i>	—	Buddhīśreṣṭha	<i>bhikṣu</i> <i>bhāṣanaka</i> <i>caturvid</i>	Sk 98
14	Pillar Base of Devila	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	77 [Vāsudeva] (204/205 CE)	<i>dāna</i>	—	Devila	<i>devakulika</i>	Sk 99
15	Pillar Base of Dharmadatta 1	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	77 [Vāsudeva] (204/205 CE)	<i>dāna</i>	—	Dharmadatta	<i>bhikṣu</i> <i>dharmakathika</i>	Sk 100
16	Pillar Base of Dharmadatta 2	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	—	<i>dāna</i>	—	Dharmadatta	<i>bhikṣu</i>	Sk 101
17	Pillar Base of Datta 1	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	77 [Vāsudeva] (204/205 CE)	—	—	Datta	—	Sk 102
18	Pillar Base of Datta 2	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	77 [Vāsudeva] (204/205 CE)	<i>dāna</i>	—	Datta	<i>bhikṣu</i>	Sk 103
19	Torus and Pillar Base of Buddharakṣita 1	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	77 [Vāsudeva] (204/205 CE)	<i>dāna</i>	—	Buddharakṣita	<i>vaḍakṣa</i>	Sk 104
20	Torus and Pillar Base of Buddharakṣita 2	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	—	<i>dāna</i>	—	Buddharakṣita	<i>bhikṣu</i> <i>vaḍakṣa</i>	Sk 105
21	Pillar Base of Buddharakṣita,	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	—	<i>dāna</i>	—	Buddharakṣita	<i>bhikṣu</i> <i>vojyavaśika</i>	Sk 106
22	Pillar Base of Buddhadāsa	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	—	<i>dāna</i>	—	Buddhadāsa Saṃghamitra	<i>bhikṣu</i> <i>sārdhamvihārin</i>	Sk 107
23	Pillar Base of Śurīya and Buddharakṣita	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	—	<i>kuṃbhaka</i> <i>dāna</i>	—	Śurīya Buddharakṣita	<i>Bhikṣu</i> <i>prahāṇika</i> <i>Bhikṣu</i> <i>prahāṇika</i>	Sk 108
24	Pillar Base of Bhadrakhoṣa et al, 1	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	—	<i>kuṃbhaka</i>	—	Bhadrakhoṣa	<i>saṃghaprakṛta</i> <i>pramukha</i>	Sk 109

25	Pillar Base of Bhadragehoṣa et al, 2	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	—	<i>kuṃbhaka</i>	—	Bhadragehoṣa	<i>saṃghapraḁṛta pramukha</i>	Sk 110
26	Pillar Base of Bhadragehoṣa et al, 3	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	—	<i>kuṃbhaka</i>	—	Bhadragehoṣa	<i>saṃghapraḁṛta pramukha</i>	Sk 111
27	Pillar Base of Bhadila et al, 1	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	—	<i>dāna</i>	—	Bhadila	<i>saṃgha-praḁṛta pramukha</i>	Sk 112
28	Pillar Base of Bhadila et al, 2	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	—	<i>dāna</i>	—	Bhadila	<i>saṃgha-praḁṛta pramukha</i>	Sk 113
29	Pillar Base of Bhadra and Buddhagehoṣa, 1	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	—	<i>kuṃbhaka</i>	—	Bhadra Bhadragehoṣa	<i>bhikṣu</i> <i>bhikṣu</i>	Sk 114
30	Pillar Base of Bhadra and Buddhagehoṣa, 2	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	—	<i>kuṃbhaka</i>	—	Bhadra Bhadragehoṣa	<i>bhikṣu</i> <i>bhikṣu</i>	Sk 115
31	Pillar Base of Saṃghavarma and Vṛddha	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	—	<i>kuṃbhaka</i> <i>dāna</i>	—	Saṃghavarma Vṛddha	<i>bhikṣu</i> <i>bhikṣu</i>	Sk 116
32	Pillar Base of Saṃghadeva	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	—	<i>dāna</i>	—	Saṃghadeva Vakuḁa	<i>bhikṣu</i> <i>āntevāsin</i>	Sk 117
33	Pillar Base of Buddhagehoṣa and Phalaphala	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	—	<i>dāna</i>	—	Buddhagehoṣa Phalaphala	<i>bhikṣu</i> <i>bhikṣu</i>	Sk 118
34	Pillar Base of Phalaphala	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	—	<i>dāna</i>	—	Phalaphala	<i>bhikṣu</i>	Sk 119
35	Pillar Base of Buddhamitra	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	—	<i>dāna</i>	—	Buddhamitra	<i>bhikṣu</i>	Sk 120
36	Pillar Base of Buddhist Elder	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	—	<i>dāna</i>	—	—	<i>saṃghasthavīra</i> <i>bhadanta</i>	Sk 121
37	Pillar Base of	Jamalpur,	—	<i>dāna</i>	—	Vakamihira	<i>viśvasika</i>	Sk 122

	Vakamihira, 1	Mathura, India						
38	Torus of Horamurṇḍaphara, 1	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	—	<i>dāna</i>	—	Horamurṇḍa- phara Vakamihira	<i>putra</i> —	Sk 122
39	Pillar Base of Vakamihira, 2	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	—	<i>dāna</i>	—	Vakamihira	<i>viśvasika</i>	Sk 123
40	Torus of Horamurṇḍaphara, 2	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	—	<i>dāna</i>	—	Horamurṇḍa- phara Vakamihira	<i>putra</i> —	Sk 123
41	Pillar Base of Vakamihira, 3	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	—	<i>dāna</i>	—	Vakamihira	<i>viśvasika</i>	Sk 124
42	Torus of Horamurṇḍaphara, 3	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	—	<i>dāna</i>	—	Horamurṇḍa- phara Vakamihira	<i>putra</i> —	Sk 124
43	Pillar Base of Aśyala	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	—	<i>kuṃbhaka</i>	—	Aśyala	<i>viśvasika</i>	Sk 125
44	Bodhisattva of Sandhika	Caubara, Mathura, India	79 [Vāsudeva] (206/207 CE)	<i>bodhisattva</i>	—	Sandhika	<i>bhikṣu</i> <i>vinayadhara</i>	Sk 126
45	Jina of Vijayaśiri	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	7[... Vāsudeva] (197–207 CE)	<i>dāna</i> <i>pratimā</i>	—	Vijayaśira et al	<i>pitāmahī</i> <i>māṭṛ</i> <i>dharmapatnī</i> <i>upavāsini</i>	Sk 221
46	Nāga of Trivāhana	Mathura, India	80 Vāsudeva (207/208 CE)	<i>pratimā</i>	—	Trivāhana	<i>Mahādaṇḍa- nāyaka</i>	Sk 127
47	Jina of Bala	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	80 Vāsudeva (207/208 CE)	—	—	Bala Dasakadasa et al	<i>duhitṛ</i> <i>vadu</i> —	Sk 128
48	Jina at Request of Dhana[...]	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	80 [Vāsudeva] (207/208 CE)	—	—	Dhana[...]	—	Sk 129
49	Jina of Grahaśirī	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā,	81 [Vāsudeva]	—	—	Grahaśirī	—	Sk 130

		Mathura, India	(208/209 CE)					
50	Pedestal of Unknown Donor	Hashtnaga, Charsadda, Pakistan	384 [Yoṇa] (208/209 CE)	—	—	—	—	CKI 124
51	Jina of Rudradeva and Grahaśiri	Kaṅkāli Ṭilā, Mathura, India	82 [Vāsudeva] (209/210 CE)	<i>pratimā</i>	—	Rudradeva Grahaśirī	—	Sh 138
52	Jina of Pūvakhamī	Kaṅkāli Ṭilā, Mathura, India	83 [Vāsudeva] (210/211 CE)	<i>pratimā</i>	—	Pūvakhamī	<i>kutumbinī</i> <i>gandhika</i>	Sk 131
53	Jina of Unknown Donor	Kaṅkāli Ṭilā, Mathura, India	83 [Vāsudeva] (210/211 CE)	—	—	—	—	Sk 132
54	Jina of Koṭabhavā	Mathura, India	84 [Vāsudeva] (211/212 CE)	<i>pratimā</i>	—	Koṭabhavā Aindra et al	<i>kutumbinī</i> —	Sk 133
55	Jina of Datā	Mathura, India	84 [Vāsudeva] (211/212 CE)	<i>pratimā</i> <i>dāna</i>	—	Datā Okhārika et al	<i>kutumbinī</i> —	Sk 134
56	Well Donation of Nṛbhrātrīśarman's Son	—	85 [Vāsudeva] (212/213 CE)	<i>kūpa</i> <i>dāna-</i> <i>mukha</i>	—	— Nribhratrisāma	<i>putra</i> —	CKI 461
57	Jina of Unknown Teacher	Kaṅkāli Ṭilā, Mathura, India	85 [Vāsudeva] (212/213 CE)	—	—	—	<i>vācaka</i>	Sk 135
58	Stone Slab of Unknown Donor for Benefit of Vāsudeva	Ranigat, Buner, Pakistan	85 Vāsudeva (212/213 CE)	—	Kuṣāṇa	Vāsudeva	<i>mahārāja</i> <i>devaputra</i>	CKI 336
59	Jina of Priya's Wife	—	86 [Vāsudeva] (213/214 CE)	—	—	— Priya	<i>kutumbinī</i> —	Sk 138
60	Śivaliṅga of Unknown Donor	Mathura, India	86 [Vāsudeva] (213/214 CE)	<i>īśvara</i>	—	—	—	Sk 139
61	Jina at Request of	Kaṅkāli Ṭilā,	87 [Vāsudeva]	—	—	Mitra	<i>śiṣya</i>	Sk 140

	Mitra	Mathura, India	(214/215 CE					
62	Jina of Śreṣṭhīnī	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	87 [Vāsudeva] (214/215 CE	—	—	— Avāśika	śreṣṭhīnī —	Sk 141
63	Buddha Statue of Dharmapriya	Mamane Dheri, Charsadda, Pakistan	89 [Vāsudeva] (216/217 CE)	<i>deya-</i> <i>dharmā</i>	—	Dharmapriya Buddhapriya	śramaṇa <i>upādhyāya</i>	CKI 161
64	Jina of Bhini	Mathura, India	90 [Vāsudeva] (217/218 CE)	<i>dāna</i>	—	Bhinī	<i>kutumbinī</i>	Sk 143
65	Jina of Unknown Donor	Mathura, India	92 [Vāsudeva] (219/220 CE)	—	—	—	—	Sh 156
66	Stupa of Grāmaśesika	—	92 [Vāsudeva] (219/220 CE)	<i>stupa</i>	—	Grāmaśesika	<i>bhikṣu</i> <i>vastavya</i>	Sk 145
67	Jina of Deva's Daughter	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	93 [Vāsudeva] (220/221 CE)	<i>pratimā</i>	—	— Deva et al	<i>duhitṛ</i> <i>hiraṇyakara</i>	Sk 146
68	Buddha of Monastic Scribes	Mathura, India	93 [Vāsudeva] (220/221 CE)	<i>bhagavat</i> <i>chattrā</i>	—	—	<i>kāyastha</i> <i>śramaṇa</i>	Sk 147
69	Buddha of Nāgamitra	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	94 [Vāsudeva] (220/221 CE)	<i>bhagavat</i>	—	Nagamitra	<i>bhikṣu</i>	Sk 148
70	Well of Aśvarakṣita Corporation	Peshawar, Pakistan	94 [Vāsudeva] (220/221 CE)	<i>kūpa</i>	—	Aśvarakṣita	<i>sahaya</i>	CKI 829
71	Jina of Unknown Donor	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	98 [Vāsudeva] (224/225 CE)	—	—	—	—	Sh 157
72	Jina of Mitrā	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	98 Vāsudeva (224/225 CE)	—	—	Mitrā Varuṇa — et al	<i>vadhu</i> <i>gandhika</i> <i>pravārika</i>	Sk 151
73	Plaque of Grahadatta's Daughter	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	99 [Vāsudeva] (225/226 CE)	—	—	— Grahadatta et al	<i>duhitṛ</i> —	Qu 27
74	Buddha of Sena's	Lākhanū, Alīgarh,	Vāsudeva	—	—	—	<i>vadhu</i>	Lakh 2

Daughter-in-Law

Uttar Pradesh,
India

(190–226 CE)

Sena

—

A total of 33 individual inscriptions were found at this site on tori and pillar bases, several of which are dated to 77 [Vāsudeva] (204/205 CE). These were donated primarily by monastic figures from as far afield as Uḍḍiyāṇa (Swat), as in the case the monk Jivaka's inscription, cited above, indicating the joint funding of a major temple structure in this year.¹ But six thereof, represented by three pillar bases and tori, name a certain Vakamihira, and his sons, Horamuṇḍaga and Horamurdapphara².

[Base] [1.] [dānaṃ] viśv[a]sik[a]sya v[akamīh]īr[as]y[a]
s[ahā p]utre[ṇa] horamuṇḍa[ge]na im[e] [2.] [na]
devadharm[m]apa[r]it[y]āgena [a]cala[m=ai]ś[var]y[y]aṃ
bhav[a]t[u]

[Torus] d[a]naṃ Vakamīhīraputrasya horamu[r]d[d]a-
pharasya³

[Base] Gift of the overseer of the house Vakamihira, along with his son Horamuṇḍaga. By means of relinquishing this gift-worthy object, may the sovereignty be unshaken.

[Torus] Gift of Horamurddaphara, son of Vakamihira.

This same formula is repeated almost verbatim on the remaining two pillar bases and tori. Vakamihira's wish that the sovereignty (*aiśvarya*) be unshaken strengthens the connection the Mihira family had with the Kuṣāṇa Vāsudeva. That he served an official function in the Kuṣāṇa

¹ For editions, see Sk 96–125. For a highly detailed discussion of the pillar bases and the significance of the Jamalpur site for the Kuṣāṇas and Buddhism, see Skinner, 'Marks of Empire', 136ff.

² Some treat the two latter names as equivalent, though this is not an obvious conclusion, cf. Lüders, *Mathurā Inscriptions*, 95; Th. Damsteegt, *Epigraphical Sanskrit, Its Rise, Spread, Characteristics and Relationship to Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 40; Skinner, 'Marks of Empire', 305.

³ This text is repeated near verbatim thrice, see Sk 122–124.

Empire is also indicated by his appellation, which seems to mean ‘overseer of the house’ (*viśvasika*)¹. However, precisely what this title connotes is decidedly uncertain. It appears elsewhere on another undated inscription, the Standing ‘Scythian’ Statue in Fig 8.5 above, which depicts a figure sporting the same ‘wadded boots that are worn by Kaniṣka in his well known statue’,² in connection with a figure named Ulāna:

[1.] *maha[daṃḍa]nā[yakasya] yamaṣa[2.][heka]s[ya]a³ [v]iś-
[v]a[saka]sya Ulānasya paṭimā⁴*

Whether *yamaṣakeha* is the name of another individual,⁵ in this case a great general, or is simply another title of Ulāna is not certain. Since Ulāna may well be the same as the Great General Valāna above, perhaps the latter option is the more favourable and would date this inscription to around 201/202 CE. It would also indicate perhaps that the ‘overseer of the house’ was specifically related to the military. Others have loosely interpreted the title in this vein: Heinrich Lüders suggested it denotes ‘a title of some functionary of high rank during the Kuṣāṇ period’,⁶ Kalyani Das concurs, in deeming it to be a ‘reference to officers’ and an

¹ Most likely equivalent to BHS: *viśvāsika*, *visvāsika* and *visvāsika*. It arises either in the negated sense of [1] one who is not trustworthy (*aviśvāsika*), Mv 3. 378. Or [2] in the sense of the ‘overseer of the house’, see below.

² Heinrich Lüders, ‘Seven Brahmi Inscriptions from Mathura and Its Vicinity’, *Epigraphia Indica* 24 (38 1937): 206.

³ Lüders is unable to offer an explanation for the presumably Iranian title *yamaṣakeha*. Lüders, ‘Seven Brahmi Inscriptions from Mathura and Its Vicinity’, 207.

⁴ § 119.

⁵ Skinner, ‘Marks of Empire’, 354.

⁶ See his commentary to § 119.

‘official designation’,¹ and D.C. Sircar regards it as a ‘private secretary’, though provides no good explanation.²

Its precise purport, however, may find clarification in Buddhist literature. One passage in the *Svāgatāvadāna* of the *Divyāvadāna* names a Brahmin Ahituṇḍika as the ‘overseer of the house’, charged in this case with feeding wine to elephants.³ An almost identical passage is to be found in the *Cīvaravastu* of the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*, naming an ‘overseer of the house of elephants of King Prasenajit of Kośala called Śrīvardhana.’⁴ In these two cases, therefore, the ‘overseer of the house’ is specifically concerned with the care of elephants, whose martial significance as one member of the four-limbed force (*caturaṅga-balakāya*)—elephants, horses, chariots and infantry⁵—need hardly be stressed. Although it is not obvious Vakamihira and Ulāna were also tasked with this specific duty, the rarity of the title in epigraph and text may well lend to the view, it being transmitted as administrative title used under the Kuṣāṇas within Sarvāstivādin circles, with whom these sources are to be institutionally connected.

¹ Kalyani Das, *Early Inscriptions of Mathurā – A Study* (Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, 1980), 71–72.

² Sircar, *Indian Epigraphical Glossary*, 269; 360; 379. Sircar, 1966: 269; 360; 379.

³ *rājñā prasenajitā kauśalena hastimadhyasyopari viśvāsikaḥ sthāpita*. Divy 188. Andy Rotman decides not to translate this term directly and leaves it without comment. He renders this passage as, ‘King Prasenajit of Kośala placed him in charge of liquor for the elephants. Andy Rotman, trans., *Divine Stories. Divyāvadāna Part I* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2008), 316.

⁴ *rājñāḥ prasenajitaḥ kosalasya śrīvardhano nāma hastiviśvāsikaḥ. so ‘pareṇa samayena rājñā avasāditaḥ*. MSV 2 .66.

⁵ E.g., *athā rājā ajātaśatruś caturaṅgabalakāyaṃ saṃnahya hastikāyaṃ aśvakāyaṃ rathakāyaṃ pattikāyaṃ rājānaṃ prasenajitaṃ kauśalam abhiniryāto yuddhāya*. Avś 1. 54. ‘Then King Ajātaśatru readied the groups of the four-limbed force [comprising] a group of elephants, horses, chariots and foot-men and marched forwards to engage king Prasenajit.’

LATE KUṢĀṆA PERIOD

The later phases of the Kuṣāṇa Empire during the reigns of Kaniṣka II (229–245 CE), Vāsiṣka (c. 248–266 CE) and Kaniṣka III (c. 267–unknown date) are characterised by what Skinner terms ‘imperial diminution’, seen in a decreasing number of donative inscriptions indicative of a dysfunctional economy and in the invasions of the Sasanians which precipitated the demise of Kuṣāṇa power in Bactria (c. 230).¹

24 inscriptions fall within the reign of Kaniṣka II. However, many of these must remain provisional. Since the year is dated by dropping the one hundred numeral, ascertaining whether a given inscription belongs to the era of Kaniṣka I or Kaniṣka II is therefore not always clear. Only nine of the inscriptions stipulate the name of the ruler. In one, the Well Donation of Hiperacaa, from Swabi, Pakistan, dated 11 Kaniṣka II (238/239 CE), it is stipulated that the well was excavated in the reign of Kaniṣka, who is entitled with the ethnonym *muroḍa* and the uncertain title, *marzaka*, denotive in some way of rulership²: *khade kue [mu]r[o]ḍasa marzakasa Kaniṣkasa rajami*.³ Harry Falk dated it to the era of Kaniṣka II on the basis of these more minor titles and that ‘the number of titles used by the Kuṣāṇas and their magnitude increase in diametric opposition to their actual political power’.⁴

10 inscriptions fall within the reign of Vāsiṣka (c. 248–266 CE). However, only three state his name in the donative formula and no inscriptions are found in the last decade of his rule. For this reason, the precise period of his governance is not known. Notably, two of the

¹ Skinner, ‘Marks of Empire’, 179ff.

² For discussion of these titles, see Falk, ‘Names and Titles’, 79–80.

³ For a full edition of the inscription, see CKI 148.

⁴ Falk, ‘Pious Donation of Wells’, 27.

inscriptions to likely name him arise much further south at Sāñcī, Madhya Pradesh. The first, a Buddha donated by Vidyamatī¹ is dated to year 22 of Vaskuṣānā, a distinct name which is taken either as a different ruler or an abbreviated form of Vas-(iṣka) coupled with the dynastic epithet -kuṣāṇa. Since the second, the Buddha Image of Madhurikā (No. 71), is dated to 28 Vāsiṣka (254/255 CE), the latter solution is perhaps the more favourable.² That the Kuṣāṇas appear so far south is no doubt curious, but for lack of numismatic finds it does not suggest they governed this far and the date formulae are more likely the product of a devotee from the Indic North and subject of Vāsiṣka.

Only one Kharoṣṭhī inscription derives from the reign of Kaniṣka III, recording the excavation of a well in year 41 of Kaniṣka II's era (268/269 CE). This record is unusual not only for being singular but also for its singularity in naming the ruler the Great King, Supreme King Among Kings, Caesar, and son of Vāsiṣka: [1.] *maharajasa rajatirajasa devaputrassa kaiśarasa* [2.] *Vaṣeṣkaputrassa Kaniṣkasa*.³

Due to such a small number of inscriptions, little more can be gleaned regarding the picture of society and donative activity during the period of the Late Kuṣāṇas. A greater number of Jain inscriptions in comparison to others may be indicative of a shift in the patterns of patronage at Mathura. But any such conclusions are pure conjecture. Perhaps the very lack of inscriptions is to be attributed to the diminishing of the Kuṣāṇa Empire. Indeed, regions of the Northwest came under the control of the Sasanians during this period, who appear to have borne some connection to the Kuṣāṇas in adopting the title Kuṣāṇaṣāh in the overstrikes they issued of Vāsiṣka and Kaniṣka III's coinage. Some remnants of the Kuṣāṇas would persist until the

¹ For an edition, see Sk. 182.

² For arguments for and against these two positions, see Skinner, 'Marks of Empire', 195–96.

³ For a full edition of the inscription, see CKI 230.

beginning of the 4th century, whereafter the Gupta Samudragupta assumed control to establish the foundation of what would become another vast empire.¹

¹ On these later phases, see Skinner, 'Marks of Empire', 178ff.

Fig 8.6. Dated Inscriptions from the Late Kuṣāṇa Period

No.	Title	Provenance	Date	Donation	Ruling Group	Individuals		Ref.
						Name	Title	
1	Jain Statue of Unknown Donor	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	4 Kaniṣka II (231/232 CE)	<i>dāti</i>	—	— Sihamitrā et al	<i>sārdham-cāriṇī</i> <i>sārdham-cāriṇī</i>	Sk 153
2	Jina of Unknown Donor	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	5 [Kaniṣka II] (232/233 CE)	—	—	—	—	Sk 155
3	Water Tank of Viśākhamitrā	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	5 Kaniṣka II (232/233 CE)	<i>dāna</i>	—	Viśākhamitrā Buddhila et al	<i>duhitṛ</i> <i>vadhu</i> <i>dharmapatnī</i>	Sk 156
4	Jina of Pāla's Daughter	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	5 Kaniṣka II (232/233 CE)	<i>pratimā</i>	—	— Pāla et al	<i>duhitṛ</i>	Sk 157
5	Jina of Bodhilabhī	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	5 [Kaniṣka II] (232/233 CE)	—	—	Bodhilabhī	—	Sk 158
6	Jina at Request of Ārya Kṣeraka	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	5 [Kaniṣka II] (232/233 CE)	—	—	Kṣeraka Et al	<i>ārya</i>	Sk 159
7	Jina of Sthirā	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	—	<i>dāna</i>	—	Sthirā Kuṭha Kusutha Kṣeraka Et al	<i>dharmapatnī</i> — <i>ārya, vācaka</i>	Sk 218
8	Buddha Statue of Budhananda	—	5 [Kaniṣka II] (232/233 CE)	<i>dāna-mukha</i>	—	Budhananda	<i>trepīṭaka</i>	CKI 232
9	Jina at Request of Ārya Ghoṣṭ[...] and Jayā	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	7 Kaniṣka II (234/235 CE)	—	—	Ghoṣṭ[...] Jayā	<i>āryā</i> <i>āryā</i>	Sk 161

10	Jina of Grahapāla	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	9 [Kaniṣka II] (236/237 CE)	—	—	Grahapālā Ekaḍala et al	<i>kuṭumbinī</i> <i>vadhū</i> <i>śiṣyā</i> —	Sk 162
11	Jina of Vikadā	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	9 Kaniṣka II (236/237 CE)	—	—	Vikadā Bhaṭṭmitra	<i>kuṭumbinī</i> —	Sk 163
12	Well Donation of Hiperacaa	Zeda, Swabi, Pakistan	11 Kaniṣka II (238/239 CE)	<i>kūpa</i> <i>toyada</i>	Kuṣāṇa	Hiperecaa Kaniṣka Et al	— <i>muroḍa</i> <i>marzaka</i>	CKI 148
13	Kārttikeya of Viśvila's Sons	—	11 [Kaniṣka II] (238/239 CE)	<i>pratimā</i>	—	Viśvadeva Viśvasoma Viśvabhava Viśvavasu Viśvila	<i>kṣatriya</i> <i>bhrāṭṛ</i> <i>putra</i> <i>kṣatriya</i> <i>bhrāṭṛ</i> <i>putra</i> <i>kṣatriya</i> <i>bhrāṭṛ</i> <i>putra</i> <i>kṣatriya</i> <i>bhrāṭṛ</i> <i>putra</i> —	Sk 164
14	Donation of Nagadatta	Sui Vihar, Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan	11 Kaniṣka II (238/239 CE)	<i>yaṣṭi</i> <i>parivāra</i>	—	Nagadatta	<i>bhikṣu</i> <i>dharmā-</i> <i>kathika</i> <i>śiṣya</i> <i>anuśiṣya</i>	CKI 147

						Damana et al	<i>vihāra- svāminī</i>	
15	Jina of Jinadāsi et al	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	12 [Kaniṣka II] (239/240 CE)	—	—	Jinadāsi et al	<i>śrāvikā</i>	Sk 167
16	Buddha of Saṃghilā	Mohalla, Mathura, India	14 Kaniṣka II (240/241 CE)	<i>pratimā</i>	—	Saṃghilā Hāsthi	<i>bhāryā pravārika</i>	§ 81
17	Jina of Kumāramitā	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	15 [Kaniṣka II] (241/242 CE)	<i>pratimā, dāna</i>	—	Kumāramitā Veniga	<i>dharmapatnī śreṣṭhin</i>	Sk 169
						et al		
18	Buddha of Virasena's Son	—	16 [Kaniṣka II] (242/243 CE)	<i>pratimā</i>	—	— Virasena	<i>putra pravārika</i>	Sk 170
19	Jina at Request of Kauśikī	Mathura, India	17 Kaniṣka II (243/244 CE)	—	—	Kauśikī Graharakṣitā Et al	<i>śiṣyā ārya</i>	Sk 171
20	Jina of Māsigi	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	18 [Kaniṣka II] (244/245 CE)	<i>dāna</i>	—	Māsigi Vasajaya	<i>mātr̥ —</i>	Sk 172
21	Jina of Mitaśiri	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	18 [Kaniṣka II] (244/245 CE)	—	—	Mitaśiri —	<i>duhit̥ —</i>	Sk 173
22	Jina of Le[...]	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	19 [Kaniṣka II] (245/246 CE)	<i>pratimā dāna</i>	—	Le[...] Suchiḥla et al	<i>dharmapatnī —</i>	Sk 175
23	Jina of Dinā	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	20 [Kaniṣka II] (246/247 CE)	<i>pratimā dāna</i>	—	Dinā [...] -matila et al	<i>śrāvaka kuṭumbinī —</i>	Sk 176
24	Jina of Mitaśiri	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	20 [Kaniṣka II] (246/247 CE)	<i>dāna</i>	—	Mitaśiri Haggadeva	<i>dharmapatnī — lohavarṇika</i>	Sk 177

						Vadharada Khoṭṭamitta et al	<i>maṇikāra</i>	
25	Jina of Dharmasomā	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	22 [Vāsiṣka] (248/249 CE)	<i>dāna</i>	—	Dharmasomā	<i>sārthavāhinī</i>	Sk 179
26	Jina of Unknown Donor from Vāruṇagaṇa	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	22 [Vāsiṣka] (248/249 CE)	<i>pratimā</i>	—	—	—	Sk 180
27	Buddha of Unknown Donor in Pravārikavihāra	Mathura, India	22 [Vāsiṣka] (248/249 CE)	<i>pratimā</i>	—	—	—	Sk 181
28	Buddha of Vidyamatī	Sāñcī, India	22 Vaskuṣāṇa (248/249 CE)	<i>bhagavat</i>	—	Vidyamatī	—	Sk 182
29	Sacrificial Post of Droṇala	Isapur, Mathura, India	24 Vāsiṣka (250/251 CE)	<i>yupa</i>	—	Droṇala et al	<i>brāhmaṇa</i>	Sk 183
30	Jina of Rajagini Vasu	Kaṅkālī Ṭilā, Mathura, India	25 [Vāsiṣka] (251/252 CE)	—	—	Rajagini Vasu Nādi et al	<i>duhitṛ</i> —	Sk 184
31	Nāga of Nandibala et al	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	26 [Vāsiṣka] (252/253 CE)	<i>śilāpaṭṭa</i>	—	Nandibala —	<i>putra</i> <i>śailalāka</i>	Sk 185
32	Buddha Image of Madhurikā	Sāñcī, India	28 Vāsiṣka (254/255 CE)	<i>bhagavat</i>	—	Madhurikā Khara	<i>duhitṛ</i> —	Sk 186
33	Buddha of Unknown Donor	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	28 Vāsiṣka (254/255 CE)	—	—	—	—	§ 28
34	Well Donation of of Unknown Donor	Kamra, Attock, Pakistan	30 Vāsiṣka (256/257 CE)	—	—	—	—	CKI 230
35	Well Donation of Samadavhara	Ara, Attock, Pakistan	41 Kaṇiṣka III (268/269 CE)	<i>kūpa</i>	—	Samadavhara Toṣapurīa	<i>putra</i> —	CKI 158

PART TWO

BUDDHIST INSTITUTIONS AND INDIVIDUALS

It cannot be ignored that the political history outlined above is almost exclusively derived from epigraphic sources whose common thread is the Buddhist community (*saṃgha*). One would imagine that dramatic changes to power structures at both regional and local levels would present an impossible hindrance to the development of institutional Buddhism; yet, contrary to the ebb and flow of these seemingly tempestuous tides, it was apparently this sole institution that proceeded unhindered. This could indicate that there was no such upheaval and that the multifarious political structures found in epigraphy simply present a reality more complicated than it truly was. However, many of the political alliances or subjugations between these ruling groups were expressed through donative epigraphs, and subsequently, political ties were formed (at least in part) within the sphere of the Buddhist ritual. Therefore, the Buddhist community served an instrumental role in society and politics and its institutions were not simply passive entities weathering a storm, but rather dynamic, creative and active bodies that shaped the trajectory of events and represented deeply embedded power structures of their own. But how exactly did the Buddhist community serve such a role?

The answer to this question has a lot to do with the nature of Buddhist ritual practice, and we shall have cause to deal with this later in detail. It also has a lot to do with the shape of society,¹ and when a significant portion of the population define themselves as Buddhist, then this alone would be reason enough for the economically and politically powerful to find influence there. Of equal import are the institutional structures of the community, the individual monastic institutions (*nikāya*) and the social backgrounds of the monastic individuals that comprised them. Needless to say, it is nigh impossible to precisely define these institutional structures in any given period. Monastic institutions were not monolithic and were undoubtedly particular in respect to their own internal structures, their practices, as well as to their societal role within a given locale. A comprehensive answer to this question would subsequently demand a gargantuan study of the various, institutionally inconsistent,² and rather unwieldy (if extant) *Vinayas*³ alongside the archaeological and epigraphic sources. Even in the fortuitous circumstances that such a study were realised, accessing the

¹ See Chapter Ten: Individuals in Donative Inscriptions.

² For further details of the variety and structures of the *Vinayas*, see Petra Kieffer-Pülz, 'What the *Vinayas* Can Tell Us About Law', in *Buddhism and Law. An Introduction*, ed. Rebecca Redwood French and Mark A. Nathan (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 47–52.

³ For a comprehensive outline of the various *Vinayas*, see Frauwallner, *The Earliest Vinaya and the Beginnings of Buddhist Literature*. Only the Pali *Vinaya*, as transmitted by the Theravādins, is entirely extant, and has received a complete edition and translation, whereas those of other monastic institutions are not fully attested. The *Sarvāstivādivinaya* is only partially extant in Chinese, with only a small number of Sanskrit fragments available from Central Asia; the *Mūlasarvāstivādivinaya* is partially extant in Sanskrit and Chinese, and only exists fully in Tibetan; the *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya* is only partially attested in Chinese; and the *Mahāsāṃghikalokottaravādivinaya* of the is partially extant in Chinese and Sanskrit. See Petra Kieffer-Pülz, 'Die Buddhistische Gemeinde', in *Der Buddhismus I: Der indische Buddhismus und seine Verzweigungen*, ed. Heinz Bechert (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2000), 283ff.

minutia of daily monastic life and monastic roles in distinct social spheres would still present an impassable hurdle.¹ Still, something can be said more generally about the geographical spread of monastic institutions (*nikāya*) and the individual agents that comprised them.

¹ Von Hinüber notes the inherent issues of reconstructing (even normalised) daily monastic behaviour, but does deal quite interestingly with some of the minutia, such as the making of robes and issues of handling property and wealth. See Oskar von Hinüber, 'Everyday Life in an Ancient Indian Buddhist Monastery', *Annual Report of The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology* 9 (2005): 1–32.

CHAPTER NINE: MONASTIC INSTITUTIONS

In the early period, the Buddhist community (*saṃgha*) was ordered according to the structures of ‘non-monarchical’ groups (*gaṇa*) definitive of the agrarian tribal based society of the Gangetic Plains (although without the element of kinship). Scholars have pictured it as having a ‘democratic’ structure with ‘egalitarian’, ‘communist’, and ‘anarchistic’ values, exemplified by the antisocial tendency towards social renunciation (*pravrajyā*). It is frequently claimed that such ideologies were propagated as a revolution against the newly formed commercial confederacies and urbanised city-states (*mahājanapada*), such as Magadha and Kosala, and their incumbent monarchic systems. Buddhism, with its doctrine of suffering (*duḥkha*), is placed in ideological contrast to these states and, it is argued, was designed to appeal to those less well off in society.¹ Somewhat paradoxically, however, the monastic community comprised mainly individuals from Brahmanical, ruling, and mercantile circles—the traditional elites of

¹ See Bailey and Mabbett, *The Sociology of Early Buddhism*, 20ff; Xavier S. Thani Nayagam, ‘Patterns of Studenthood in India’, *Pedagogica Historica: International Journal of the History of Education* 8, no. 1–2 (1968): 479; Marlene Njammasch, ‘Hierarchische Strukturen der buddhistischen Klöstern Indiens in der ersten Hälfte des ersten Jahrtausends unserer Zeitrechnung’, *Ethogr.-Achäol. Z.* 11 (1970): 515; Shaw, ‘Archaeologies of Buddhist Propagation in Ancient India: “Ritual” and “Practical” Models of Religious Change’, 87.

Indic society—who are normatively presented as upholding the political, commercial and mercantile values that are beneficial to Buddhist institutions.

Regardless of whether these opposing positions developed sequentially or concurrently (and broadly the renunciant model is taken as the kern of Buddhist ideology) it would seem that the Buddhist community was quickly socialised due to the institutional tendencies of ordination (*upasampadā*) and the ‘institution of the rain retreat’, which demanded monks assemble for four months between the full moon of Āṣāḍha and the full moon of Kārttika¹, which led to the organisation of monastic communities into permanent institutional structures.²

The subsequent growth and dispersion of Buddhist communities in the centuries following the death of the Buddha inevitably precipitated the development of regionally circumscribed institutional structures, rules of discipline (*vinaya*), as well as aberrant doctrines, praxes, and texts that diverged from a specific standard. Consequently, several schisms arose in the community (*saṃghabheda*), which led to the formation of discrete monastic institutions (*nikāya*). Little concrete is known regarding the localities, temporalities, and circumstances of schisms, and several explanations are provided by tradition and scholarship alike. For instance, the Pali *Vinaya*³ records that a schism occurred during the Buddha’s lifetime due to ideological conflicts with Devadatta, the Buddha’s cousin, over renunciation and monasticism;⁴

¹ Vin. 3. 263.

² Gokhale, ‘Early Buddhism and the Urban Revolution’, 8.

³ Vin 1. 337–338. See Akira Hirakawa, ‘An Evaluation of the Sources on the Date of the Buddha’, in *The Dating of the Historical Buddha. Part I*, ed. Heinz Bechert (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), 257.

⁴ Specifically Devadatta’s followers asked the Buddha for five things (*pañcavatthu*): that all *bhikkhus* should be forest dwellers (*āraññika*) and not live near villages (*gāmanta*), that they should beg for food (*piṇḍapātika*) and not accept invitations (*nimantana*), that they wear rags (*paṃsukulika*) and not

and there are also accounts of discord and schism occurring immediately after the Buddha's death. Most sources state that a schism at the second council of Vaiśālī, dated to one hundred years after the Buddha's death, led to the split between the Sthaviras and Mahāsāṃghikas.¹ And yet other accounts hold that a first schism occurred at a council in Pāṭaliputra that was instigated by Aśoka²: the Aśokan edicts of the 3rd century BCE from Sāñcī, Sarnath and Kauśāmbī do indeed communicate that a schism had arisen in the community due to issues in the observance of the *uposatha*, and that Aśoka legislated against it in his lifetime.³

accept robes (*cīvara*) from householders, that they dwell at the root of a tree (*rukhamūlika*) and not under a sheltered (*channa*) place, and that they never eat fish or meat (*macchamaṃsa*). But the Buddha allowed all of these activities in moderation. Vin 2. 195ff. For further discussion, see Sukumar Dutt, *Early Buddhist Monachism. 600 B.C - 100 B.C* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd, 1924), 117ff.

¹ Other sources state that a schism occurred at another council, held at Pāṭaliputra, due to dispute regarding the five characteristics of an Arhat. Norman, *Pāli Literature. Including the Canonical Literature in Prakrit and Sanskrit of All the Hīnayāna Schools of Buddhism*, 7ff.

² A narrative recorded by Faxian in his closing notes to his translation of the *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya* 摩訶僧祇律 states that the division of the community occurred at the time of Upagupta, and Aśoka. He records that four monastic institutions were created at that time: the Dharmaguptaka, Mahīśāka, Kāśyapīya, and Sarvāstivāda. He briefly records the unique ontology of the Sarvāstivādins to illustrate the doctrinal differences amongst the institutions. Aśoka enquires as to which *Vinaya* is the correct one, to which the answer of course is the majority, i.e., the Mahāsāṃghika. T 1425. 548b1–26.

³ Hultzsch, *Inscriptions of Aśoka*, 159–64. It is maintained that the schism mentioned in the Aśokan edicts does not refer to an overall division in the community but rather a localised division in the region of Magadha, since the term *saṃghabheda* specifically denotes discord in respect to the ritual practice of the *uposatha*. For further discussion, cf. Bechert, 'Aśokas "Schismenedikt" und der Begriff Sanghabheda'.

Accounts differ as to whether schism arose out of a dispute over monastic regulations or doctrine, although most scholars favour the former reason.¹ Moreover, it is unclear how, once created, individual monastic institutions constructed their identities (and this is unlikely to have been consistent within institutions of the same name) or when the schisms actually occurred, although most scholars estimate a point in the 2nd century BCE.²

MONASTIC INSTITUTIONS IN THE NORTH AND NORTHWEST

In the Indic North and Northwest around the turn of the Common Era, it is quite evident that monasticism was firmly cemented and that the community had already divided (in these regions at least) into six different institutions (*nikāya*): the Dharmaguptakas, Sarvāstivādins, Kāśyapīyas, Mahīśāsakas, Mahāsāṃghikas, and Sāṃmitīyas. Although it is conceivable these groups emerged earlier, it is in this period that they initially appear in the historical record and presumably many institutions

¹ See Heinz Bechert, 'On the Origination and Characteristics of Buddhist Nikāyas, or Schools', in *Premier Colloque Étienne Lamotte (Bruxelles et Liège 24-27 Septembre 1989)* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Institute Orientaliste de l'Université Catholique de Louvain, 1993), 51–56; Skilling, Peter, 'Rehabilitating the Pudgalavādins: Monastic Culture of the Vātsīputrīya-Sāṃmitīya School', *Journal of Buddhist Studies* 13 (2016): 2.

² For a discussion of the times, reasons, and implications of schism cf. André Bareau, *Les Sectes Bouddhiques du Petit Véhicule* (Saïgon: École Française d'Extrême-orient, 1955); Dutt, *Early Buddhist Monachism. 600 B.C - 100 B.C.*, 120ff; Collett Cox, 'Mainstream Buddhist Schools', in *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, ed. R. E. Buswell (The Gale Group Inc., 2017), 501–7, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/mainstream-buddhist-schools>.

felt the need to represent themselves epigraphically, and thus publically and officially, for the first time. That institutional identity had become particularly salient is shown by several textual passages¹ retained in Chinese translation that imply institutional division and identity was borne out of the political circumstances peculiar to this historical context.

In the 4th century CE translation of the **Mahāsaṃnipātasūtra* 大方等大集經, we find a prediction of the Buddha, who foretells that five hundred years after his *parinirvāṇa*, the twelve branches of the teaching shall be mistaught by six monastic institutions: the Dharmaguptakas 曇摩耇多, Sarvāstivādins 薩婆帝婆, Kāśyapīyas 迦葉毘部, Mahīśāsakas 爲彌沙塞部, Vātsīputrīyas 婆嗟富羅 and Mahāsāṃghikas 爲摩訶僧祇. But despite being divided, as the account goes, the five (sic) institutions shall not obstruct the Dharma or the attainment of *nirvāṇa*.² One commentary to this passage in the *Fayi mingyi ji* 翻譯名義集 of Fayun 法雲 (467–529 CE) quotes the Buddha as stating also that five hundred years after his *parinirvāṇa*, the bad monks of these five (sic) schools (the same six as above are specified) wrongfully divided up the *Vinayapīṭaka* 毘尼藏 in accordance with their own views.³ These enumerations are in direct accord with the epigraphic record, in which the Dharmaguptaka, Sarvāstivāda, Kāśyapīya, Mahīśāsaka, Sāṃmitīya (held to be the source or derivative of the Vātsīputrīya in different Buddhist accounts)⁴ and Mahāsāṃghika arise.

In addition to the list of monastic institutions being in accordance with the epigraphic material, the narrative stands in correspondence to

¹ Discussed already in passing by Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, 175ff.

² T 397. 159a16–b3.

³ T 2131. 1113a24–b20. For a paraphrased translation of the passage, see Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, 176.

⁴ Bareau, *Les Sectes Bouddhiques du Petit Véhicule*, 17–30; Skilling, Peter, ‘Rehabilitating the Pudgalavādins: Monastic Culture of the Vātsīputrīya-Sāṃmitīya School’, 3.

the ‘Kauśāmbī stories’, discussed above, in which the destructive forces of the bad kings—the Indo-Greeks, Indo-Scythians, Indo-Parthians, and Kuṣāṇas—ultimately produced the circumstances that precipitated a disappearance of the Dharma. Indeed, this section of the **Mahāsaṃnipātasūtra* also details that five hundred years after the Buddha’s death, three kings invade, in this case, the Parthians, Persians and the Scythians, whose enumeration does represent a diversion from other such Kauśāmbī stories of this and other groups.¹ Nonetheless, the narrative situates monastic schism directly within this historical context and has common the model of the disappearing Dharma, attributed to these conditions of the North and Northwest. If the epigraphic material, as the earliest evidence for institutional *differentiation*, is a fair reflection of the temporalities of institutional *division*, and if the temporal attributions of these sources are credible in the same regard, perhaps the advent of several monastic institutions should indeed sought in this period.²

A total of 69 inscriptions, dated to between the early 1st century CE and 3rd century CE, name six monastic institutions³: 24 the

¹ See Nattier, *Once Upon a Future Time*, 177–78. Discussed above in Chapter Two: Narratives of Decline.

² A critique of institutional trends in monasticism is not limited to these two texts and is a view common to Mahāyāna discourse. In the *Rāṣṭrapālapariṣcchāsūtra*, for instance, the end times (*paścimakāla*, *carimakāla*) of the Dharma is attributed to immoral and wealth hungry monastics, who do not follow the *Vinaya*. For further discussion, see Daniel Boucher, ed., *Bodhisattvas of the Forest and the Formation of the Mahāyāna: A Study and Translation of the Rāṣṭrapālapariṣcchā-Sūtra* (University of Hawai’i Press, 2008), 64ff; Jonathan Silk, ‘The Origins and Early History of the Mahāratnakūṭa Tradition of Mahāyāna Buddhism with a Study of the Ratnarāśīsūtra and Related Materials. (Volumes I and II)’ (PhD, Ann Arbor, UMI, 1994), 166ff.

³ André Bareau found that a total of 18 monastic institutions are named in Buddhist literature of which 14 arise in pre-Gupta epigraphy: the Theravāda or

Sarvāstivādins, 18 the Dharmaguptakas, 16 the Mahāsāṃghikas, seven the Kāśyapīyas, two the Mahīśāsakas, and one the Sāṃmitīyas (Fig. 9.1). The frequency at which these institutions arise varies with time and place. Most objects are undated and lack provenance, however, and this hinders a true study of the chronology and geography of monastic institutions. Those that are dated begin to arise from the late Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian Periods but more frequently during the middle Kuṣāṇa Period, after the reign of Kaniṣka I. Indeed, of those that are undated, the majority have been placed on palaeographic grounds to after the 2nd century CE.

The majority of items are monastic objects (ewers pots, etc.).¹ But there are also several dedications of relics, Bodhisattva and Buddha statues, and other architectural features of a stupa or monastic complex. On these objects, the name of a monastic institution is typically specified in a set formula, which states that an object is given into the possession (*parigrahe*)² of the monks (*śramaṇa*), teachers (*ācārya*), etc., of a given institution. These formulae have their blueprint in certain formulae and

Vibhajyavāda, the Haimavata, Mahāsāṃghika, Bahuśrutīya, Caitika, Aparāśaila, Pūrvaśaila, Rājagirika, Siddhārthika, Sarvāstivāda, Mahīśāsaka, Kāśyapīya or Suvarṣaka, Sautrāntika or Suttavāda, Vātsīputrīya, Sāṃmitīya, Dharmottarīya and Bhadrāyānīya, Bareau, *Les Sectes Bouddhiques du Petit Véhicule*, 15–30. Cf. Ajay Mitra Shastri, *An Outline of Early Buddhism: A Historical Survey of Buddhology, Buddhist Schools and Sanghas Mainly Based on the Survey of Pre-Gupta Inscriptions* (Varanasi: Indological Book House, 1965), 67. The earliest of these arise in Brāhmī inscriptions of the c. 2nd–1st century BCE at stupa sites in Madhya Pradesh; these include the Haimavats and Kāśyapīyas, see Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, 523–26.

¹ See Chapter Twelve: Monastic Items.

² Terms occur from the roots *pari-√grah* or *prati-√grah*. Both hold the principal sense of ‘take hold of’, ‘grasp’, ‘acquire’, ‘accept’ etc., and thus the loc. *parigrahe* in the epigraph context is oft rendered ‘for the acceptance’ or ‘in the possession’ of such-such-such an institution; see Sircar, *Indian Epigraphical Glossary*, 238.

regulations concerning the ownership of objects by monks and monasteries in the Chinese witnesses of the *Sarvāstivādinaya* and *Mūlsarvāstivādinaya*.¹ A typical example reads:

*saṃghe cadudiṣe Kakaḍospe Takṣaśilae Kaśaviana śamanana
parigrahe Driḍhasya śamanasa danamukho Śeriana vihare*²

The donation of the monk Driḍha at the Śerianavihāra, into the possession of the Kāśyapīya monks of the four directions, at Taxila, in the region of Kakaḍa

It is no doubt, as Salomon points out, for reasons of ownership that the majority of objects to bear an institutional name are monastic items.³ Indeed, Schopen has drawn attention to both the legal connotations of the donative term ‘into the possession’, observing that ownership demanded that the monks had a duty to maintain the object in order that other can use it and the donor gain merit from the object’s continued usage (*paribhoga*).⁴

The matter of inscribing such objects of display as statues or those that were hidden such as reliquaries implies a distinct function. In the case of the former, an inscription naming a monastic institution may well have served to publically mark an object and space as owned by a monastic institution. Indeed, some regions were so crowded with different groups that, presuming there was a certain amount of jostling

¹ See Chapter Twelve: Donative Inscriptions and Formulae in the *Vinaya*.

² CKI 233. For further discussion, see Harry Falk, ‘A Copper Sieve from Taxila’, *Indo-Asiatische Zeitschrift* 4/5 (2001 2000): 28–34.

³ Richard Salomon, ‘Gandharan Reliquary Inscriptions’, in *Gandharan Buddhist Reliquaries*, by David Jongeward et al. (Seattle: Early Buddhist Manuscripts Project, 2012), 194–95.

⁴ Gregory Schopen, *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters: Still More Papers on Monastic Buddhism in India* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004), 219ff.

for recognition in society, an inscription may have proved to be of utility in this regard. Contrastingly, in the case of inscribed reliquaries that were to be buried, the value of inscribing the name of a monastic institution is harder to square and is attached more to philosophical notions of writing and causality.¹ These objects were seen as mechanisms to attract further donors and thereby produce wealth from any subsequent donations made at the same site—they were both money and merit makers.² But the wealth belonging to a stupa (*staupika*) was separated from that of individual monks (*paudgalika*). For example, an inscribed incense burner from Jalalabad, dated to 24 [Kaniṣka I] (150/151 CE), day two of the month Xandikos, states that it was dedicated to the stupa at Baiṭaana into the possession of the Dharmaguptakas: *saṃ 20 4 khsaṃdikas[a] di [2] thubaṃmi baiṭaanaṃmi acaryaṇa dharmagutakaṇa parigrahami*.³ This object was therefore the property not of the monks but of the stupa⁴ and such capital could be used to maintain the stupa, for instance by selling it off.⁵

¹ See Chapter Fourteen: Inscriptions and Causality.

² This dynamic is articulated nicely in the *Abhisamācārikā*, Abhis 48. 6.

³ CKI 460.

⁴ Other examples suggest otherwise, for example, cf. No. 38.

⁵ See Chapter Fifteen: Stupa Destruction and Relic Theft.

Fig. 9.1 Monastic Institutions in Donative Inscriptions

No	Title	Provenance	Date	Donation	Monastic Institution	Monastery	Individuals		Ref.
							Name	Title	
1	Reliquary Inscription of Naganamda (No. 10)	Samarbagh, Pakistan	50 [Azes] (2/3 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	Dharmaguptaka	—	Naganamda Taravia	<i>bhārya meridarkha</i>	CKI 454
2	Reliquary Inscription of Śatruleka (No. 23)	Bajaur, Pakistan	77 Azes (29/30 CE)	<i>dhātu</i>	Kāsyapīya	—	Śatruleka Vijayamitra Indravarma et al	<i>kṣatrapa apracarāja stratega, gandhāra-svāmin</i>	CKI 257
2	Mathura Lion Captial (No. 25)	Mathura, India	—	<i>śarīra</i>	Sarvāstivāda Mahāsāṃghika	Busavihāra	Yasi Rajuvula Buddhila	<i>agramahiṣī mahā-kṣatrapa bhikṣu</i>	CKI 48
4	Bodhisattva Statue of Nandā (No. 47)	Mathura, India	—	<i>bodhi-sattva</i>	Sarvāstivāda	—	Nandā —	<i>upāsikā kṣatrapa</i>	§ 2
5	Railing of Kaṭhika	Caubara, Mathura, India	—	<i>dāna</i>	Mahāsāṃghika	—	Kaṭhika	<i>abhyantaro-pasthāyaka</i>	Qu 1.17
6	Bodhisattva Statue of Dharmaka	Mathura, India	—	<i>bodhi-sattva</i>	Sāṃmitīya	Śirivihāra	Dharmaka	<i>upadhyāya</i>	Math 70
7	Pedestal Donation for Mahāsāṃghika	Mathura, India	—	—	Mahāsāṃghika	Ālanakavihāra	—	—	Math 73

8	Copper Plates of Helaiūta (No. 33)	—	121 Azes (73/74 CE)	<i>dhātu</i>	Dharmaguptaka	—	Helaiūta Tira 8et al	<i>arivagi kṣatrapa</i>	CKI 564
9	Reliquary Inscription of Priavaśa (No. 38)	—	126 (78/79 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	Mahīśāsaka	<i>vihāra</i>	Priavaśa —	<i>śramaṇa yabgu mahārājā</i>	CKI 331
10	Pot of Mahīśāsakas	—	—	—	Mahīśāsaka	—	—	—	CKI 1119
11	Reliquary Inscription of Candrabhi (No. 39)	Kalawan, Taxila, Pakistan	134 Azes (86/87 CE)	<i>śarīra gaha-stūpa</i>	Sarvāstivāda	—	Candrabhi Sihaseṇa et al	<i>upāsikā bhāryā</i>	CKI 172
12	Inscription for Kāśyapīyas	Takht-i-Bahi, Pakistan	—	—	Kāśyapīya	—	—	—	CKI 55
13	Pot for Kāśyapīya	Charsadda, Pakistan	—	<i>dāna-mukha</i>	Kāśyapīya	—	—	—	CKI 127
14	Copper Ladle of Iśparaka	Taxila, Pakistan	—	<i>dāna-mukha</i>	Kāśyapīya	Uttarāma	Iśparaka	—	CKI 66
15	Sieve of Driḍha	Begram, Afghanistan (from Taxila, Pakistan)	—	<i>dāna-mukha</i>	Kāśyapīya	Śerianavihāra	Driḍha	<i>śramaṇa</i>	CKI 233
16	Copper Ladle of Saṃgharakṣita	Bedadi, Pakistan	—	<i>dāna</i>	Kāśyapīya	—	Saṃgharakṣita	—	CKI 67
17	Dharmaguptaka Pot	Haḍḍa, Afghanistan	—	—	Dharmaguptaka	Sreṭharaṇya	—	—	CKI 362
18	Dharmaguptaka Potsherd	Haḍḍa, Afghanistan	—	—	Dharmaguptaka	Sreṭharaṇya	—	—	CKI 399

19	Dharmaguptaka Potsherd	—	—	—	Dharmaguptaka	—	—	—	CKI 533
20	Dharmaguptaka Pot	—	—	—	Dharmaguptaka	[...]raṇya	—	—	CKI 534
21	Vase of Ana[...]pa	Afghanistan	—	<i>deya- dharma</i>	Dharmaguptaka	Baliyaphaiṃka- vihare	Ana[...]pa [...]budha	<i>putra</i> —	CKI 182
22	Schōyen Collection Pot	Jalalabad, Afghanistan	—	—	Dharmaguptaka	—	—	—	CKI 219
23	Dharmaguptaka Jar	Jalalabad, Afghanistan	—	—	Dharmaguptaka	—	—	—	CKI 510
24	British Library Pot D	—	—	—	Dharmaguptaka	—	—	—	CKI 372
25	British Library Potsherd 8	—	—	—	Dharmaguptaka	—	—	—	CKI 381
26	British Library Potsherd 11	—	—	—	Dharmaguptaka	—	—	—	CKI 383
27	Bowl of Buddhapriya	—	—	<i>dāna- mukha</i>	Dharmaguptaka	Ṅaḥiṇaga- vihare	Buddhapriya et al	<i>śramaṇa</i>	CKI 404
28	Pot of Dharmaguptakas	—	—	—	Dharmaguptaka	—	—	—	CKI 1121
29	British Library Pot A	—	—	<i>pānīya- ghaṭa deya- dharma</i>	Sarvāstivāda	—	Vasavadata Suhasoma	<i>bhāryā svāmin</i>	CKI 369
30	British Library Pot B	Haḍḍa, Afghanistan	—	<i>pānīya- ghaṭa deya- dharma</i>	Sarvāstivāda	Purnagaraṇa	—	—	CKI 370
31	British Library Pot C	—	—	<i>pānīya- ghaṭa</i>	Sarvāstivāda	—	Viratata Srvahama	<i>bhāryā</i> —	CKI 371

32	Sarvāstivāda Pot	Haḍḍa Afghanistan	—	—	Sarvāstivāda	—	—	—	— ¹
33	Pot from Mingora	Mingora, Swat, Pakistan	—	—	Sarvāstivāda	Śpuṭhasa- vihara	—	—	CKI 1111
34	Ewer from Mingora	Mingora, Swat, Pakistan	—	—	Sarvāstivāda	Śpuṭhasa- vihara	—	—	CKI 1109
35	Ewer from Mingora	Mingora, Swat, Pakistan	—	—	Sarvāstivāda	Śpuṭhasa- vihara	—	—	CKI 1110
36	Ewer from Mingora	Mingora, Swat, Pakistan	—	—	Sarvāstivāda	Śpuṭhasa- vihara	—	—	CKI 1112
37	Door from Minogra	Mingora, Swat, Pakistan	—	<i>deya- dharma</i>	Sarvāstivāda	Bhadradha- vihara	Duśa Nanimi	<i>putra</i> —	CKI 1113
38	Pot of Dredhoda	Dir, Pakistan	—	<i>dāna- mukha</i>	Sarvāstivāda	—	Dredhoda Gada	<i>putra</i> —	CKI 1161
39	Parasol Shaft and Bodhisattva of Bala (No. 49)	Śrāvastī, India	[3 Kaniṣka I] (130/132 CE)	<i>bodhi- sattva, daṇḍa, chattrā</i>	Sarvāstivāda	Kosaṃbakuṭi	Bala Puṣyavuddi	<i>bhikṣu, trepīṭaka, sārdhaṃ- vihārin bhikṣu</i>	Sk 21

¹ See Seishi Karashima, ‘Two Inscriptions in Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī’, *Annual Report of The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhism at Soka University* 16 (2013): 27–28.

40	Bodhisattva of Buddharakṣita (No. 53)	—	8 Kaniṣka I (134/135 CE)	<i>bodhi- sattva</i>	Mahāsāṃghika	—	Buddharakṣita Sihaka	<i>bhikṣu sārdhaṃ- vihārin bhikṣu</i>	Sk 31
41	Bodhisattva of Nāgadatta	—	16 Kaniṣka I (142/143 CE)	<i>pratimā dāna</i>	Mahāsāṃghika	Kāṣṭhikīya- vihāra	Nāgadatta	<i>bhikṣu vihārin</i>	Sk 34
42	Bodhisattva of Nāgapiyā	—	17 [Kaniṣka I] (143/144 CE)	<i>bodhi- sattva</i>	Dharmaguptaka	—	Nāgapiyā	<i>upāsikā, kutuṃbinī</i>	§ 150
43	Reliquary Inscription of Śveḍavarma	Kurram, Pakistan	20 Kaniṣka I (146/147 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	Sarvāstivāda	<i>āraṇya Navavihāra</i>	Śveḍavarma Et al	—	CKI 153
44	Bodhisattva Statue of Aśvadatta (No. 56)	Mathura, India	20 Kaniṣka I (146/147 CE)	<i>dāna pratimā</i>	Mahāsāṃghika	—	Aśvadatta	<i>bhikṣu</i>	Sk 39
45	Incense Burner of Dharmaguptaka	Jalalabad, Afghanistan	24 [Kaniṣka I] (150/151 CE)	—	Dharmaguptaka	—	—	—	CKI 460
46	Maitreya of Unknown Nun	Mathura, India	29 Huviṣka (155/156 CE)	—	Dharmaguptaka	<i>vihāra</i>	—	<i>bhikṣuṇī</i>	Sk 51
47	Reliquary Inscription of Mahasena and Saṃgharakṣita (No. 57)	Shah-ji-ki- Dheri, Peshawar, Pakistan	—	<i>gandha- karaṇḍa deya- dharma</i>	Sarvāstivāda	Kaniṣkavihāra	Mahasena Saṃgharakṣita	<i>agniśāla- karmika</i>	CKI 145
48	Pillar Base of Buddharakṣita and Dharmarakṣita (No. 61)	Mathura, India	33 Huviṣka (159/160 CE)	<i>kumbhaka dāna</i>	Sarvāstivāda	<i>svakavihāra</i>	Buddharakṣita Et al	<i>upāsaka brāhmaṇa</i>	Sk 58

49	Pillar Base of Buddharakṣita and Dharmarakṣita	Mathura, India	33 Huviṣka (159/160 CE)	<i>kumbhaka dāna</i>	Sarvāstivāda	<i>svakavihāra</i>	Same as above		Sk 59
50	Bodhisattva Statue of Unknown Monk	Mathura, India	34 Huviṣka (160/161 CE)	<i>bodhi- sattva</i>	Mahāsāṃghika	—	— Aśvadatta	<i>sārdhaṃ- vihārin bhikṣu</i>	Sk 60
51	Buddha Statue of Saṃghila (No. 70)	Peshawar, Pakistan	35 [Huviṣka] (161/162 CE)	—	Mahāsāṃghika	—	Saṃghila	<i>upadhyāya</i>	Sk 61
52	Reliquary Inscription of Vagamarega (No. 62)	Wardak, Afghanistan	51 Huviṣka (177/178 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	Mahāsāṃghika	Kadalayigava- gamariga- vihāra	Vagamarega et al	—	CKI 159
53	Reliquary Inscription of Vagamarega's Daughter (No. 63)	Wardak, Afghanistan	51 Huviṣka (177/178 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	Mahāsāṃghika	Kadalyage- vihāra	— Vagamarega et al	<i>duhitṛ</i> —	CKI 509
54	Stone Bowl of Vaira (No. 64)	Charsadda, Pakistan	51 Huviṣka (177/178 CE)	<i>dāna- mukha</i>	Kāśyapīya	Puyakavihara	Vaira	—	CKI 367
55	Buddha Statue of Buddhavarma (No. 65)	Mathura, India	51 Huviṣka (177/178 CE)	<i>bhagavat</i>	—	Mahārājadeva- putravihāra	Buddhavarma	<i>bhikṣu</i>	Sk 77
56	Bodhisattva Pedestal of Unknown Donor	Mathura, India	51 Huviṣka (177/178 CE)	<i>Bodhi- sattva</i>	Mahāsāṃghika	—	—	—	§ 134
57	Buddha Statue Pedestal of Saṃghasena	Mathura, India	53 Huviṣka (179/180 CE)	<i>dāna</i>	Mahāsāṃghika	<i>svakvihāra</i>	Saṃghasena	—	Sk 82

58	Donation of Poda	Jamālgarhī, Mardan, Pakistan	359 [Yona] (183/184 CE)	—	Dharmaguptaka	<i>āraṇya</i>	Poda	<i>śrāvaka</i>	CKI 116
59	Buddha of Guṣṣenā	Palikhera Mathura, India	64/67 Vāsudeva (191–95 CE)	<i>pratimā, gr̥ha</i>	Mahāsāṃghika	—	Guṣṣenā	<i>kutuṃbinī</i>	Sk 88
60	Buddha of Nandika (No. 69)	Mathura, India	74 Vāsudeva (201/202 CE)	<i>bhagavat dāna</i>	Sarvāstivāda	Mihiravihāra	Nandika	<i>bhikṣu</i>	Sk 93
61	Stone Bowl of Unknown Donor for Mahāsāṃghika	Mathura, India	—	—	Mahāsāṃghika	—	—	—	§ 125
62	Bodhisattva of Śirika	Mathura, India	—	<i>bodhi-sattva deya-dharma</i>	Mahāsāṃghika	—	Śirika	<i>upāsaka sārthavāha</i>	Sk 61
63	Stone Fragment for Mahāsāṃghika	Mathura, India	—	—	Mahāsāṃghika	Cutakavihāra	—	—	§ 79
64	Bodhisattva of Unknown Nun	Vadnagar, Gujarat, India	—	<i>dāna</i>	Mahāsāṃghika	—	—	<i>bhikṣuṇī</i>	— ¹
65	Pot of Yolamira (No. 67)	Dabar Kot, Balochistan, Pakistan	—	<i>prāpa deya-dharma</i>	Sarvāstivāda	Yolamira-vihāra	Yolamira	<i>vihāra-svāmin</i>	CKI 165

¹ See Oskar von Hinüber and Peter Skilling, ‘An Inscribed Kuṣāṇa Bodhisattva from Vadnagar’, *Annual Report of The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University* 19 (2016): 21–28.

66	Pot of Buddhananda	Haḍḍa, Afghanistan	—	<i>deya- dharma</i>	Sarvāstivāda	—	Buddhananda Saṅghananda	<i>bhadanta vyāpṛtya- kara</i>	— ¹
67	Pot of Sihaṣuda	Haḍḍa, Afghanistan	—	<i>deya- dharma</i>	Sarvastivāda	Samantapaśa- mahapriya- raṃṇā	Sihaṣuda	—	CKI 223
68	Gift for Sarvāstivādins from Sarnath	Sarnath, Mathura	—	<i>dāna</i>	Sarvāstivāda	—	—	—	Sarn 168
69	Gift for Sarvāstivādins from Sarnath	Sarnath, Mathura	—	<i>dāna</i>	Sarvāstivāda	—	—	—	Sarn 230

¹ Tarzi, Salomon, and Strauch, ‘An Inscribed Bowl’, 150.

But there are actually very few inscriptions to name a monastic institution, constituting but 18% of all 384 inscribed Buddhist donations considered in this study. This trend has led some to conclude that donative activity had very little to do with individual monastic institutions and that many donors were apparently content with stipulating the donee as the community of the four directions (*cāturdiśasaṃgha*), an abstract sense of the community rather than a concrete institutional body.¹ For example, on the basis that very few

¹ Njammasch, 'Hierarchische Strukturen der buddhistischen Klöstern Indiens in der ersten Hälfte des ersten Jahrtausends unserer Zeitrechnung', 528. The notion of the *cāturdiśasaṃgha* (P. *cātuddisaṃgha*) is found quite regularly within the earliest strata of both the textual and donative epigraphic sources. In general, scholars have taken it as designating an idealised entity: a loosely defined body that in the context of donative practice essentially designates all monastics everywhere. In this sense it is often considered as a generalised notion in opposition, say, to the precise designation of a specific monastic institution (*nikāya*) within a residence (*āvāsa*) or boundary (*sīmā*). Sukumar Dutt argues that this distinction is only applicable to inscriptions that first appear c. 2nd century BCE, where the beneficiary of the donation is the idealised *cāturdiśasaṃgha*, whereas in the case of the early Pali *Suttas*, he understands that the term was used in reference to a concrete community and group of monastics; for example in cases where a donor is advocated to build a dwelling (*vihāra*), the dwelling is given to the *cātuddisaṃgha*. See DN 1. 146; AN 4. 394–396. For Dutt this is evidence of an early formative period in Buddhism, where monks belonged to a community prior to schism, Dutt, *Early Buddhist Monachism. 600 B.C - 100 B.C*, 83–86. It is, however, rather difficult on the basis of these textual sources alone to establish whether the term is used in the Pali sources in a concrete institutional sense, that is in respect to a historical community. Indeed the context of both the Pali texts and epigraphs are identical, in so far as they are concerned with donative practice, and this leads one to quite opposite conclusions of those of Dutt. The term is related less to grouping of institutional or bureaucratic vocabulary and is more in line with vocabulary associated with donative practice to ideal body, the *cāturdiśasaṃgha*. In the *Cullavagga*, for example, the *cātuddisaṃgha* is clearly an idealised entity and we read that a dwelling, say that built at Jetavana by Anāthapiṇḍika, is to be established for the past and future (*āgatānāgata*)

relic and stupa establishments were donated into the possession of monastic institution, Hirakawa Akira concluded that the stupa cult was originally the province of Mahāyāna lay-practitioners and was only later adopted by monastics.¹

This would be an acceptable finding if it were not for the fact that almost all stupa sites are attached to monastic complexes and that the two structures, in archaeological and numismatic terms, cannot always be differentiated chronologically. Additionally, the vast majority of inscribed objects were found within or nearby the grounds of a monastery, many objects were donated upon ritual days (e.g., the *upoṣadha*) when monastics played an instrumental role, and rather fundamentally the very ability to perform the donative ritual and to compose an epigraph, which invariably contains highly specific terminologies and formulas, required a doctrinal specialist. Monastic oversight can, therefore, be inferred in the better part of cases and our analysis is premised upon the assumption that the majority of objects were indeed conducted under the auspices of a monastic institution—I suspect the degree of error in this presumption should be minor.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL SPREAD OF MONASTIC INSTITUTIONS

Due to a lack of provenance for most objects, determining the geography of monastic institutions is problematic. Most institutions are found in several regions throughout the North and Northwest. But there were certain centres in which several groups were clustered. In Mathura, the Sarvāstivādins and Mahāsāṃghikas appear most prominently, alongside the Dharmaguptakas and Sāṃmitīyas. The Dharmaguptakas

cātuddisa saṃgha: the deliberate atemporality being an indication of its idealisation. Vin 2. 147, 165.

¹ Akira Hirakawa, 'The Rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism and Its Relationship to the Worship of Stūpas', *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko* 22 (1963): 55–106; Hirakawa, *A History of Indian Buddhism*, 245–46.

and Sarvāstivādins also occur with high frequency in eastern Afghanistan at Jalalabad and Haḍḍa, as well as across the border in Dir and Bajaur in Pakistan. And the Kāśyapīyas and Sarvāstivādins arise in Taxila also.

The coexistence of monastic institutions is typically presented in scholarship as being harmonious.¹ But there is very little evidence to determine the nature of inter-institutional relations. There are only two possible instances of separate institutions appearing in the same inscription: one mentions the Kāśyapīya and perhaps the Bāhuśrutīya (although the latter appellation is highly questionable),² and another the Sarvāstivāda and Mahāsāṃghika (although this may be in a confrontational context).³ A notable lacuna in inscriptions are monastic titles of visiting monks (*āgantuka*); that is, monastics who have entered from outside of a specific monastic boundary (*sīmā*). We can provisionally conclude therefore that all monastic donors made donations within their own institutional context. Perhaps this is not overly unusual, although one may expect to find inter-monastic relations expressed in donative epigraphy just as political relations are, and, as far as I am aware, there are very few rules in the *Vinaya* that deal with visiting monks' donative activities. In the *Abhisamācārikādharma* of the Mahāsāṃghikalokottāravādins, some regulations are stipulated; for example, a visiting monk can only leave a monastery when his business

¹ As far as I can tell, this view is based exclusively on the much later report of Xuan Zang on Indic monasticism of the 7th century, which observed that monastics of distinct groups dwelt in the same monastic complexes. Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, 519; Salomon, *Ancient Buddhist Scrolls from Gandhāra: The British Library Kharoṣṭhī Fragments*, 177.

² A jar from Palatu Dheri reads: *saṃgh(*e) ca[du]diśe śamanana Bah(*u)[ṣuti]a[ka]na Kaṣ[y]aviyana (*parigrahe)*. CKI 127. One may take *bahuṣutikana* as Skt. *bahuśrutikānām* ('of the learned'), and thus as an adjective of *kaśyaviana*, which is the more likely solution.

³ See below.

(*kārya*) in respect to the stupa and community is fulfilled.¹ Unfortunately, the text does not detail precisely what this business may have been and it could simply be a case of ritual actions of veneration, which all monks were expected to perform towards the stupa.

Most fundamentally, it is self-evident that every monastic institution needed to garner sufficient economic support through the donative activities of society at large and preferably wealthy individuals. Hence, when in the same locale, institutions would have had to compete for the same pool of wealth. Whilst a competitive dynamic is not overt in the sources available, one point at which institutional identity becomes salient is in political contexts. Certain institutions appear to have had the support of rulers: the Dharmaguptakas and Kāśyapīyas are found in connection with the Apracarājas, the Sarvāstivādins with the Indo-Scythian satraps in Mathura, the Oḍirājas and early Kuṣāṇas in Swat, and later the Kuṣāṇa Kaniṣka I across the Northwest, and the Mahāsāṃghikas with Huiṣka in Mathura and much later in Afghanistan. To a certain degree it was the institutional power and ideology of a monastic institution that secured power for rulers in a region, and some, as we shall see, were more successful than others.

SARVĀSTIVĀDINS

The most highly represented and widely distributed of all the monastic institutions are the Sarvāstivādins. A total of 24 inscriptions (more than a third) name this group at locations in the North and Gangetic Plains—including Mathura, Śrāvastī, Kauśāmbī and Sarnath—and Northwest—including several locations on the Peshawar Plain (Gandhara) and in

¹ Abhis 31. 35–38.

valleys adjoining it to the south in Kurram, to the north in Dir and Swat, to the east at Taxila, as well as at Haḍḍa in eastern Afghanistan and as far afield as Balochistan. No doubt, the Sarvāstivādins were the most successful institution and likely enjoyed the patronage of several ruling groups in these regions.

SARVĀSTIVĀDINS IN THE NORTHWEST

Several metal water-pots and ewers as well as a bronze door, dated on palaeographic grounds to the Indo-Scythian Period (c. 1st century BCE–1st century CE), attest to the presence of the Sarvāstivādins in Mingora, Swat. They record a series of donations given into the possession of the Sarvāstivādin teachers at three monasteries: the Śpūṭhasavihāra, Sodaśpavihāra, and Bhadradhavihāra, suggesting they had a well-established presence there.¹ The time and geography of these finds would lead one to presume that the Sarvāstivādins held a particular connection with the Oḍirājas and that the latter were their sponsors. Although the inscriptions of these rulers do not explicitly mention the Sarvāstivādins, certain doctrinal formulae in their inscriptions evidence a form of knowledge we know to have been preserved within this monastic circle.

For example, the Gold Scroll of Ajidasena (No. 34) states that the ruler establishes relics in a previously unestablished location: [5.] *dhadue pratīḥaveti apratīḥavitaprubami padhavipradeśami*. This formula indicates a purpose in producing Brahma-merit (*brāhmapuṇya*), which we know from Sarvāstivādin literature specifically.² The same formula is found in Dharmaguptaka and Kāśyapīya inscriptions, indicating it was widespread and not institutionally limited, but because

¹ CKI 1109–13. For editions and notes, see Harry Falk, “‘Buddhist’ Metalware from Gandhāra”, *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 26 (2012): 39ff.

² See Chapter Fourteen: Eschatology and Brahma-Merit.

these latter groups are not attested in Swat, we can tentatively propose that it was the Sarvāstivādins who provided the Oḍirājas with this highly specific form of doctrinal knowledge.

It is widely assumed that the Sarvāstivādin's base in the Northwest was at Taxila.¹ There are certainly grounds to argue that they were present here from the early Kuṣāṇa period, since they arise in the Reliquary Inscription of Candrabhi (No. 39), dated 134 Azes (86/87 CE), which records the establishment of a relic by the lay-practitioner Cadrabhi into the possession of the Sarvāstivādin teachers at the monastic complex at Kalawan, located in the hills to the southeast of Taxila. A further two Brāhmī inscriptions from Mathura support the presence of the Sarvāstivādins in Taxila. These record donations of two lay-practitioners, Buddharakṣita and Dharmarakṣita (No. 61), who specifically state they come from that city. Presuming their status as lay-practitioners was institutionally consistent, this may indicate an institutional relationship between the Sarvāstivādins in the two regions.² These two inscriptions belong to the reign of Huviṣka (152/153 CE) and this would further suggest that the Sarvāstivādins maintained an establishment within the Taxila region throughout the Kuṣāṇa period.

From around the 2nd century CE, the Sarvāstivādins were established at Haḍḍa, the ancient city of Nagarahāra, near Jalalabad in Afghanistan. Some twenty monasteries, hundreds of stupas, and thousands of sculptures of the so-called Haḍḍa school of art were uncovered there, in addition to a few epigraphs from the site, composed in both Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī, which demonstrate it was home to not only the Sarvāstivādins but also the Dharmaguptakas. Salomon, Strauch, and Tarzi are of the opinion that the Dharmaguptakas were at Haḍḍa in

¹ Willemen, Dessein, and Cox, *Sarvāstivāda Buddhist Scholasticism*, 113.

² See Falk, 'A Dedicatory Inscription from the Time of Huviṣka in the Mathura Museum'; Harry Falk, 'Two New Inscriptions from the Time of Huviṣka', *Berliner Indologische Studien* 13/14 (2000): 29–35.

the early centuries of the Common Era and that the Sarvāstivādins arrived at a later date. This conclusion is made on the basis of an inscribed pot donated by Buddhānanda, which he transferred into the possession of the Sarvāstivādin teachers of the community of the four directions at Vulture Peak in Haḍḍa: *[d](*)yadharmmo yaṃ kuḍāke bhadantabuddhana(d)dasya niryādetti saṅ[gh]e catturdiśe heḍā[gh]rījā-k[ū]ṭaṃmi ācārya[n]naḥ sarvās(*)ivvārtinaḥ pratigrahe.*¹ This inscription is written in the Brāhmī script and EHS, two linguistic peculiarities which scholars date to a post 3rd century CE period.²

SARVĀSTIVĀDINS IN MATHURA

The Sarvāstivādins were already established in Mathura during the Indo-Scythian Period. This is shown by two inscriptions, the Bodhisattva Statue of Nandā (No. 47), dated palaeographically to this period, and, more concretely, the Mathura Lion Capital (No. 25–26), which records two donations, one from Queen Yasi, wife of the Great Satrap Rajuvula, and another from their son Śoḍāsa, who had been forced from their domain in the Indic Northwest, most likely due to the Indo-Parthians around 30 CE.

Mathura Lion Capital (No. 25)

A relic of the Fortunate One Śākyamuni, the Buddha, in addition to a stupa and monastic complex at the Buddhavihāra was established at a location outside the boundary by Yasi Kamui, the Principal Queen of the great satrap Rajuvula, daughter of the *yūvarāja* Kharāostes...in the possession of the Sarvāstivādins belonging to the community of the four directions.

¹ Tarzi, Salomon, and Strauch, 'An Inscribed Bowl', 150.

² Tarzi, Salomon, and Strauch, 'An Inscribed Bowl', 157–58.

Mathura Lion Capital (No. 26)

[Lions] The Satrap Śoḍasa, son of the Great Satrap Rajuvula, made the *yūvarāja* Kharaostes, Prince Khalamasa and the youngest Maja the authors [i.e. of the dedication]. The Satrap Śoḍasa made and handed over this location on the earth, the designated boundary of the encampment named Veyaadirṇa, the Viya encampment at Buddha-mountain. It was accepted with water by the teacher Budhateva and the citizen and Sarvāstivādin monk Budhila. For the worship of the Great Satrap Kusulaa Patika and the Satrap Menaki Miyaka. In the possession of the Sarvāstivādins.

[Bottom] Being in the possession of the teacher Budhila, the citizen and Sarvāstivāda monk, it is not to be arranged for the Mahāsāṃghika. For the worship of the entirety [of] Sakastan, for the worship of all Buddhas, for the worship of the Dharma, for the worship of the community.

These donations evidence that the Sarvāstivādins received major political support from the Indo-Scythian satraps in this region, who dedicated a substantial piece of land, monastic complex, monastery, as well as a relic and stupa for the monks. Notably, this is the only relic dedication record epigraphically in the North, no less in the foreign Kharoṣṭhī script. This relic was therefore brought from the Northwest by these rulers and the Sarvāstivādins in order that it be established in this new location. In this regard Falk argues the following:

Mentions of Sarvāstivādins are very rarely found in inscriptions at Mathura and, apart from the lion, only about a century later. It stands to reason that the lion documents the first influx of Sarvāstivāda monks into Mathura, and we also surmise that this introduction occurred when the family of

Rajuvula/Śoḍāsa had to move from the Jammu area down south to Mathura. They brought their “family” Buddhist group with them, as they did with the script they were wont to use, Kharoṣṭhī, alien to the local culture. We can also presume that these new arrivals were regarded as a threat by the Mahāsāṃghikas. On the other hand, the imported Sarvāstivādins were too few in number to overtake the Mahāsāṃghikas in importance, even with royal patronage. Three times we read on the lion of the Sarvāstivādins as donees and three times *ācārya* Buddhadeva appears as their head. Whether these textual repetitions were enough to prevent a take-over of the Mahāsāṃghikas remains doubtful.¹

These observations are not wholly accurate. In fact, the Sarvāstivādins and Mahāsāṃghikas occur epigraphically with almost equal incidence in Mathura and both only arise in dated inscriptions towards the end of Kaniṣka I’s reign in the final half of the 2nd century CE. The Mathura Lion Capital thus represents the earliest dateable mention of both institutions by some centuries. It is also not self-evident that the Sarvāstivādins may be described as a ‘family’ Buddhist group for these rulers, as there is no evidence of this monastic institution in regions where the Satraps had formerly governed in the Northwest.² The only potential connection in this regard is to be found in the Copper Plate of Patika (No. 12), which shares the premise of establishing a monastic complex and relic stupa at a new location, with the likely purpose of producing Brahma-merit.³ This latter inscription does not name the Sarvāstivādins but it does derive from Taxila, which we know to have been one of this monastic institution’s bases in the Northwest, and

¹ Falk, ‘Mathura Lion Capital’, 275–76.

² See Chapter Four: Satraps in the North and Northwest.

³ See Chapter Fourteen: Eschatology and Brahma-Merit.

equally retains this rare piece of doctrinal knowledge known to Sarvāstivādin literature. This may we substantiate the view that the Sarvāstivādins had here forged a political relation with these Indo-Scythian queens and satraps and hence, in part, enabled them to affirm power in their new domain in Mathura with a relic dedication.

There may also be, as Falk suggests, a confrontational aspect to this inscription, residing in the expression, ‘Being in the possession of the teacher Budhila, the citizen and Sarvāstivāda monk, it is not to be arranged for the Mahāsāṃghika’: [N1.] *ayariasa Budhilasa naḱarakāsa bhikhu*[N2]*sa Sarvastivatasa pagra*[N3.]*na Mahasaghiana pra*[N4]-*ñavitave*. But there are two problems with this passage. First is the term *pagra*, which Falk takes as an abbreviatory form of *pratigrahe* (‘in the possession’).¹ Alternatively, Stefan Baums reconstructs *pa<*ri>grana* (‘the act of possession’)² and Tsukamoto Keishō takes it as Skt. *prāgrya* (‘the highest’).³ Second, there is some question here as to whether the *na*, following *pagra-* (although on a separate line where it precedes *Mahasaghiana*) should be construed as *pa<*ri>gra<*ha>na* (‘belonging’), or if it belongs with *prañavitave*, indicating that the donation of land into the possession of the Sarvāstivādin teacher Budhila should most definitely *not* to be ‘offered’ or ‘announced’ (*prañavitave*, Skt. *prajñāpayitavya*) for the Mahāsāṃghikas.

Both Falk and Baums take the passage as confrontational, although the former read *na Mahasaghiana prañavitave* (‘must not to be offered’)⁴ and the latter *pa<*ri>gra-na Mahasaghiana prañavitave* (‘the act of possession [Skt. *parigrahaṇa*]....should be announced’).⁵ Falk

¹ Falk, ‘Mathura Lion Capital’, 270.

² Baums, ‘Catalog’, 220.

³ Tsukamoto, *A Comprehensive Study of The Indian Buddhist Inscriptions Part I: Text, Notes and Japanese Translation.*, 672.

⁴ Falk, ‘Mathura Lion Capital’, 271.

⁵ Baums, ‘Catalog’, 221fn46.

observes that there was plenty of space for the scribe to write *pratigrahe* instead *pagra* if they so wished, which diminishes any arguments in favour of Baums' reconstruction of *pa(*ri)gra-na*, but equally he provides no reason whatsoever that *pagra* is an abbreviatory form and there is certainly no other corroboratory evidence to support this conjecture. Tsukamoto's suggestion of *prāgrya* ('the highest') seems tenable, but would produce a meaning of 'the highest of the Sarvāstivāda teacher Budhila', whose possible significance escapes me. In any case it seems best to construe the *na* with *prañavitave* in light of their being inscribed on the same line. That the scribe chose not to include the *na* on the preceding line, even though there was space to do so, and thus to place it in physical and direct semantic apposition with *prañavitave*, indicates that the donation of land was certainly not to be 'arranged' for the Mahāsāṃghikas.

If indeed this inscription marks the Sarvāstivādins' entrance onto the stage, as it were, and their teacher Budhila maintained some kind of relation, whether personal or political, to the Satraps Rajuvula and Śoḍāsa, then perhaps the background is indeed one of political competition. We can only presume that Rajuvula and Śoḍāsa must have taken Mathura, likely by force, and marked their dominion with this relic inscription. Perhaps the Mahāsāṃghikas represented an institutional hindrance to this goal and therefore the sense of 'not to be arranged' captures this moment. Leaving the realms of surmise, what we can firmly conclude is that the Sarvāstivādins were now present in Mathura, and had established a monastic complex there at a time when the Mahāsāṃghikas were already present.

From Mūlasarvāstivādin literature it becomes clear that Mathura had not always been a home to Buddhist and that the Buddhists needed to justify their presence there. The city of Mathura finds mention several times in Pali literature (named Madhurā or Uttaramadhurā) and is typically described as an unruly and a disadvantageous region with

uneven roads (*visamā*), a lot of dust (*bahurajā*), fierce dogs (*caṇḍasunakhā*), predatory *yakṣas* (*vālayakkha*), hard come by alms (*dullabhapiṇḍa*),¹ and as a place where rulers and citizens suffer famine. Yet, in other places the region is described as having a flourishing market economy, as being a central node on the Northern Route (*uttarāpatha*) and therefore the city was of some economic importance from an early date, even if associated with immorality according to the Buddhist worldview.² These sources never claim that the Buddha travelled in Mathura and it is only in one passage that he is said to have travelled to the nearby town of Verañja; although Mahākaccāna, a disciple of his, is held to have converted Mathura's ruler, Avantiputti.³

Contrastingly in Mūlasarvāstivādin sources, Mathura rises to find a more prominent role. Several passages in *Avadāna* and *Vinaya* works recount the Buddha's sojourn in the city, where he converts as many as 2500 *yakṣas* and *yakṣiṇīs*, who cause the people there particular grief, and whom the Buddha allays by convincing the people to build dwellings (*vihāra*) for them. In these sources, Mathura is also pictured as a prominent city of commerce, but again as having five disadvantages: 'an uneven ground, abound with stumps and thorns, it has many stones, pebbles, and grit, the people eat at night and the women are many'.⁴ It is also described here as the home of Brahmins who contrive to waylay the Buddha from entering the city on the day of

¹ For this list of the five disadvantages in Madhurā (*ādīnavā madhurāyaṃ*), see AN 2. 256.

² Vin 3. 5.

³ MN 2. 84.

⁴ *pañceme bhikṣava ādīnavā mathurāyāṃ. katame pañca. utkūlanikūlāḥ sthāṇukaṇṭakapradhānā bahupāṣāṇaśarkarakathallā uccandrabhaktāḥ pracuramātrigrāmā iti.* MSV 1. 14–15.

a festival celebrating a constellation (*nakṣatra*). Of course, they ultimately fail and the Buddha converts all concerned.¹

The Mūlasarvāstivāda account is of some interest since the composers, diverging from the Pali accounts, felt a need to associate the city with the Buddha and thus bring it within the realm of his Dharma—the entire city was literally converted. In several sources the city is also associated with the Arhat Upagupta, the emblematic Sarvāstivādin patriarch, who is held to have lived one hundred years after the Buddha's death, to be a contemporary of Aśoka, a Sarvāstivāda proponent, and a Buddha without characteristics (*alakṣaṇabuddha*) no less.² The association with Upagupta thus has the double effect of claiming Mathura (that had already been claimed by the Buddha) for the Sarvāstivādins at the time of Aśoka. But to which context do these sources speak?

Both the Theravāda and Mūlasarvāstivāda histories record that after the schism with the Mahāsāṃghika at the council of Pāṭaliputra during the time of Aśoka, the Sthaviras concurrently went to Kashmir and Gandhara, where they were established by Madhyāntika (P. Majjhantika),³ and to Mathura, where they were established by Upagupta.⁴ In the latter case, this comes in the form of a prediction, found in the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* of the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*:

¹ See Jaini, 'Political and Cultural Data in References to Mathurā in the Buddhist Literature'; Strong, *The Legend and Cult of Upagupta*, 5–6.

² MSV 1. 51. The term *alakṣaṇabuddha* is apparently only applied to Upagupta in Buddhist literature and has the positive connotation that Upagupta is somewhat of a replacement for the Buddha, a 'proto-Buddha', as Strong puts it: 'one who has within him the elements of Buddhahood, though he has not yet fully developed them.' Strong, *The Legend and Cult of Upagupta*, 39–40.

³ Mv 7. 24.

⁴ MSV 1. 2; T 2043. 99a–131a.

The Fortunate One saw from afar a stretch of intense blue woodland and, seeing this, he asked Vajrapāṇi, ‘Do you see, Vajrapāṇi, that this stretch of forest is an intense blue?’ ‘I see, sir.’ ‘That, Vajrapāṇi, is the domain of Kashmir. One hundred years after I have completely ceased there will be a monk named Mādhyandina, co-resident of the monk Ānanda; he shall instruct Huluṭa, the corrupted nāga. Having assumed the *paryāṅka* posture he shall impart the teaching throughout the domain of Kashmir...¹

...Then the Fortunate One set out for Mathura and from afar he saw a dark blue row of trees and addressed Ānanda, ‘Do you see, Ānanda, this dark blue row of trees?’ ‘Yes, sir.’ ‘This, Ānanda, is the mountain named Uramuṇḍa. Here in Mathura, two brothers, Naṭa and Bhaṭa, establish a monastery one hundred years after my death. It shall have the name Naṇabhaṭika and shall be the highest in respect to suitable bedding and seating for *samatha* and *vipaśyanā* meditation. In Mathura, there will be a perfumer named Gupta, whose son will be named Upagupta, a Buddha without characteristics; one hundred years² after my death, he shall go forth in the teaching and perform the duty of the

¹ *adrākṣīd bhagavān dūrād eva nīlanīlāṃ vanarājim. dr̥ṣṭvā ca punar vajrapāṇiṃ yakṣam āmantrayate. Paśyasi tvaṃ vajrapāṇe nīlanīlāṃ etāṃ vanarājim. paśyāmi bhadanta. eṣa vajrapāṇe kāśmīramaṇḍalam. mama varṣaśataparinirvṛtasya mādhyandino nāma bhikṣur bhaviṣyaty ānandasya bhikṣoḥ sārđhamvihārī. sa huluṭaṃ duṣṭanāgaṃ vineṣyati. atha paryāṅkaṃ baddhvā samagre kāśmīramaṇḍale śāsanaṃ praveśayiṣyati. MSV 1. 2*

² Dutt read *varṣoṣitasya* but this makes no sense in the context of the passage and in any case, is not possible on the basis of the manuscript. (fol. 142v.3). I read *varṣa[śa]tasya*. Shayne Clarke, ed., *Vinaya Texts. Gilgit Manuscripts in the National Archives of India Facsimile Edition* (Tokyo: The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhism, Soka University, 2014), 51.

Buddhas. Mādhyandina, co-resident of the monk Ānanda, will cause Upagupta to go forth. Upagupta is the last of the instructors (*avavādaka*). He shall have a cave within an enclosure of trees, eighteen cubits in length, twelve in width, and seven high. Those who attain arhatship under his instruction shall throw a stick measuring four fingers into the cave. When the cave is filled with the sticks of the Arhats, then Upagupta shall die. When he has died, they shall burn him with the sticks.¹

On the basis of Upagupta's story, it is held that the Sarvāstivādins were established in Mathura at the time of Aśoka.² There is no archaeological basis for this claim and the earliest such trace, as we just observed, derives from the Indo-Scythian Period around the turn of the millennium. Considered alongside the relic dedication of Queen Yasi made at this

¹ *tatra bhagavān āyusmantam ānandam āmantrayate. āgamayānanda yena mathurā iti. evaṃ bhadanta ity āyusmān ānando bhagavataḥ pratyaśrauṣīt. atha bhagavān mathurāṃ samprasthitaḥ. dūrād eva nīlanīlāṃ bhagavān vanarājīm dr̥ṣṭvā punar āyusmantam ānandam āmantrayate. paśyasi tvam ānanda etāṃ nīlanīlāṃ vanarājīm. evaṃ bhadanta. eṣa ānanda uramuṅḍo nāma parvataḥ. atra mathurāyāṃ naṭo bhaṭas ca dvau bhrātarau mama varṣa-śataparinirvṛtasya vihāraṃ pratiṣṭhāpayataḥ. tatas tasya naṭabhaṭika iti saṃjñā bhaviṣyati. agraṃ ca bhaviṣyati śamathavipaśyanānukūlānāṃ śayanāsanānām. adyānanda mathurāyāṃ gupto nāma gāndhikadārako bhaviṣyati. tasya putraḥ upagupto nāma bhaviṣyati alakṣaṇako buddhaḥ. sa mama varṣa[śa]tasya parinirvṛtasya śāsane pravrajya buddhakāryaṃ kariṣyati. mādhyandīno nāmnā ānandasya bhikṣoḥ sārḍhaṃvihārī. sa upaguptaṃ pravrajyati. upaguptaḥ paścimako bhaviṣyati avavādakānām. vr̥kṣavāṭikāyāṃ guhā bhaviṣyati. dairghyenāṣṭādaśahastā. vistāreṇa dvādaśa. ucchrāyeṇa sapta. ye ye tasyāvavāde arhatvaṃ sākṣātkariṣyanti te te catur-aṅgulamātrāṃ kaṭikāṃ tasyāṃ guhāyāṃ prakṣepsyante. yadā sā guhā purṇā bhaviṣyati arhatkaṭikābhīḥ tadā upaguptaḥ parinirvāsyati. parinirvṛtaṃ cainaṃ tābhir evārhatkaṭikābhīḥ sametya te dhṃāpayiṣyanti. MSV 1. 3–4. See also Aś-v 2–3.*

² Strong, *The Legend and Cult of Upagupta*, 6–7.

time, we can perhaps here see a propagandist accord in this ritual act and the Mūlasarvāstivādin narratives, insofar as both are very much concerned with localising Buddhism in the Mathura and thence, because of this common purpose, conceivably derive from a shared context.

THE SARVĀSTIVĀDA AS A TRANS-REGIONAL INSTITUTION

The account of the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* quoted above suggests that the Sarvāstivādins may have been divided geographically from an early period, and this raises some question as to the integrity of the institutions named Sarvāstivāda in our epigraphs, i.e., are we dealing with two distinct institutional bodies, one in the North and another in the Northwest. E. Frauwallner argues for such a bifurcation between the Sarvāstivādins of the North and Northwest, noting that the *Vinaya* of each are essentially the same with but one difference in that the *Mūlasarvāstivādavīnaya* of Mathura includes *Jātaka* and *Avadāna* collections.¹ The narrative, however, does not evidence a regional distinction but rather seeks to conceive a trans-regional unity for Buddhism in both the North and Northwest.

The text details the famous recount of the Buddha's journey with Vajrapāṇi along the Northern Route, where, on his travels, he converts several hundred beings from as far north as the abode of Apalāla, identified with the source of the Swat river in Uḍḍiyāna, as well as through other sites, including, Rohitika,² Nandivardhana,¹ Kutī² and

¹ Frauwallner, *The Earliest Vinaya and the Beginnings of Buddhist Literature*, 27. Cf. Jean Przyluski, 'Fables in the Vinaya-Pitaka of the Sarvāstivādin School', *The Indian Historical Quarterly* 5, no. 1 (1929): 1–2; Alexander Wynne, 'On the Sarvāstivādins and Mūlasarvāstivādins', *The Indian International Journal of Buddhist Studies* 9 (2008): 243–66.

² Xuanzang places the Rohitika stupa 盧醯坦迦窣堵波, constructed by Aśoka, forty or fifty *li* west of Mingora. T 2087. 883b.12–13.

Kharjūrikā (Peshawar), the site of Kaniṣka I's stupa.³ Frauwallner understands the Buddha's journey to be a later interpolation of a post 2nd century CE period to the text. This deduction is made primarily on three bases: [1] that the passage mentions the stupa establishment of Kaniṣka I in Peshwar, [2] that it is in structural discord with the surrounding text, which would otherwise be a narrative concerning the Mathura region, and [3] that the conversion of the *nāga* Apalāla in Swat was originally localised in Magadha.⁴ This latter point has recently been shown to be falsely conceived,⁵ and there are greater associations between this narrative and the Northwest⁶: essentially the same account is found in several translations from the 3rd century CE including the *Samyuktāgama* 雜阿含經,⁷ the *Aśokarājavadāna* 阿育王經,⁸ and the *Aśokāvadāna* 阿育王傳,⁹ all of which are localised in the Northwest. Moreover, the story of Apalāla first appears in Gandharan relief art from c. 3rd century CE,¹⁰ thus cementing its significance to this region.

¹ Tucci places the region of Nandivardhana between Jalalabad and Peshawar. Tucci, 'Preliminary Report on an Archaeological Survey in Swāt', 327fn24.

² Likely in Dir, see Chapter Six: The Apraca Dynasty.

³ MSV 1. 2–5.

⁴ Frauwallner, *The Earliest Vinaya and the Beginnings of Buddhist Literature*, 32–36.

⁵ Palumbo has shown that this latter deduction is founded on an incorrect reading of the passage, which reads Juchi 俱持, an unknown kingdom that is explained in the commentary as Magadha, where in fact it is simply a scribal error for Wuchi 烏持 (Oḍḍiyāna) and that the story was certainly intended to be localised in the Northwest. Palumbo, *Early Chinese Commentary*, 287fn9.

⁶ For a detailed discussion, see Lamotte, 'Vajrapāni in India [I]', 22ff.

⁷ T 99. 165b.

⁸ T 2043. 135a.

⁹ T 2042. 105b.

¹⁰ Monika Zin, 'Vajrapāni in the Narrative Reliefs', in *Migration, Trade and Peoples Part 2: Gandhāran Art*, ed. Christine Fröhlich (London: The British Academy for South Asian Studies, 2009), 73–88.

The primary purpose of the account is to legitimise Buddhism's (but especially the Sarvāstivāda's) presence in both the North and Northwest, by claiming that the Buddha had travelled and converted the peoples there. Thus, the narrative belongs very much to our current period where there was an obsession to localise the Buddha, whether through narrative or through establishing relics and stupas of various kinds.¹ When taken as an integral whole, the text therefore only makes sense as the product of a single Sarvāstivāda institutional body and it is therefore not, as Frauwallner suggests, a mere suggestive link between the Mūlasarvāstivādins at Mathura and the Sarvāstivādins of the Northwest, but must belong to a cohesive group of the type that had a stake in both regions concurrently.²

This degree of institutional unity, in turn, is necessarily dependent upon broader geo-political factors. Above, it was observed that the Rabatak Inscription, composed six years after the beginning of Kaniṣka I's reign, names certain sites that Kaniṣka I had conquered in the North, and that many of these locations can be directly correlated, both temporally and geographically, with Sarvāstivādin donative inscriptions of the Bearers of the Three Baskets (*trepīṭaka*),

¹ See Chapter Fifteen: Types of Stupas.

² It is the case that later a split in the Sarvāstivāda institution did occur; the very existence of the Mūlasarvāstivāda makes that much clear. Tradition has it that during the reign of Kaniṣka I, four or five hundred years after the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*, the Vaibhāṣika Sarvāstivādins of Kashmir held a council to determine doctrinal orthodoxy and produced the *Jñānaprasthāna* and a commentarial text to that work, the *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣa*, in order to serve that end. This so-called orthodoxy allegedly became quite successful after Kaniṣka I and influenced further works such as the *Abhidharmahrdaya*. However, not all conformed and the Sautrāntikas in Mathura (called Dārṣṭāntikas by their Vaibhāṣika opponents) maintained the 'original' (*mūla*) teaching and later came to be called the Mūlasarvāstivādins after the fall of Kuṣāṇa power. For details of these *Abhidharma* texts and history, see Willemsen, Dessein, and Cox, *Sarvāstivāda Buddhist Scholasticism*, 116–25.

Buddhamitrā and Bala, found on the colossal Bodhisattva images in Mathura, Kauśāmbī, Śrāvastī, and Sarnath (No. 48–50). These donations were made in the early years of Kaniṣka I's reign and in conjunction with the Great Satrap Kharallāpana and Satrap Vanaspara, indicating a direct thread of communication between the Kuṣāṇa administration and the Sarvāstivādins.¹ Their activities here were part of a highly politicised and coordinated project, and hence these Bodhisattva statues offer an interesting insight into the relationship between the political and monastic institutions of the period and were likely intended to articulate an at once imperial and Buddhist discourse that had arisen at this time.

By the middle of the Kuṣāṇa Period, therefore, the Sarvāstivādins had become a central component of politics in the North and Northwest and were now able to conceive of a trans-regional unity.

DHARMAGUPTAKAS

The next most commonly encountered, and indeed the earliest, monastic institution to occur in inscriptions is a supposed sub-sect of the Sarvāstivāda², the Dharmaguptaka, for whom we find 18 inscriptions (Fig. 9.1). These arise at Mathura in the North, in the Dir and Bajaur valleys to the northwest of the Peshawar Plain, at the Jamalgarhi monastic complex on the plain itself, but foremost at Jalalabad and Haḍḍa in eastern Afghanistan. This indicates that their primary field of activity lay along the border regions of today's western Pakistan and eastern Afghanistan.

¹ See Chapter Eight: Kaniṣka I.

² In some sources, they are held as an offshoot of the Mahīśāsaka, who themselves divided from the Sarvāstivāda. Bareaux, *Les Sectes Bouddhiques du Petit Véhicule*, 16–90.

The earliest dedication is a relic dedication (No. 10), dated 50 [Azes] (2/3 CE), made by Naganamda, wife of the District Governor Taravia, during the early years of the reign of Apracarāja Vijayamitra. This object was found at Samarbagh, lower Dir, indicating that the Dharmaguptakas were established in this region at an early date and were in receipt of patronage from local rulers there. This is further substantiated by a bowl donated by the monk Buddhapriya which is undated but written in Kharoṣṭhī letters of the Indo-Scythian Period. It records that the monk Buddhapriya hands a donation into the possession of the Dharmaguptakas at a stupa within the monastery of Mahila, son of Mahamitra, at a place called Vajrakuḍa: *daṇamuhe io Vajrakuḍae ṇiyatati thubami Mahamitraputrasa Mahilasa viharami Ṇabiṇagami ayariṇa Dhamāitagana pariḡrahami*.¹ The object has no provenance, however, Salomon proposes that Vajrakuḍa could be a cognate of the modern day toponym Bajaur,² lying to the south of Dir. It also contains the aspiration to remove suffering (Skt. *duḥkhadāya*), which is an expression known only to the Reliquary Inscription of Ramaka (No. 20), another Apraca figure located in this time and place.

The next inscription to mention the Dharmaguptakas is the Copper Plates of Helāūta (No. 33), dated 70 later to 121 Azes (73/74 CE). This records a relic dedication of a caravan leader (G. *ariavargi*) Helāūta, in association with two sons of Satrap Yodavharṇa. Whilst this object has no provenance, this latter individual enables us to situate it most likely in Orazkai, to the southwest of the Peshawar Plain, as he arises in another undated relic dedication from that region.³ The dedication of Helāūta states the relics were established in at a previously unestablished location in order to produce Brahma-merit (*brāhma-*

¹ CKI 404.

² Richard Salomon, 'Two New Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions', *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 14 (2000): 64–65.

³ CKI 442. See Chapter Eight: Early Kuṣāṇa Period.

punya).¹ Denoting the dedication of relics in a new location, this could imply that the Dharmaguptakas had only established themselves in this region in the late 1st century CE, though nothing certain can be concluded in this regard. Notably, the formula arises most commonly in Apracarāja inscriptions, implying that it was the Dharmaguptakas who provided these rulers with this highly specific form of doctrinal knowledge, as the Sarvāstivādins had the Oḍirājas in Swat and the Satrap Patika in Taxila and Queen Yasi in Mathura.

A close relation between the Apracarājas and Dharmaguptakas is indeed confirmed by certain Kharoṣṭhī manuscripts found at Haḍḍa, Afghanistan, which were found within an inscribed pot ‘in the possession of the Dharmaguptakas of the four directions’: *saghami caūdiśami Dhamāūteaṇa [p]arig[r]ahami*.² In particular, two *Avadānas* therein mention the Apraca General Aśpavarma and the Satrap Jihoṇika, who we know from inscriptions and coins dated to the mid 1st century CE. The former likely arises in connection with establishing a monastery for the monsoon season³ and we may therefore tentatively conclude that the Dharmaguptakas enshrined the Apracarājas in their narrative discourse as among the monastic institution’s primary patrons.

It is moreover in the region of Haḍḍa and nearby Jalalabad in eastern Afghanistan, where the majority (6) of inscribed objects of the Dharmaguptakas arise (Fig. 9.1). Only one inscription from Haḍḍa is dated, an inscribed incense burner from 24 [Kaniṣka I] (151/152 CE), attesting to their presence from sometime in the early 2nd century CE. Three other inscribed pots from the site state that one Dharmaguptaka residence was named the Sreṭharaṇa: *saghe cadudiśe S[re]ṭharaṇe acaryana Dharmāūtakana paragrahami*.⁴ Two pots from Jalalabad

¹ See Chapter Fourteen: Eschatology and Brahma-Merit.

² CKI 372.

³ See Chapter Two: Buddhist Political Propaganda.

⁴ CKI 362. See also CKI 514, 399.

record a donation made at an unknown site called Radana¹: *saghe cadodi(*śa)mi Radana acarya Dharmāidaka p(*r)adigha[h]e*.² Finally, one further copper vase from Afghanistan names another Baliyaphaiṃkavihare at a place of unknown location named Stara: *saghe catudiśe Staraya Baliyaphaiṃkavihare acariyanaṃ Dhammagutakana parigrahe*.³

Several later inscriptions also attest to the Dharmaguptaka's presence in Mathura. The earliest is a Bodhisattva statue, dated 17 [Kaniṣka I] (144/145 CE), which records that a lay-practitioner named Nagapiyā, wife of Dharmaka the gold-smith (*suvarṇakara*), establishes a Bodhisattva at her own place of worship into the possession of the Dharmaguptaka teachers.⁴ Next is a Maitreya Statue,¹ dated 29 Huviṣka

¹ This site could further be connected to the Inscribed Bodhisattva, which reads: */// rae Budhaśaasya bhariyae Haridaasya radana[kṣatrasya bha]in[ie] + [pa]iaka + + dae daṇamuye*. CKI 252. Fussman was unsure of the term *radanaḥkṣatrasya*, which he translates 'le tailleur de gemmes'. Gérard Fussman, 'Documents épigraphiques kouchans (II)', *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 67 (1980): 57. However if we propose a reading of *radanaḥkṣatra(pa)sya*, then the inscription could be translated as follows: The principal gift of the *upāsikā* ?, wife of Budhaśaa, sister of Haridaa, satrap of Radana.

² CKI 510. See also: *aghe caturtiśami [Ra]danami acaryana Dharmamuyana pratigrahe*. CKI 219. Strauch notes that the term *dharmamuyana* (**dhārmodyāna* 'Dharma Garden') in this inscription corresponds to the name of the monastery (G. *arañe*, Skt. *āraṇye*) where the scribe Buddhavarma copied the Khotan Dharmapada. He concludes that *dharmamuyana* is an alternative spelling Skt. *dharmaguptānāṃ*, and thus, in his view, confirming the association of the Khotan Dharmapada with the Dharmaguptakas. Ingo Strauch, 'Two Inscribed Pots from Afghanistan', *Gandhāran Studies* 1 (2007): 78.

³ CKI 182.

⁴ [1.]...*Dharm[a]k[a]sa sovaṇik[a]sa kūṭubiniye* [2.] *upaśikā N[a]gapiyā bodhisatva pratiḥāpeti svakāyā cet[i]*[3.]*yākaṭ[i]y[ā] acāryana Dharmaguptakāna pratigrahe*. § 150.

(156/157 CE), which records that [a statue] was donated by an unknown nun.² And in the late 2nd century CE, the Dharmaguptakas are also found at the Jamalgarhi monastic complex,³ located to the north of Mardan, the ancient city of Puṣkalāvātī, in an inscription dated 359 [Yoṇa] (183/184 CE) recording the dedication of a monastery (*āraṇya*) by the monk Poda.

We can conclude that the Dharmaguptaka's primary sphere of influence was in Dir and Bajaur and eastern Afghanistan and they emerged as an institution during the reign of the Apracarājas, who governed the region until late 1st century CE. They subsequently established monastics complexes at Radaṇa in Jalalabad and nearby Haḍḍa from the middle of the 2nd century CE and then later at Mathura.

KĀŚYAPĪYAS

There are seven inscriptions that name the Kāśyapīyas, regarded as another sub-sect of the Sarvāstivādins. The majority of these are associated with sites around Charsadda, ancient Puṣkalāvātī, where they

¹ Rosenfield tentatively identifies this image with Maitreya on the basis that he holds a water vessel in the left hand, which is a motif indicative of that figure, and he points out the Dharmaguptakas are particularly associated with the Bodhisatva cult since they added a *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* to their textual corpus. Rosenfield, *Dynastic Arts of the Kushans*, 229–32. To this we can add that the aforementioned Copper Manuscript in Five Sheets (No. 41) also mentions the unique goal of attaining a meeting with Maitreya (G. *metreasamosaṇa*; Skt. *maitreyasamavadhāna*), which substantiate Rosenfield's conjecture of a specific relationship between Maitreya and the Dharmaguptakas.

² [1.] *mahārājasya huviṣkasya saṃ 20 9 va 4 [di] 1 etaya pu[r]vaya bh[i]khuṇ[i](ye) ? ? ? ? ? + + ? vihāre dhar[ma]gupatikānaṃ parigrahe* [2.] *sarvasarvānaṃ hitasukhāya bhavatu*. Sk 51.

³ For an archaeological study of this site, see Elizabeth Errington, 'The Western Discovery of the Art of Gandhāra and the Finds of Jamālgarhī' (London, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1987).

appear to have resided from as early as the 1st century BCE, as well as in regions to the east of the Peshwar Plain in Bedadi and at Taxila. Due to such a paucity of evidence, however, little can be said as to the history of institution and only two of their inscriptions are dated.

First, the Reliquary Inscription of Śātruleka (No. 23), from 77 Azes (29/30 CE), records the establishment of relics by the Satrap Śātruleka, nephew of the Apracarāja Vijayamitra, at a previously unestablished location (*apratīṭhavitapurvaṃmi pradeśaṃmi*), with the likely intention of producing Brahma-merit (*brāhmapuṇya*).¹ The location of the dedication is the unknown site of Aṭhayi, which scholars have speculated is in Bajaur on the basis that the Apracarājas primarily governed there. However, it is perhaps more likely that it should be searched for in Gandhara proper, because it mentions General Indravarma I as the Lord of Gandhara (*gaṃdharaśpami*) and because this monastic institution is predominantly known to this region.

The second record from this region is the Stone Bowl of Vāira (No. 64), found at Charsadda, a Buddhist site associated with ancient Puṣkalāvātī in Gandhara, and dated to 51 [Huviṣka] (177/178 CE):

*saṃ 20 20 10 1 Kartaasa masasa divasaṃmi 10 1 1 1 iṣe
kṣuṇaṃmi saṃghe caūdiśami Kridañakae Puyakaviharami
acaryaṇa Kaśaviaṇa parigrahaṃmi Vāirasa daṇamukhe
ṣaveasa Uvajayasa arogadakṣiṇe sarva(*sa)tvana puyae*

Year 51, day 13 of the month Kārttika. At this moment, the donation of Vaira [was given] into the possession of the Kāśyapīya teachers of the four directions at the Puyakavihāra in Kridañaka, for the reward of the monk Uvajaya's health, and for the worship of all living beings.

¹ See above and Chapter Fourteen: Eschatology and Brahma-Merit.

The monumental bowl is made of blue schist and since it derives from near Puṣkalāvātī, it has been tentatively identified with the Buddha's alms bowl mentioned by several Chinese travellers from as early as the 4th century CE. They describe it as being in the realm of the Xiao Yuezhi 小月氏 (Kuṣāṇas), in either Jibin 罽賓 or Gantuowei 乾陀衛 (*Gandhāvātī, i.e., Puṣkalāvātī), and that it was made of a blue stone with four rims,¹ indicating that it is an amalgamation of the four bowls offered to the Buddha by the four Lokapālas.² Kuwayama favoured the attribution of Jibin to Puruṣapura (Peshawar). But more recently Falk has tended towards Puṣkalāvātī on the basis of this inscribed object. Noting, however, that the Chinese travellers record a small bowl, he speculates that there were once two: the monumental bowl for public display and a smaller counterpart—the true alms-bowl of the Buddha—that was shown twice a day, as the travellers record.³ This nexus can never be substantiated, but it does indicate that the Puyakavihāra of the Kāśyapīyas was likely an important place of pilgrimage in Gandhara and that devotees would likely have travelled there to make donations of food, flowers and so forth into this secondary relic of use (*paribhogika*).

Several other inscriptions of the Kāśyapīyas were found around Charsadda. These include several jars found at Palatu Dheri, dedicated to the learned Kāśyapīya monks of the community of the four directions:

¹ The account is found in the travelogues of various travellers from China between the 4th and 10th centuries CE; for references see Shoshin Kuwayama, 'The Buddha's Bowl in Gandhāra', in *South Asian Archaeology 1987: Proceedings of the Ninth Conference of the Association of South Asian Archaeologists in Western Europe, Held in the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Island of San Giorgio Maggiore, Venice*, ed. Pierfrancesco Callieri (Rome: Istituto Italiano Per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1990), 946–53.

² See Lalit 24; Bcār 15. 64; Mvu. 1. 4.

³ Harry Falk, 'The Buddha's Begging Bowl', in *South Asian Archaeology 2001, Volume II: Historical Archaeology and Art History* (Paris: Éditions Recherches sur les civilisations, 2005), 446.

*saṃgh(*e) ca[du]diśe śamanana Bah(*u)[ṣuti]a[ka]na Kaṣ[y]aviyana (*parigrahe).*¹ Another potsherd was found at the Takht-i-Bahi monastic complex located to the northwest of Charsadda also.² Archaeologically, the site is recorded as having a number of building phases: the earliest is attributed to c. 1st century BCE–1st century CE, on the basis of a single coin of the Indo-Greek Apollodotus I (c. 180–160 BCE) or II (c. 80–65 BCE) that was discovered in the ‘lower level vaulted chambers’.³ At this stage the complex comprised a modestly sized square monastery with fifteen cells and an adjoining stupa courtyard; at a later stage another monastery with a further ten cells was added.⁴ This evidence could indicate that the Kāśyapīyas were resident here from this period.

Only two inscriptions to mention the monastic institutions are found outside of this locale in Gandhara. The first is a copper sieve donated by a monk named Dṛdha that was discovered in Begram, Afghanistan, but records it was donated at the Śerianvihara in the region of Kakaḍa in Taxila: *saṃghe cadudiśe kakaḍospe Takṣaśilae Kaśaviana śamanana parigrahe Driḍhasya śamanasa danamukho Śeriana vihāra.*⁵ Second, a copper ladle was found at Bedadi, located to the northeast of Taxila, close to the border with Kashmir.⁶

On the basis of such limited evidence, it is difficult to ascertain the institutional role of the Kāśyapīyas. Their geographical base was likely located in Gandhara, as the majority of their finds are located there. Institutionally, they were within the sphere of the Apracarājas and had some formal connection therewith, as evinced by the patronage of the Satrap Śatruleka.

¹ CKI 127. See also CKI 126, 128.

² CKI 55.

³ Errington, ‘Numismatic Evidence for Dating Buddhist Remains’, 193–94.

⁴ Fogelin, *An Archaeological History of Indian Buddhism*, 127.

⁵ CKI 233.

⁶ CKI 67.

SĀMMITĪYAS

Only one inscription to name the Sāṃmitīyas has arisen. This is a Bodhisattva Statue of Dharmaka found at Mathura; it is undated but is inscribed in a Brāhmī script of the Indo-Scythian Period, placing it perhaps in the 1st century CE.¹

[1.] *Bodhisatvo s[a]hā mātāpitihī s[a]hā upajhāyena*
Dharmakena [2.] *sahā ātevāsikehī s[a]hā ātevāsinihī*
Śirivihāre [3.] *ācariyānaṃ Samitiyāna parigrahe*
*sarvabudhapujāye*²

A Bodhisattva [was established] by the preceptor Dharmaka, along with [his] mother and father, and along with [his] male and female pupils, into the possession of the Sāṃmitīya teachers at the Śirivihāra, for the worship of all Buddhas.

We can only say, therefore, that the Sāṃmitīyas were in Mathura. That they were perhaps limited to the Indic North and the Gangetic Plains is substantiated by Xuanzang's record of the 7th century CE, who states they were dominant at Śrāvastī, Varanasi, Vaiśālī and Kapilavastu.³

¹ Comparatively little is known in general about this monastic institution, due to a lack of epigraphic and literary sources. This picture is changing, however; for a recent summary of the available evidence, see Peter Skilling, 'Rehabilitating the Puḍgalavādins: Monastic Culture of the Vātsīputrīya-Sāṃmitīya School', *Journal of Buddhist Studies* 13 (2016): 1–54.

² § 80. For further information on its archaeological context, see Daya Ram Sahni, 'Seven Inscriptions from Mathurā', *Epigraphia Indica* 19 (1928): 67.

³ Beal, *Buddhist Records. Vol. II*, 200–202.

MAHĪŚĀSAKA

Only two inscriptions name the Mahīśāsakas. A pot inscribed with the Kharoṣṭhī script that has no provenance¹ and the Reliquary Inscription of Priavaśa (No. 38), dated 126 Azes (78/79 CE), which also has no provenance and therefore nothing more can be said about the geographical spread of the Mahīśāsaka beyond that they were active in the Northwest in the late 1st century CE.

[A1.] *savatsaraye ṣaviśavaṣaśatimae* [A2.] *maharayasa mahatasa Ayasa kalagada*[A3.]*sa Aṣaḍasa masasa divasami* [A4.] *treviśami iśa divasami* [A5.] *yaiśasa ra[j]ami* [A6.] *maharayasa nai[mi]tra* [A7.] *[vha]jao* [B8] *tre[haṇi]a[y]ao puyae* [B9.] *yeṇa io vihare pratiṭha*[B10.]*vide* [C11.] *i śarira aḍi pradethavida* [C12.] *Priavaśara śamaṇasa* [C13] *ime ya śarira pradethavi*[C.14.]*da i daṇamuhe Priava*[D18]*śasa śamaṇasa* [D15] *madapida puyāida* [D16] *Mahiśadagaṇa aiiri*[D17.]*aṇa parigrahami*

In the one-hundred and twenty-sixth year of the Great King, the Great Azes, deceased, on the twenty-third day of the month Āṣāḍha. On this day, in the reign of the *yabgu*, the Great King [Kujula Kadphises], for the worship of the relatives and friends, *vhajao* and *trehaṇiayao*, a relic was established here at the monastery by him. A relic was established [by] the monk Priavaśa. The principal gift of the monk Priavaśa, for the worship of [his] mother and father, into the possession of the Mahīśāsakas.

¹ /// a{*ca}ryaṇa I Mahiśasakana ///. CKI 1119.

Of note, the Mahīśāsaka monk Priavaśa names the titles of the Kuṣāṇa ruler Kujula Kadphises, implying some association with the ruler at an early stage of his governance.¹ A clue as to the provenance of the reliquary is to be found in the date formula which states Azes is deceased (*kālagata*). This, as we have seen, is a peculiarity of inscriptions associated with the Apracarājas,² which may enable us to tentatively place the object in regions close to their domain, perhaps on the Peshawar Plain or in the Dir and Bajaur valleys to the north.

There is another epigraph to state the name Priavaśa. This is an undated reliquary of unknown provenance, which may be dated to the same period as the above, as coins of Vima Kaphises were found in the deposit.³ It records the donation of a certain wife of Priavaśa⁴ and if this individual is indeed the same as the aforementioned monk, this would suggest that monks were able to marry in the Northwest, recalling the critique of the *Rāṣṭrapālapariṣcchāsūtra*, which laments monks marrying.⁵ This evidence, however, is too flimsy to draw any conclusions and there is no evidence elsewhere to suggest that monks did indeed wed.

¹ See Chapter Eight: Early Kuṣāṇa Period.

² See Chapter Six: The Apracarājas.

³ See Harry Falk, 'Buddhistische Reliquienbehälter aus der Sammlung Gritli von Mitterwallner', *Journal Fünf Kontinente: Forum für ethnologische Forschung* 1 (2105 2014): 154.

⁴ *Priavaśabhayae pra[ṣṭh]iṭhavane madapida puyāita sarvasatva pu[ṣṭ]yāita*. CKI 240.

⁵ Rp-pr 28. 11-33.6. For a translation of the relevant passage, see Silk, 'The Origins and Early History of the Mahāratnakūṭa Tradition of Mahāyāna Buddhism with a Study of the Ratnarāśīsūtra and Related Materials. (Volumes I and II)', 166–67.

MAHĀSĀM̐GHİKAS

The history of the Mahāsām̐ghikas is quite different from the former five monastic institutions. Unlike these latter, for which the earliest evidence is found in the Northwest, in the case of the Mahāsām̐ghikas, precisely the reverse is the case. Of the 16 inscriptions available (Fig. 9.1), 13 are from the Indic North, of which 11 are from Mathura. One other was found in Gujarat, another in Peshawar, which likely derived from the North, and finally two later examples stem from Wardak in Afghanistan. Their domain was therefore primarily in Mathura, and they are attested at this site from the Indo-Scythian Period in the 1st century CE until the 3rd century CE.

Three donations are palaeographically associated with the Indo-Scythian Period of the early 1st century CE: the aforementioned Mathura Lion Capital (No. 25–26), where they appear to be in some conflict with the Sarvāstivādins, a Bodhisattva statue donated at the Ālānakavihāra,¹ and a railing donation of a certain servant of the interior (*abhyantaropasthāyaka*)² Kāṭhika.³ However, the earliest dated donations arise in the first four decades of the Kuṣāṇa Kaniṣka I's reign: the Bodhisattva of Buddharakṣita (No. 53), dated 8 Kaniṣka I (136/137 CE), the Bodhisattva of Nāgadatta, dated 16 Kaniṣka I (144/145 CE),⁴ and the Bodhisattva of Aśvadatta (No. 56), dated 20 Kaniṣka I (150/151 CE). This same donor likely arises as a teacher of another unnamed

¹ Ālānake vihāra Mahāsaghiyānaṃ parigrahe sarvabudhap(u)[ja](y)e. § 86.

² Sircar interprets this title as a servant working in the inner palace. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphical Glossary*, 3. Others have understood Kāṭhika to be a eunuch. Details of the title, periodisation and art-historical elements are discussed in Quintanilla, *History of Early Stone Sculpture at Mathura CA. 150 BCE-100 CE*, 155ff.

³ Qu 1. 17.

⁴ For an edition, see § 157.

monk upon an inscribed Bodhisattva statue of Saṃghilā (No. 70), dated 34 Huviṣka (162/162 CE), which was dedicated into the possession of the Mahāsāṃghikas at a Dharmarājikā stupa: [2.] (**bodhi*)*satva pratiṣṭhapitaḥ dharmmarajike āca[r]yyaṇā mahās///(*aṃghiyānām pari-grahe)*. This is the only record from Mathura to record the existence of a Dharmarājikā stupa, although several are mentioned by Xuanzang,¹ and it indicates that in Mathura the Mahāsāṃghika had a complex nearby such an important place of pilgrimage. Similarly, a monumental stone bowl² inscribed in Brāhmī of the Kuṣāṇa Period implies they also had a secondary relic—the Buddha’s alms bowl—at Mathura, strengthening the view that this region was very much their domain. Finally, an inscribed pedestal, dated 35 [Huviṣka] (162/163 CE), was found in Peshawar. However, it is fashioned of sandstone from Mathura and is inscribed in Brāhmī letters, implying it was imported it from Mathura to Gandhara at some unknown time.³

This is the earliest inscription of the Mahāsāṃghika known from the Northwest and one may be tempted to suggest their north to northwest expansion was afforded by an increase in patronage they experienced towards the end of Kaniṣka I and the beginning of Huviṣka’s reign. One must note that the sociological quality of Mahāsāṃghika inscriptions is not specifically political prior to and in the early decades of Huviṣka’s reign, and rather monastic and merchantile. In the latter decade, however, this situation changes and the Mahāsāṃghika become more politicised.

In support of this view are three dedications made in 51 Huviṣka (178/179 CE): two reliquary inscriptions (No. 62–63) at Wardak, in

¹ Beal, *Buddhist Records. Vol. II*, 181.

² § 125.

³ Harry Falk, ‘Six Early Brāhmī Inscriptions from Gandhāra’, *Univerità degli Studi di Napoli L’Orientale, Annali* 64 (2004): 139–40.

Afghanistan, and another Bodhisattva Statue from Anyor, Mathura.¹ The former two represent the latest dateable relic establishments of the corpus considered in this study. They record the donation of relics within stupas at the Kamagulyaputravagamaregavihāra at a place called Khadava, by members of the powerful Marega family, who named the Kuṣāṇa Huviṣka as a beneficiary of the relic dedication.² These are the only relic establishments attributable to the Mahāsāṃghika and represent the sole occasion in which this monastic institution is named in the Northwest.

In fact, a total of five dedications³ were made in this same year, including the Bodhisattva Statue of Buddhavarma (No. 65) at the Mahārājadevaputravihāra of Huviṣka. For Michael Skinner, this rise is indicative of an attempt by Huviṣka to ‘reaffirm his imperial standing’ following military conflict and economic difficulties.⁴ Indeed, the direct association between an establishment and the ruler may well indicate he increased his patronage of Buddhism during this period of his reign and, in at least two cases, selected the Mahāsāṃghikas over other monastic institutions. We may conjecture, therefore, that the expansion of this monastic institution into the Northwest was enabled, to a degree, by imperial support. Thereafter, two further dated inscriptions arise in Mathura: the Buddha Statue Pedestal donated by Saṃghasena, dated two years later to 53 Huviṣka (180/181 CE),⁵ and the Buddha of Guṇasenā, dated 64/67 Vāsudeva (190–194 CE).¹

¹ [1.] *saṃ 50 1 gr 3 di [4] asya puvayā + + ma + [hāth.grasa] ///* [2.] + [sya] ? ? bo ? ? t. a ? rya ma ? ? [ṅghika]na par[i] ? h. § 134. ‘Year 51, month three of summer, day 4. At previous time, (a Bodhisattva) of Hāth.grasa[...] (was established) into the possession of the Mahāsāṃghika teachers.’

² See Chapter Eight: Huviṣka.

³ CKI 159, 367, 509, Sk 76–77.

⁴ Skinner, ‘Marks of Empire’, 177.

⁵ [1.] *mah(ā)r(ā)jasya devaputrasya huviṣkasya sa 50 3 va 4 di 10 etasyā puvayaṃ [saṃ]ṅghasenasya dānaṃ [2.] ///* s[va]-vihāre acaryya [ma]///. Sk 82.

In comparison to the two other dominant monastic institutions, the Sarvāstivāda and Dharmaguptaka, the Mahāsāṃghika appear to have had slightly different fortunes. As they were apparently not present in the Northwest, they did not engage in relic dedications nor receive patronage from the ardent Buddhist Apracarājas and Oḍirājas. Patronage of Buddhism was much higher in the Northwest and was first politicised in this region. This was to the benefit of the Sarvāstivādins in particular, who were enabled to spread the most widely. It was only later during the reigns of Kaniṣka I and Huviṣka that Buddhism became a political force in the North, at which time the Sarvāstivādins initially, and the Mahāsāṃghikas later, were given the opportunity to garner support from rulers and alike and become instrumental in the formation of political power.

‘Year 53 of the Great King, Son of Gods, Huviṣka, month 4 of monsoon, dat 10. At this previous time, a gift of Saṃghasena in his own monastery, [into the possession of the Mahāsāṃghika] teachers.’

¹ [1.] *///trasya vāsudevasya sa[m] 60 [4/7] varṣ[ā]-māse dviti 2 divasi [2.] /// naṃ sa[rva]ṣa ya[m]tr=opanāna p[ū]jjārtha [3.] /// na pariḡrahā acariyana mahāsāghikā [4.] /// [ni]sya prat[i]m[ā] sag[i]gh[ā] mātā-pitreṇa abha[s]i[ta]naṃ ? /// [5.] /// ? ? k[u]ṭ[ub]ikānaṃ [guha]sen[ena] ? ?*. Sk 88. ‘Year 64/67 of...Son of Gods, Vāsudeva, in the second month of monsoon, day 2...for the worship of all...wherever they have arisen, for the possession of the Mahāsāṃghika teacher, a statue of [Śākyamuni], in addition to a shrine, along with [his or her] mother and father, of the unaddressed...of the wives, by Gunasena.

CHAPTER TEN: INDIVIDUALS IN DONATIVE INSCRIPTIONS

Epigraphic sources permit of a form of knowledge that transgresses the normative limits of Buddhist literary discourse, which has hitherto served as the choice fundament of research.¹ Anticipated by broader trends within social theory, which emerged out of a radical reappraisal of the essentialist and constructivist categories of society and identity,² scholarship has increasingly placed value on inscriptions for the form of sociological study of Indic Buddhism they afford, enabling the analysis of patterns of patronage in terms of gender and social and economic status.³ Thus, several studies of individuals in Buddhist inscriptions from site-based corpora, such as those found on the architecture of stupas at Bharhut and Sāñcī in Madhya Pradesh, and Amarāvati in Andhra Pradesh, have been conducted in the last decades, with a view to nuancing the social picture of Buddhism. These studies have typically

¹ On the historical predilection for textual studies, see Gregory Schopen, *Bones Stones and Buddhist Monks: Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), 9ff.

² For a good summary, see Craig Calhoun, 'Social Theory and the Politics of Identity', in *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), 9–36.

³ For a historiography of the study of gender and women in Buddhist textual studies, see Collett, 'Historio-Critical Hermeneutics in the Study of Women in Early Indian Buddhism'.

classified individuals in inscriptions according to four attributes of identity, namely, gender, place of origin or residency, religion (lay or monastic status), and occupation, in order to determine patterns of patronage. This is due to the formal nature of the inscriptions from these sites, which, in their lengthiest instantiations, stipulate the name of a donor, a place name, and, less commonly, other titles identifying their social role. Typically gender is taken as the main independent variable of any analysis and studies have therefore primarily determined the extent to which the role of a donor is dependent upon whether an individual is male or female. From this data broader social and economic arguments are often extrapolated; e.g., that women had access to wealth apart from men.¹

Donative inscriptions from the North and Northwest have been almost entirely excluded from this form of sociological analysis. The reasons for this are not immediately evident, although, in the most recent study of this variety, Garima Kaushik states she omitted the corpus of inscriptions from the Northwest, due to its being composed in the Kharoṣṭhī script, its regional separation from a putative Brāhmī sphere, and because the inscriptions have comparatively complicated contents, stipulating, for example, the intention of the donors, and for their purportedly not mentioning women with any notable frequency.² It is true these inscriptions stand apart from their Brāhmī cousins in Central India at several levels. But the slightly later examples from the North are coeval and formally more akin to those in the Northwest than

¹ Upinder Singh, 'Sanchi: The History of the Patronage of an Ancient Buddhist Establishment', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 331, no. 1 (1996): 10; Matthew Milligan, 'The Economic Power of Women in Early South Asian Buddhism', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 56, no. 1 (2019): 13ff.

² Kaushik, *Women and Monastic Buddhism in Early South Asia. Rediscovering the Invisible Believers*, 209fn1.

to those in Central India; thus their alienation on grounds of script and geographic estrangement appears quite unfounded. Moreover, these inscriptions afford several other lines of sociological inquiry (including gender), which are not realisable in the case of other sets of inscriptions.

Unlike inscriptions from the aforementioned site-based corpora, the group considered in this study derives not from individual locales but from across the regions of the North and Northwest. The majority of those in the former come from the city of Mathura and its vicinities, and there are several groups also from the Northwest that are localised around other urban centres, such as Taxila and Mingora. Yet, the numbers of inscriptions at these sites are often too low to derive any representative findings regarding patterns of patronage. For the most part, the specific find-spots of inscriptions considered in this study are widely diffused, imprecise, or unknown. Similarly, whilst many inscriptions are dated, and afford therefore the possibility of conducting synchronic and diachronic analyses of patronage, the majority do not have a date formula and their periodisation has only been approximated on the palaeographic bases.

Individuals within inscriptions are also identified by a far greater set of attributes than in other epigraphic corpora, each possessing more than one title that stipulates their gender, kinship, political, monastic, lay, occupational, geographical, or class status. Names and titles given in inscriptions are expressions of identity; they constitute categorical or relational attributes by means of which an individual identifies himself or herself within a social location.¹ These attributes cannot be considered alone but rather collectively as a constellation of attributes that make up a given social agent. Individuals are also identified by their roles within the ritual context, which include a donor, participant,

¹ Rogers Brubaker and Frederik Cooper, 'Beyond "Identity"', *Theory and Society* 29 (2000): 7, 14–15.

beneficiary, and other named relations. A donor is either given in the nominative, when the action verb is in the indicative, or in the instrumental, when construed with a past passive participle; participants are formulaically named either in the instrumental case or with the prefixes, including *sa-* or *saha-* ('along with'); beneficiaries are those to whom the benefit of donative act is to be accrued; and named relations are those individuals to arise only by virtue of their relation (normally familial or institutional) to a donor, participant or beneficiary, and are not obviously present in the ritual performance. These four different roles reflect the degree of agency a given individual held in the ritual performance, which decreases in potency from donors, who were most active, to the more passive roles of participants, beneficiaries, and named relations. Naturally determining the degree of agency is a hazardous affair. Nonetheless, when considered statistically it transpires that agency is the key variable and determinant of the other categorical and relational attributes of identity.

INDIVIDUALS IN INSCRIPTIONS

Within the 588 inscriptions considered in this thesis, 1454 named individuals arise. On average therefore around 2.5 individuals are found in a donative inscription. These individuals can be analysed according to their gender, determined by their names and titles, as well as according to different social categories with which they identify themselves and are identified; these include, most commonly, a kinship relation, their political or court status, occupation, religion (whether Jain, Brahmin, Buddhist, or other cult) and their role within a religious context, whether monastic or lay.

NAMES AND IDENTITY

As matrices of both individuality and identity, names constitute markers of attribution, often reflecting an individual's class, ethnicity, gender, kinship, and religion. Whilst this is a given in social theory concerning contemporary societies, the precise nature of the nexus between name and identity in Indic contexts has yet to be adequately problematised. This is largely due to a lack of comprehensive onomastic surveys. Indeed, the only comprehensive example of which I am aware is Alphons Hilka's *Die altindischen Personnamen* of 1910, which deals exclusively with the conventions of name construction and naming practices in Sanskrit literary sources and inscriptions edited in the first three volumes of *Epigraphia Indica* (1892–95) and publications on the Buddhist stupas sites at Sanchi, Bharhut, and Amaravati, and the cave complexes at Karle, Ellora, and in the Western Deccan. This work is therefore invaluable but does not entirely fill the requirements for the onomastic study of Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions and manuscripts in the Indic Northwest, whose names are not only Indic but also Greek and Iranian. This study will not deal with naming conventions in any detail, for this demands a study of its own. Nonetheless, it is important to point out one or two aspects of the relation between name and identity.

The first is a distinct assimilation of multiple identities within single names and individual families. One important inscription in this regard records the dedication of the Buddha's relics in 121 Aze (73/74 BCE) by a certain Helaüta (No. 33). His name is a compound¹ of the Gk. Hēlio- ('sun') and the Skt. -gupta ('protector') and likely represents the wish of his parents to code two ethnolinguistic backgrounds into his nominal identity, corresponding respectively to his father Demetria (Gk.

¹ See also the seal inscription of Theüta: Theo- ('god') with the Sanskrit -gupta ('protector'). CKI 969.

Dēmētrios) and his mother Sudaśaṇa (Skt. Sudarśanā). Helaiūta also names his wife, Sumaga (Skt. Sumagadhā), as well as their sons, who have Iranian (Adura, Arazada, Adramitra, Adravharṇa), Greek (Demetria), and Indic (Mahasaṃmada, Skt. Mahāsaṃmata) names, and their daughters, including, Kaśia (Skt. Śāśikā), Supraūda (Skt. Suprahodā), Sudayaṇa (Skt. Sudarśanā), and Supraña (Skt. Suprajñā), each of whom bears an Indic name.

Harry Falk has noted certain onomastic patterns on the bases of chronology, ordering, and gender. In respect to the former basis, he observes that the first four named sons bear Iranian names—following either an acrophonic system, beginning with the sound *a-*, or an acronymic system, deriving their names from OIr. *atar* ('fire')—whereas the later sons, Demetria,¹ who is named patronymically after his grandfather (a common practice), and Mahasaṃmada, who was given a distinctly Buddhist name, diverge from this pattern. He argues:

If the succession of names mirrors the succession of births, then we can deduce that the first born [sons] all have Iranian names, while the “foreign” languages come last.²

In the case of gender, he also notes that all women bear Indic names, indicating matrilineal denominations, which begin with the prefix *su-*; one, Sudayaṇa, is named matronymically after her grandmother. Due to these variances he concludes it impossible to determine the family's ethnic identity.³

¹ If this family followed typical Greek naming conventions then Demetria, taking the name of his grandfather, would be the first-born son. Hilka, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der indischen Namengebung. Die altindischen Personennamen*, 9.

² Falk, 'Copper-Plates of Helagupta', 11.

³ Falk, 'Copper-Plates of Helagupta', 5, 10–11, 21.

In a recent survey of Greek and Indic names in Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions, Stefan Baums makes the important observation that in the majority of cases in which an individual bears a Greek name, their family members contrarily bear Indic names. In some cases, such as the name Menander which occurs twice in inscriptions,¹ he attributes the continued presence of Greek names to the ‘continuing historical memory and prestige of the Indo-Greek rulers’ and concludes ‘we can deduce nothing from it about the ethnicity or cultural self-identification of their bearers (unless we have positive evidence that the whole family bore Greek names)’.² Similarly, Harry Falk also states, ‘It seems possible that Greek families assumed local names and that local families gave Greek names to their children. The existence of double names could be a sign of marriages into families from the other side’.³

But the assimilation of multiple ethno-linguistic identities within a single family, this being quite common in donative inscriptions of the Northwest, is itself indicative of a form of cultural and ethnic identity that was no doubt peculiar to the Northwest and may be reflective of what some have termed ‘hybridity’, a cultural condition resulting in a mixed identity of ‘Graeco-Iranian, Hellenist Indian’, etc.⁴

GENDER DISTRIBUTION IN INSCRIPTIONS

Of the 1454 individuals, there are 1034 men, 330 women, and 90 individuals whose gender could not be determined. The existence of this latter category is due to the fact that gender is construable either on the basis of an individual’s name, determined according to the length of a

¹ See CKI 142, 257.

² Baums, ‘Greek or Indian? The Questions of Menander and Onomastic Patterns in Early Gandhāra’, 40–41.

³ Falk, ‘Names and Titles’, 74.

⁴ See, e.g., Ghosh, ‘Understanding Transitions at the Crossroads of Asia: C. Mid Second Century BCE to c. Third Century CE’, 291–95.

vowel, or from a title which identifies that individual in terms of their gender. In absence of the former, which can be due either to a name being partially attested or due to the Kharoṣṭhī script not rendering long vowels, a given gender is therefore not always obvious. In some cases, this problem can be mitigated by the presence of a title but where this latter is also absent or not given, then we encounter the same problem. This undetermined category occurs most commonly in the case of named relations, whose name is simply compounded with a familial title of another individual, normally the donor. Consider the following excerpt:

Silver Scroll of Utara (No. 15)

[1.]...*Utara (*kuma)*[2.]*[ra]bhaya sadha Iṃdravarmeṇa kumarena bhagavato dhatue pratistaveti śilastaṃbho [hi]te a. Sadaḍha Ujīṃ[da]*...[3.] *Utaraüto Pupidrio Uṣaṃveo puyai(*ta) meriakhomata Śreṭha puyäita...*

...Utara, wife of the Prince, establishes relics of the Fortunate One and erected a stone pillar, along with Prince Indravarma I; Sadaḍha, Ujīṃ[da],...Utaraüto, Pupidrio, and Uṣaṃveo are worshipped, Śreṭha, mother of the district governor, is worshipped...

In this case, the genders of the donor Utara, participant Indravarma I, and beneficiary Śreṭha, are only known by virtue of their having a title indicative thereof, whereas the gender of the other beneficiaries is not obvious, in absence of either long vowels or titles.

Men	1034 (71%)
Women	330 (22%)
Undetermined	90 (7%)
	Total: 1454

Fig. 10. 1: No. (%) Individuals in Inscriptions by Gender

The conclusion to be derived from these data is that between the mid 2nd century BCE and late 3rd century CE in the Indic North and Northwest, the likelihood of an individual engaging in donative practice was highly determined by gender. Indeed, if individuals whose gender is undetermined are removed from the calculation, then men constitute three quarters of all individuals to arise in a donation. To the presumptuous reader, such a finding may strike one as wholly unremarkable. The sceptical reader may also question whether, due to the scale of the geography and expanse of the time frame, such a finding is to be considered relevant, assuming that the participation of men and women in donative contexts is contextually specific and not to be generalised. However, both the presumption and the scepticism are proved correct to a certain extent.

Considered by region, men remain the majority in both the North and Northwest. But women are more represented in inscriptions of the North at 30%, as opposed to the Northwest where they constitute 20% of all named individuals. It was already observed that patterns of patronage geographically shift in number from the Northwest to the North in the 1st-2nd century CE;¹ therefore, women are found more commonly in inscriptions from this period also. Even though this difference in region and gender is perhaps not so pronounced, it is a phenomenon reflected in the donative inscriptions of all religious institutions.

¹ See Chapter Two: Diachronic Patterns of Patronage.

In the 389 Buddhist inscriptions from both regions, there are 942 individuals mentioned. In the 873 cases in which gender could be determined, men number 679 (78%) and women 194 (22%). However, the percentage of women in Buddhist inscriptions from the North increases to 24% and decreases to 17% in the Northwest, which would appear to indicate it was more normative for women to participate in ritual contexts.

	North	Northwest
Men	252 (70%)	427 (65%)
Women	85 (24%)	109 (17%)
Undetermined	1	68 (11%)
Totals:	338	604

Fig. 10. 2: No. (%) Individuals in Buddhist Inscriptions by Gender and Region

This same distribution is observed in the corpus of 94 Jain inscriptions from Mathura. Here, male individuals represent 75% and women 25%. Similarly, in the case of the small number of 19 Brahmanical inscriptions, in the North, men number 40 (87%) and women 6 (13%), whereas in the Northwest no women are mentioned in any inscription of this religious affiliation. Regardless of institutional affiliation, women are therefore more highly represented in the former region than in the latter.

Men	252 (75%)
Women	85 (25%)
Undetermined	1
Total:	338

Fig. 10. 3: No. (%) Individuals in Jain Inscriptions by Gender

GENDER AND AGENCY

It was argued above that individuals in inscriptions can be divided into four roles—donor, participant, beneficiary, and named relation—and that these roles are reflective of degrees of agency in the ritual. Following the observation that gender is a strong determinant of participation overall, the question remains as to whether the fact of being a man or woman influenced one's agency also.

Of the 1454 named individuals in all inscriptions from the North and Northwest, 600 are named as the donor. Within this specific group, 417 (70%) are men and 160 (27%) are women, and the remainder is undetermined. In general, therefore, men were the most active in ritual contexts, and thence enjoyed higher degrees of agency than women. Near identical results are to be found in the case of the 203 individuals named in participatory roles, whereof 139 (68%) are men and 57 (28%) women. However in the role of beneficiary—which, for its passivity, enjoys the least agency—the statistics are quite distinct: of the 267 individuals to arise in this role, 168 (63%) are men and 87 (33%) women. If we recall that overall 71% of individuals were men and 22% women, and account for agency within this set, we can see that in active roles men and women are proportionately represented, whereas in the least active role of beneficiary, women are overrepresented as a group.

These findings become more acute when regionality is factored into the equation. It was seen above that women are statistically more likely to engage in donative contexts in the North than in the Northwest. One would expect, therefore, this to be translated into agency, whereby women appear in roles with higher degrees of agency. Indeed, of the 289 donors in the North, 161 (57%) are men and 124 (43%) women, of the 140 participants, 96 (69%) are men and 42 (30%) are women, and of the 76 beneficiaries, 49 (64%) are men and 25 (33%) women. Since a

woman is statistically less likely to engage in donative practice in the Northwest, one would expect the reverse to be the case for agency in this region. Thus, of the 312 donors, 256 (82%) are men and 36 (12%) women; of the 63 participants, 43 (68%) are men and 15 (24%) women; and of the 191 beneficiaries, 120 (63%) are men and 62 (32%) women. We can see here that gender and regionality had a strong effect on agency. Particularly in the Northwest, women were far less likely to be a donor and much more likely to be a beneficiary.

The division in the relation between gender and agency at a regional level is in part to be attributed to institutional differences. Notably, in Jain inscriptions, there are 81 (81%) women in the role of the donor as opposed to only 17 (17%) men and in the more passive roles the distribution is reversed: of the 68 participants 48 (71%) are men and 20 (28%) are women; and of the 68 beneficiaries, 44 (65%) are men and 25 (36%) women.

TITLES IN BUDDHIST INSCRIPTIONS

In the 389 Buddhist inscriptions, a total of 942 individuals are named, of which a significant number bear one title or more. These titles can be divided into the following major categories: [1] familial, [2] political, [3] occupational, or [4] class status, [5] one's role in the Buddhist community, and [6] ethnic or geographical origins. Within each classification, there are also several sub-groups. For example, included under political titles are rulers, administrators, judiciary, military personnel, and individuals belonging to the royal court, under occupational titles, various artisans, guildsmen, merchants, etc., are encountered, as are several titles of administrators, pedagogues, and lay-practitioners who served specific duties in the Buddhist community. The

type of title an individual bears is determined heavily by gender. For example, women are invariably identified in familial terms, and whilst this is also true for men, members of this group also bear other titles indicative of their social status. An analysis of titles thus reveals the social demographic of Buddhist patronage in the North and Northwest across this period.

It is often claimed in scholarship that Buddhist discourse gives precedence to merchants. We shall observe below¹ that this is a gross misrepresentation in literary contexts and the conclusion needs to be reevaluated in epigraphic contexts also, as mercantile groupings are not overly common in inscriptions. However, the majority of individuals to arise in inscriptions do not bear occupational titles, meaning that in many cases we cannot determine their role in society. In light of the economic capital required to fund a donation, it is entirely conceivable, and indeed logical, that many individuals do not bear an occupational title could well have been engaged in commerce. In this case, it seems that the social statuses of artisans, merchants, etc., were not salient enough as attributes of identity for individuals to specify them in donative contexts.

KINSHIP AND FAMILIAL TITLES

The most commonly encountered attributes of identity in inscriptions are those which express a kinship or familial relationship, denoting the fact that donors were most often concerned with dedicating merit to those closest to them. These range from parental, matrimonial, filial, or sororal titles of immediate family members, to the extended family comprised of aunts, uncles, cousins, etc.

¹ See Chapter Thirteen: The Function of Avadānas.

Male		Female	
Title	No. Occurences	Title	No. Occurences
Father (<i>pitṛ</i>)	67	Mother (<i>mātr</i> , <i>ambā</i>)	77
Son (<i>putra</i> , <i>darakā</i>)	129	Daughter (<i>duhitṛ</i> , <i>darikā</i>)	22
Grandson (<i>pautra</i>)	3	Sister (<i>duhitṛ</i> , <i>svasṛ</i>)	22
Brother (<i>bhrātr</i>)	18	Wife (<i>bhāryā</i> , <i>kutum̐binī</i> , <i>dāra</i>)	46
Maternal uncle (<i>mātula</i>)	1	Paternal aunt (<i>pitṛsvasṛ</i>)	1
Maternal nephew (<i>bhāgineya</i>)	3	Maternal aunt (<i>mātrsvasṛ</i>)	2
Paternal nephew (<i>bhrātrputra</i>)	1	Maternal uncle's wife (<i>mātulānī</i>)	1
Maternal cousin (<i>mātrsvasṛputra</i> , <i>mātulaputra</i>)	2	Maternal niece (<i>bhāgineyī</i>)	2
Paternal cousin (<i>pitṛsvasṛputra</i>)	1	Daughter-in-law (<i>vadhu</i> , <i>snuṣā</i>)	3
Father-in-law (<i>śvaśura</i>)	1	Paternal grandmother (<i>pitāmahī</i>)	1

Fig. 10.4 Kinship and Familial Titles by Gender

Of the 942 individuals, 362 bear a familial title: 211 men and 151 women. This means that of the 679 men to occur in total, only 31% identified themselves in such terms, as opposed to 78% of the 184 women. Regardless of agency, therefore, women invariably expressed their identity by virtue of their being a wife, mother, etc. Conversely, men identified themselves in such terms far less frequently, as well as in different ways. For example, it is common that a male donor, as part of a naming convention, identifies himself as the son of his father or mother and terms for 'husband' do not occur once. Most common to

inscriptions is that a donor stipulates the dedication is for the benefit of his or her mother and father (*mātāpitṛ*); however, these individuals are rarely named and it was simply standard to include one's parents in the list of beneficiaries in this form.

POLITICAL AND COURT TITLES

109 individuals, constituting 13% of all individuals named in inscriptions, bear titles designative of their political status or position in the royal court. Of these, 96 (88%) are men and 13 (12%) women. A significant number of dedications was therefore enacted within political contexts.¹ These titles can be further classified in terms of the political administration within which they were used, whether as part of an imperial structure under the Indo-Greeks, Indo-Scythians, Indo-Parthians, and Kuṣāṇas, or as part of a dynastic structure under the Apracarājas and Oḍirājas. They can also be stratified in terms of agency, for the occurrence of political individuals is not evenly distributed across the roles of donor, participant, beneficiary, and named relations.

The first group of titles to consider are those belonging to imperial administrations, ranging from the suzerains, named either as great king (*mahārāja*) or supreme king among kings (*rājātirāja*),² to the great satraps (*mahākṣatrapa*), satraps (*kṣatrapa*), district governors (*meridarkh*),³ great generals (*mahādaṇḍanāyaka*), and generals (*daṇḍanāyaka*) serving under them (Fig. 10.5). A few points already addressed above⁴ should be noted here. First, only one potential Kharoṣṭhī inscription from the Indo-Greek Period mentions a district

¹ These titles and the individuals associated with them are treated more thoroughly in Chapters Two through Eight.

² For details, see Fig. 3.1.

³ For details, see Fig. 3.2

⁴ See Part One: Buddhism, Empires and Kingdoms.

governor as a donor, indicating that political engagement with Buddhism was almost non-existent at this time. Second, inscriptions to mention suzerains occur rarely in the Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian Periods, with a slight increase in the Kuṣāṇa Period, indicating that Buddhist donative practice was marginal in imperial strategies of power. All other titles are attested during the Indo-Scythian, Indo-Parthian, and Kuṣāṇa Periods, apart from the Sanskrit titles for a general, which are only encountered in the latter. Political engagement with Buddhism was therefore conducted primarily by local potentates of imperial administrations.

Title	No. Occurrences			Named Relation
	Donor	Participant	Beneficiary	
<i>mahārāja rājātirāja</i>	1	—	5	2
<i>(mahā)-kṣatrapa</i>	5	5	9	5
<i>agramahiṣī</i>	1	—	—	—
<i>meridarkha</i>	2	1	—	1
<i>meridarkhabhāryā</i>	1	—	—	—
<i>meridarkhamātr</i>	—	—	1	—
<i>(mahā)-daṇḍanāyaka</i>	4	—	3	3
Totals:	14	6	18	11
			Overall Total:	49

Fig. 10.5 Imperial Titles and Agency

A total of 49 individuals belonging to the internal structure of imperial administrations are found in inscriptions, for the most part in the more passive roles of participants, beneficiary, and named relation. However, a significant number of satraps, district governors, and generals are encountered also in the role of the donor. Only three women arise: Yasi, the Principal Queen (*agramahiṣī*) of the Great Satrap Rajuvula in Mathura, as well as the wife and the mother of a district governor, most like the aforementioned Taravia. However, these latter two arise in the

context of Apracarājas donations and it cannot be ruled out that the district governor was a position used by this local group of rulers.

This brings us to the next group of political individuals to consider; namely, the rulers (*apracarāja*), generals (*stratega*, Gk. στρατηγός),¹ and princes (*kumāra*) of the Apracarāja dynasty, in addition to individuals belonging to the courts of these patriarchs, including queens, named as ‘women who have living sons’ (*jīvaputrā*),² wives of rulers (*rājabhāryā*), generals (*strategabhāryā*), princes (*kumārabhāryā*), women of the inner court (*antaḥpurikā*), and advisors (*anaṃkaya*, Gk. ἀναγκαῖος).

Title	Donor	No. Occurrences		Named Relation
		Participant	Beneficiary	
<i>apracarāja</i>	1	1	7	3
<i>apracarājabhāryā</i>	1	—	—	—
<i>jīvaputrā</i>	—	—	1	3
<i>kṣatrapa (apracarāja- bhāgineya)</i>	1	—	—	—
<i>stratega</i>	—	1	6	2
<i>strategabhāryā</i>	1	—	3	—
<i>kumāra</i>	3	1	—	1
<i>kumārabhāryā</i>	1	—	—	—
<i>antaḥpurikā</i>	2	—	—	—
<i>anaṃkaya</i>	—	1	—	—
Totals	11	4	17	10
			Overall Total	41

Fig. 10.6 Political and Court Titles of the Apracarājas

Apraca figures of every generation and political position were engaged in Buddhist ritual contexts, in this case making relic dedications.

¹ For details, see Fig. 6.1.

² For details, see Fig. 6.4.

Although inscriptions to name these figures only arise in the first half of the 1st century CE, we can see here by virtue of the sheer number of individuals that participation was high within this local ruling group. Moreover, far more women are encountered, particularly in the role of the donor. Below,¹ we shall further observe that this high degree of agency is reflected also in these individuals' soteriological agency, for uniquely to epigraphic contexts, women related directly or indirectly to the Apracarājas quite regularly made soteriological aspirations.

A similar pattern of patronage is encountered in the case of the three inscriptions of the mid to late 1st century CE to record relics dedications by individuals of the Oḍirāja dynasty.² Individuals named in these inscriptions include several generations of rulers (*oḍirāja*), who also bear such titles as protector of the people (*ṇavhapati*) and overlord of the fortress (*kuṭadhipati*),³ princes (*kumāra*), a queen who has a living son (*jīvaputra*)⁴ and an advisor (*anaṃkaya*, Gk. ἀναγκαῖος).

Title	Donor	No. Occurrences		Named Relation
		Participant	Beneficiary	
<i>oḍirāja</i>	2	—	4	1
<i>jīvaputra</i>	—	—	1	—
<i>kumāra</i>	1	—	3	—
<i>anaṃkaya</i>	—	1	1	—

Fig. 10.7 Political and Court Titles of the Oḍirājas

Finally, from the early Kuṣāṇa Period, there are several other individuals, who bear political titles that denote their lordship (*bhaṭṭara*, *svāmin*), presumably over a limited locale. However, these figures

¹ See Chapter Fourteen: Soteriological Agency.

² See Chapter Seven: The Oḍirājas.

³ For details of the related title *koṭṭarāja*, see Fig. 7.1.

⁴ For details, see Fig. 6.4.

cannot in all cases be demonstrably related to any imperial administration or ruling group.

First, we find that the title *bhaṭṭara* arises for the first time at the cusp of the Indo-Parthian and Kuṣāṇa Periods. For example, in the Copper Plates of Helaiūta (No. 33), dated 121 Azes (73/74 CE), the title is given to Yodavharṇa, father to the Satrap Tira, and grandfather to the two princes (*guśura*)¹ Khaṃdila and Gvaraza.² Likely this same Yodavharṇa is also named as satrap elsewhere.³ But these figures are not overtly connected to an imperial administration and may well have been autonomous in the Orazkai region to the south of Peshawar.⁴ A similar case is found in the Reliquary Inscription of Dhamavaadaṭa, dated 147 [Azes] (99/100), which records the donation of Dhamavaadaṭa, who is named as *bhaṭṭara*: [3.] *daṇamuho bha[4.]ṭarasa dhamavaada[1a.]ṭa*.⁵ The object has no provenance but as it is inscribed in the Kharoṣṭhī script, it certainly came from the Northwest and the date places it in the early Kuṣāṇa Period, most likely during the reign of Vima Takto (c. 90–115 CE).

The same title appears in compound with *svāmin*, much later in a well donation of the Satrap Anacaphaka, dated 39 [Kaniṣka I] (165/166 CE). This figure is in some way related to a certain lord (*bhaṭṭara-svāmin*) and great general of the Kuṣāṇas, whose name is unclear: [2.]...*bhaṭarakaṣami* [3.] [*yo?*] *kuṣāṇasa daḍaṇayadaṣa ana[ca?][4.]-pahakeṇa kṣatrapeṇa kuḍura* [5.] *khanavito*.⁶ On this basis, we can say

¹ OIA. *viṣpur* ('son of a good family'), Falk, 'Copper-Plates of Helagupta', 10.

² [2-4.]...*puyae bhaṭarakasa Yodavharṇaputrāsa Tirasa kṣatrapasa hidasuhadaye Khaṃdilasa Gvara[2-5.]zasa ca kṣatrapaputrāna guśuraṇa hidasuhadaye*.

³ CKI 442.

⁴ For further discussion, see Chapter Eight: Early Kuṣāṇa Period.

⁵ CKI 536.

⁶ Falk, 'Pious Donation of Wells', 29. For an alternative reading, see CKI 244, Salomon, 'The Spinwam (North Waziristan) Kharoṣṭhī Inscription'.

that the title was most likely amalgamated into the set of titles used by Kuṣāṇas or individuals related to them.

A not dissimilar picture arises in the case of *svāmin* specifically. This title too is found from objects dateable to the Kuṣāṇa Period and appears to designate individuals of some privilege or power. For instance, one such *svāmin* named Suhasoma arises on an inscribed pot donated by Vasavadatta,¹ and maybe the same occurs as an advisor (*anaṃkaya*) of the Oḍirāja Seṇavarma, when Kujula Kadphises had annexed Swat. Another figure arises in a copy of a reliquary inscription dedicated by a certain Macayemaṇa,² dated 303 [Yoṇa] (127/128 CE), named Avakhazada, who is given as a beneficiary to be worshipped and bears the titles great king (*mahārāja*), lord of a village (*grāmasvāmin*), and satrap (*kṣatrapa*): [4.] *maharayasa gramas[v]amisa Avakhazadasa puyae kṣatravasa*.³ This record would seem to substantiate that the title *svāmin* was used in respect to local rulers; indeed that this inscription was dedicated precisely in the year of Kaniṣka I's inauguration, but does not mention this or another Kuṣāṇa ruler, may well imply that local systems of governance were maintained under this imperial regime.

¹ CKI 369.

² See Richard Salomon, 'The Rededication of Buddhist Reliquaries: A Clue to the Interpretation of Problematic Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions', in *South Asian Archaeology 1995: Proceedings of the 13th Conference of the European Association of South Asian Archaeologists, Cambridge, 5-9 July, 1995*, ed. Raymond Allchin and Bridget Allchin (USA: Science Publishers, 1997), 368ff.

³ CKI 178.

Title	Donor	No. Occurrences		Named Relation
		Participant	Beneficiary	
<i>mahārāja</i>	—	—	1	
<i>bhaṭṭara</i>	1	—	1	1
<i>guśura</i>	—	—	2	
<i>svāmin</i>	—	—	—	2

Fig. 10.8 Minor Rulers

From this analysis of political and court titles, a number of important conclusions can be drawn regarding patterns of patronage in Buddhist contexts. Foremost, we can see that engagement by figures at the upper echelons of imperial systems was decidedly limited. Rather, Buddhism and its rituals were politicised and instrumentalised presumably by local rulers, such as satraps, lords, and, most notably, the Apracarājas and Oḍirājas.

OCCUPATIONAL TITLES

Occupational titles are notably limited in inscriptions, with only 37 individuals—constituting 4% of all named in inscriptions—identifying themselves in such terms. Nonetheless, these few titles offer a glimpse into the elements of society, which were likely to have been patrons of Buddhist institutions or contributors to the material aspects of Buddhist rituals. These occupations can be broken down in several sub-groups, including [1] merchants, [2] tradesmen, [4] scribes, and [5] accountants.

Three titles arise in respect to merchants, two denote a caravan guide (*arivagi*)¹ or caravan leader (*sārthavāha*)², and another a

¹ No. 33. On this term, see Falk, ‘Copper-Plates of Helagupta’, 5–6.

² See No. 58 and the Bodhisattva Statue of Dhanyabhavā:

guildsman (*śreṣṭhin*)¹. These latter two, of course, are found repeatedly as titles throughout Buddhist literature and are often pictured as establishing monasteries, repairing stupas,² and generally engaging in Buddhist donative activity. To that extent, these figures were stereotyped in literature as archetypal representations of their social groups.³ Since the Buddhists wished to render it normative for such figures to support Buddhism, and thereby make these identities salient, it is highly unexpected that more titles of caravan leaders and guildsmen do not occur in inscriptions.

Six titles arise in respect to tradesman and workers, including an overseer of horses (*aśvavarika*),⁴ gold-smiths (*suvarṇakara*),⁵ masons

[1.] maharājāsya deva[p](utrasya) [ka](ni)[ṣka]sa [sa]ṃ 4 h[e 4] di [10 4] (etasyāṃ) p[u]rv[ā]yaṃ s[ā]rthavahāsa bha[2.]vaśir[isa] ? ? ? ? .i [n]isa [k](u)ṭ[u]bin[iye] dha[ṇya]bhavaye ? ? ? ? ? tadhaṇya /// § 178. ‘Year 4 of the Great King, Son of Gods, Kaṇiṣka I. At this previous time, Dhanyaabhavā,...of Bhavaśira, the caravan leader, and wife of...’

¹ See No. 58. Skt. *śreṣṭhin*. Understood variously to denote a ‘chief’, ‘person of rank or authority’, ‘warrior’, ‘chief artisan’, ‘chief of an association or guild’. Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary: Etymologically and Philologically Arranged with Special Reference to Cognate Indo-European Languages*, s.v. *śreṣṭhin*. BHS. *śreṣṭhika*, ‘guild leader, capitalist’. Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, s.v. *śreṣṭhika*. Sircar has also defined the title as ‘a banker or merchant or the foreman of a guild; sometimes mentioned in the list of the king’s officials and subordinates addressed by him while making a grant’. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphical Glossary*, 317.

² See Chapter Fifteen: Stupa Destruction and Relic Theft.

³ See Chapter Thirteen: The Function of Avadānas.

⁴ An inscribed railing from a Buddhist site, dated palaeographically to the Indo-Scythian Period (c. 1st century CE), records the donation of a platform by the overseer of horses Bodhiyaśa, see § 178.

⁵ The earliest related title arises in the Gold Scroll of Senavarma (No. 36) in respect to a certain Valia, son of the householder Makaḍaka, by whom the gold used to make the inscribed was weighed: [11.] *io ca suaṇe solite Valieṇa Makaḍakaputreṇa ga[m]hapatīna*. The title for goldsmith (*suvarṇakara*) proper

(*śailopakāra*)¹ an overseer of vineyards (*raziṣpati*),² cloakmakers (*pravārika*),³ and a ploughwoman (*halikā*).⁴

A title loaned from Iranian for an accountant (*hāmaraka*)⁵ appears twice during the Kuṣāṇa Period. The first is found on an inscribed Nāga statue, dated 80 Vāsudeva (207/208CE), that was donated by the Great General Trivāhana, who names the son of the treasury accountant (*gañjahāmaraka*) Yalakṣa: [3.]...*mahadaṇḍa-nā[ya]kasya [ṭṛvahana]sya gañjahāmāraka⟨r⟩* [4.] [*su?*]lakṣaka-putraṇa.⁶ The second is a Buddha statue from Agra, India, that was donated by Yaśa, daughter of Grahadina, and wife of the scribe

arises on the Buddha Statue of Momadatta (No. 74) and a Bodhisattva statue from Mathura, dated 17 [Kaniṣka I] (144/145 CE), that was donated by the lay-practitioner Nagapiyā, wife of the goldsmith Dharmaka: [1.]...*dharm[a]k[a]sa sovaṇik[a]sa kūṭubiniye* [2.] *upaśikā n[a]gapiyā bodhisvatva pratiṭhāpeti*. § 150.

¹ This title occurs on one inscribed Bodhisattva statue from Śrāvastī, dated palaeographically to the Kuṣāṇa Period, that was donated by two brothers from Mathura along with the mason Śivadhara, see SaMa 1, Tsukamoto, *A Comprehensive Study of The Indian Buddhist Inscriptions Part I: Text, Notes and Japanese Translation*.

² The sense of this title is not certain, see Falk, ‘Copper-Plates of Helagupta’, 11.

³ Three cloakmakers occur in inscriptions from the reign of Kaniṣka II: an inscribed Buddha statue donated by Saṃghilā, wife of the cloakmaker Hāsthi (No. 7), in 14 [Kaniṣka II] (241/242 CE); another Buddha statue donated by a certain cloakmaker and son of Virasena, in 16 [Kaniṣka II] (243/244 CE), see Sk 170, and a fragmentary stone inscription dated palaeographically to the Kuṣāṇa Period, see § 7.

⁴ See Sh 114.

⁵ Derived from the OIr. *āmārakara*, see Falk, ‘Some Inscribed Images from Mathurā Revisited’, 44–45. This title is attested as a loanword on Aramaic papyri from the reign of the Persian ruler Darius II (423–405 BCE), see Kuhrt, *The Persian Empire: A Corpus of Sources from the Achaemenid Period*, 727–29.

⁶ Falk, ‘Some Inscribed Images from Mathurā Revisited’, 43–44.

(*kāyastha*) and accountant (*hāmāraka*) Bhaṭṭipriya: [1.]...*bhaṭṭipriyasya hamārakāra kāyasthasya kuṭū[m]bīniye grahadīnasya dhītū yaśā[ye]*.¹

It is quite common to meet with scribes, who occur a total of ten times in inscriptions (Fig. 10. 9). In eight cases, the individuals do not bear a scribal title but are said to have written (Skt. *likhita*) the inscriptions, indicating that their essential role in the fashioning of a donative object was considered worthy enough to be included in the inscription itself. Others bear a specific title for a scribe (*kāyastha*). On the basis of these examples, it is difficult to determine the position of a scribe in society. All scribes are male and, for the most part, bear Indic names. But very few are identified with another title. In four cases, scribes occur in relation to political figures: two satraps, the Apracarāja Vijayamitra, and the Oḍirāja Seṇavarma. In the latter two cases, the scribes are also designated with the title ‘advisor’ (*anaṃkaya*, Gk. ἀναγκαῖος), indicating they served specific functions in the courts of these ruling dynasties. In the case of the aforementioned Bhaṭṭipriya also, his role as a scribe is attached to his being an accountant (*hāmāraka*). It is notable that few are obviously monks.

¹ Sk 215.

Fig. 10. 9 Scribes in Donative Inscriptions

No.	Title	Provenance	Date	Donation	Monastic Institution	Individuals		Ref.
						Name	Title	
1	Inscribed Plate of Saṃghamitra (No. 4)	Buner, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan	9 Azes (39/38 BCE)	<i>dāna</i>	—	Saṃghamitra Vasa-Avakaśa Mahapalaśuśpala —	— <i>mahākṣatrapa putra</i> <i>likhita</i>	CKI 459
2	Reliquary Inscription of Unknown Donor from the Reign of Namipāla (No. 5)	Buner, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan	11 [Azes] (37/36 BCE)	<i>śarīra</i>	—	Namipala Balamitra	<i>mahākṣatrapa</i> <i>likhita</i>	CKI 827
3	Reliquary Inscription of Vijayamitra (No. 11)	Shinkot, Bajaur, Pakistan	5 Vijayamitra (3/4 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	—	Vijayamitra Viśpila	Apracarāja <i>anamkaya</i> <i>likhita</i>	CKI 176
4	Gold Scroll of Seṇavarma (No. 36)	—	14 Oḍi	<i>dhātu</i>	—	Seṇavarma et al Saṃghamitra	Oḍirāja <i>anamkaya</i> <i>likhita</i>	CKI 249
5	Reliquary Inscription of Śveḍvarma (No. 55)	Kurram Valley, Pakistan	20 [Kaniška I] (146/147 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	Sarvāstivāda	Śveḍvarma Yaśa Mahiphati	<i>putra</i> — <i>likhita</i>	CKI 143
6	Buddha of Monastic Scribes	Mathura, India	93 Vāsudeva (220/221 CE)	<i>bhagavat chattra</i>	—	—	<i>śramaṇa</i> <i>kāyastha</i>	Sk 147
7	Buddha of Yaśa	Agra, India	—	<i>bhagavat</i>	—	Yaśa Bhaṭṭipriya et al	<i>kutum̐binī</i> <i>kāyastha</i> <i>hāmāraka</i> —	Sk 215
8	Well Donation of Samadavhara	Ara, Attock Punjab, Pakistan	41 Kaniška III (267/268 CE)	<i>kūpa</i>	—	Samadavhara Toṣapurīa —	<i>putra</i> <i>likhita</i>	CKI 158

9	Pot of Bhadra	—	—	—	—	Bhadra	<i>likhita</i>	CKI 394
10	Pot of Dharmaśreṣṭha	Haḍḍa, Nangahar, Afghanistan	—	—	Dharmaguptaka	Dharmaśreṭha Dharmabhadra	<i>vyāpṛtyakara</i> <i>likhita</i>	CKI 1081

LAY-PRACTITIONERS

Several individuals bear titles that express an affiliation with or role within the Buddhist community. For their having specific duties, these lay-practitioners (*upāsaka*, *upāsikā*) are often classed as semi-monastic. Paul Harrison distinguishes between these figures and the general laity, on the basis of their more formal involvement with the monastic community, suggesting that they are ‘semi-ordained’, due to regularly practising semi-monastic observances (*vrata*).¹ Richard Gombrich similarly argues that titles for lay-practitioners are ‘situational’, meaning that only a minority of individuals would be permanently entitled as such and that others would adopt the title temporarily, for example, when attending ritual occasions.² In a more modern example, Melford Spiro also observed a similar dynamic among the Buddhist communities in Myanmar, where the same broad social groups exist—monastic, semi-monastic, and non-monastic—insofar as a minority of lay practitioners constantly would observe at least five precepts, and have particular involvement in rituals, whereas the majority of peoples, who, for economic reasons (e.g., they cannot afford to leave their shop unmanned), would not follow the stricter ritual observances and only engage in periodic acts of worship.³

One would expect an abundance of such figures to arise in donative inscriptions—this being the ideal context to express one’s

¹ Paul Harrison, ‘Searching for the Origins of the Mahāyāna: What Are We Looking For?’, *The Eastern Buddhist* 28, no. 1 (1995): 59.

² Richard Gombrich, ‘Organised Bodhisattvas: A Blind Alley in Buddhist Historiography’, in *Sūryacandrāya: Essays in Honour of Akira Yuyama On the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, ed. Paul Harrison and Gregory Schopen (Swisttal-Odendorf: Indica et Tibetica Verlag, 1998), 49–50.

³ Melford E. Spiro, *Buddhism and Society: A Great Tradition and Its Burmese Vicissitudes*. (London: University of California Press, 1982), 217.

religious identity. However, only a total of 11 such individuals occur, seven male lay-practitioners (*upāsaka*)¹ and five female lay-practitioners (*upāsikā*)². Since the majority of lay donors did not identify themselves in such terms, we may suggest either that this aspect of identity was not particularly salient, that the majority of donors did not regularly participate in monastic affairs and ritual practices, or that they were converts and these donations mark their first engagement with Buddhism in this form.

To this group of lay practitioners, several other titles may be included on the basis of their having specific duties or relations with monastic institutions. These include six male owners and one female owner of monasteries (*vihārasvāmin*, *vihārasvāminī*), master of donations (*mahādānapati*), administrators (*vyāpṛtyakāra*), and gardeners (*ārāmika*).

A total of seven inscriptions name an owner of a monastery (*vihārasvāmin*).³ However, below we shall observe that many monasteries would often take the name of the donor who funded them (Fig. 12.1),⁴ so presumably the number of such owners should be much higher. In Pali sources, a similar title denoting the ‘owner of a dwelling’ (*āvāsasāmi*) arises. This individual is tasked with a duty of maintaining the dwelling. If unable, then it was considered as the responsibility of the owner’s relatives (*ñātaka*) or his or her supporters (*upatṭhāka*) to maintain it; in the worst case, the resources of the community would be used.⁵ These regulations concerning ownership are also found in Mūlasarvāstivāda sources, which further state that the owner of a monastery (*vihārasvāmin*) had certain property rights over their

¹ See No. 47, CKI 239, 566, Sk 66, 213.

² See No. 39, 61, CKI 157, § 150, Sk 66, 95.

³ See CKI 134, 147, 165, 333, 511, Sk 43,

⁴ See Chapter Twelve: Monasteries.

⁵ Hinüber, ‘Everyday Life in an Ancient Indian Buddhist Monastery’, 20ff.

establishment and could thence dictate to monks how the monastery should be used.¹ In return, they would be the subject of daily prayers, which was seen to increase their good qualities:

The announcement must be announced in this way: when the entire community is seated and assembled, a single monk seated first at the Senior's end of the assembly must say this with reverence and his hands in the gesture of supplication: "Today is the first day of the waning fortnight. Separate verses for the benefit of the Owner and gods of the *vihāra* must be recited!"²

In three inscriptions, the owner of a monastery coincides with the role of 'master of donations', which occurs in both Indic (*dānapati*) and Iranian (*horamurta*) forms.³ The former title arises in connection with the dedication of relics and a monastery complex by the Indo-Scythian Satrap Patika (No. 12), who is named as a 'great master of donations' (*mahādānapati*). The latter title occurs in two inscriptions: the Mathura Lion Capital (No. 25), where it refers to a 'group of masters of donations' (*horamurtaparivara*) associated with the Indo-Scythian Queen Yasi (No. 25) in Mathura, who dedicated relics, a monastery and a monastic complex; and it also occurs as the title of the Kuṣāṇa General Lala (No. 54), who is the master of donations (*horamurta*) of the Satrap Veśpaśi in his own monastery.

In the two latter cases of the Iranian title, we may surmise that the Indo-Scythian satraps had individuals dedicated to administering donative activities at Buddhist and presumably other religious

¹ Gregory Schopen, 'What's in a Name: The Religious Function of the Early Donative Inscriptions', in *Unseen Presence: The Buddha and Sāṅgī*, ed. Vidya Dehejia (Mumbai: Ming Publications, 1996), 108–9.

² Schopen, *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters*, 273.

³ See Chapter Eight: Kaniṣka I for details of this form.

institutions. The former great master of donations, however, is distinct in this regard, as it belongs to a standard title given to figures in Buddhist literature. Therein, it often occurs simply as a synonym for a donor, such as in the compound ‘donor who is a master of donations’ (*dāyaka-dānapati*), and is an epithet applied to several figures, who are not necessarily lay-practitioners but potential converts¹ deriving from a variety of social groupings, the majority of which appears to be rulers,² generals (*senāpati*),³ merchants (*vaṇij*), and caravan leaders (*sārthavāha*).⁴

¹ Ruegg, ‘Aspects of the Investigation of the (Earlier) Indian Mahāyāna’, 26.

² In the *Mahābhārata* the title is used to describe the ideal ruler and a component of his performing his illustriousness and wealth, see J. Gonda, ‘Ancient Indian Kingship from the Religious Point of View’, *Numen* 3, no. 1 (1956): 49. This view is also articulated in Buddhist sources, for example:

Saddho dāyako dāna-pati anāvaṭa-dvāro samaṇa-brāhmaṇa-kapaṇaddhika-vaṇibbaka-yācakānaṃ opāna-bhūto puññāni karoti. DN 1. 137, 140.

[A king] who has faith, is a donor and a master of donations, his door is always open to renunciants, Brahmins, wayfarers, tramps and beggars and, like a spring, he makes merit.

In particular, the title great master of donations (*mahādānapati*) is associated with rulers. For example, it arises a number of times in the colophons of some Gilgit manuscripts as the title of Queen Devaśirikā, see Oskar von Hinüber, *Die Palola Śāhis: Ihre Steininschriften, Inschriften auf Bronzen, Handschriftenkolophone und Schutzauber – Materialien zur Geschichte von Gilgit und Chilas*, ed. Harald Hauptmann (Mainz: Verlag Phillip von Zabern, 2004), 21; 25; 135; 140.

³ AN 2. 38–40, 4. 79–82.

⁴ For example:

yadi koci sārthā(rtho) prayāto bhavati te bhikṣu vāṇijakasya sārthavāhasya parinditavyā vaktavyaṃ. upāsaka dānapati ime bhikṣavo tvayā sārddhaṃ gamiṣyanti. Abhis 2. 31.37.

(Und) wenn irgendeine Karawane aufbricht, so sollen (die ansässigen Mönche [*āgantukā*]) dem Kaufmann, der die Karawane führt, die (Gast-)Mönche anvertrauen, indem sie (ihm) sagen: Diese Mönche werden, oh Laienanhänger, oh Gabenherr, mit euch gehen.’

Few passages describe precisely the role a master of donations served in monastic contexts. In the *Abhisamācārikā* they are envisaged as having specific functions on ritual occasions, dedicating gift-worthy objects (*deyadharmā*) before the entire community during the proceedings of the *upoṣadha*, for which they receive Dharma-teachings in return.¹ They are depicted as inviting monks for food,² as well as providing oil (*taila*) and powder (*cūrṇa*) for bathing,³ and repairing cells (*vihārakā*) for the monsoon retreat.⁴

Ingo Strauch notes that the master of donations is a title found most often in the Gilgit *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya* and the *Varṣavastu* specifically, whereas it does not appear in the same context in the *Vinayas* of other monastic institutions. He understands, therefore, that the title denotes a specific office holder in the monastic institution.

The office of the *vaiyāpṛtyakara*, like other important figures such as the *dānapati*, had become more important in the administration of monastic institutions of the northwest—the

Translation from Seishi Karashima, *Die Abhisamācārikā Dharmāḥ. Verhaltensregeln für buddhistische Mönche der Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravādins. Band II* (Tokyo: The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology, Soka University, 2012), 258.

A further passage reads:

tena gacchiyāṇa taḥiṃ gṛhaṃ pṛcchitavyaṃ. koci ima(ṃ)hi evannāmakō upāsako dānapatī vā vāṇijakā vā ti. Abhis 1. 6.7.

Er soll (ins Dorf) gehen und dort nach dem Haus fragen: ‘Ist hier ein Laienanhänger Soundso, (nämlich) ein Gabenherr oder ein Kaufmann?’

Translation from Seishi Karashima, *Die Abhisamācārikā Dharmāḥ. Verhaltensregeln für buddhistische Mönche der Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravādins. Band I* (Tokyo: The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology, Soka University, 2012), 58.

¹ Abhis 1. 1.1; 1.11; 1.13; 2.1; 2.9; 3.1; 3.10; 4.1-2; 2. 42.26.

² Abhis 1. 4.11; 2. 39.10-13; 50.4-6.

³ Abhis 2. 42.20; 48. 28.

⁴ Abhis 2. 12.5.

main stronghold of the Mūlasarvāstivāda communities. A monastery was thus identified not only by the specification of its boundaries (*sīma*) and begging ground (*gocara*), but equally by its main donor (*dānapati*) and administrator (*vaiyāpṛtyakara*).¹

The title for an administrator arises in connection with both monastic and non-monastic individuals. Strauch quotes four inscribed pots that mention the title, two in connection with lay individuals, and two with monastic figures.² This indicates that in the Northwest there was no distinction in the administrative roles of monastic or lay figures, which is in accord with a lengthy study on this title that was conducted by Jonathan Silk. He observed that the administrator could be a monastic or lay figure charged with receiving donations of wealth for the community and stupas, with borrowing money, and with other daily duties during the monsoon retreat.³ He also found the role to be indistinguishable from gardener (*ārāmika*), which occurs once in a Kharoṣṭhī inscription.⁴

¹ Tarzi, Salomon, and Strauch, 'An Inscribed Bowl', 166ff.

² Tarzi, Salomon, and Strauch, 'An Inscribed Bowl', 170–71. For editions, see CKI 1081–84.

³ Jonathan Silk, *Managing Monks: Administrators and Administrative Roles in Indian Buddhist Monasticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 39ff.

⁴ CKI 373. For a lengthy discussion of this role, see Nobuyuki Yamagiwa, 'Ārāmika – Gardener or Park Keeper? One of the Marginals around the Buddhist Saṃgha', in *Buddhist and Indian Studies in Honour of Professor Dr. Sodo Mori* (Nagoya: The Kokusai Bukkyoto Kyokai (International Buddhist Association), 2002), 363–86.

MONASTIC INDIVIDUALS

With the establishment of an institutional environment—when monastics had settled permanently in monasteries and developed the rules and regulations (*vinaya*) to govern themselves—the monastic community necessarily underwent a series of changes that impacted on certain behavioural norms. In particular, monastics no longer represented the wandering ascetics and social renunciants but were highly institutionalised. For a long time, scholarship was reticent to present monastics in such terms, and it is only until more recently that certain myths regarding monastic behaviour have been dispelled. In part, this is due to the fact it was only the Pali *Vinaya* that had been examined in any detail. In that corpus specifically one finds, for example, prohibitions against monks handling money and that a dedicated administrator from the laity would deal with such matters.¹ This led scholars to assume that monastics would never engage in donative activity. However, in his analyses of the *Mūlasarvāstivādivinaya*, Gregory Schopen has regularly shown that, in the Indic North and Northwest in the early Common Era, possessing personal property (*paudgalika*) was something of a given, as evidenced by the existence of rules on settling debts, paying taxes on goods and tolls on travel, repaying losses incurred through the damaged property, receiving inheritance, selling goods, and so on.²

¹ See Hinüber, 'Everyday Life in an Ancient Indian Buddhist Monastery', 17–19.

² See Schopen, *Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monks*, 61; Schopen, *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters*, 3ff; Gregory Schopen, 'Art, Beauty and the Business of Running a Monastery in Early Northwest India', in *On the Cusp of an Era. Art in the Pre-Kuṣāṇa Worlds*, ed. Doris Meth Srinivasan (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 287–317.

This picture is confirmed by the corpora of donative inscriptions from across the Indic sphere, where monks and nuns are repeatedly found as donors, implying they had access to expendable wealth. Several scholars have pointed that the demographic of monastic and lay donative activity is quite evenly spread at several sites, such as at the stupas of Bharhut and Sāñcī, and similar results were also observed in the case of inscriptions from Mathura and the Northwest.¹ However, these data were based on a limited corpus of inscriptions and can now be bettered.

Monastic individuals are indeed highly common in the roles of the donor, participant, and beneficiary in donative inscriptions of the North and Northwest. In total, they number 222, which represents 24% of all named individuals in inscriptions. At a regional level, however, there are certain differences to be observed. 118 monastics arise in North, for the most part in Mathura, and represent therefore 40% of all named individuals in this region; of these 58 (42%) monastics were donors, 19 (27%) participants, and 28 (33%) beneficiaries. Contrastingly in the Northwest, a slightly lower number of 104 monastics arise in inscriptions, which represents only 17% of all individuals; 44 (17%) monastics were donors, 4 (7%) participants, and 53 (23%) beneficiaries. Whilst monastics were a minority in donative contexts overall, they were far more common in the North than the Northwest, particularly as donors.

MONASTIC IDENTITY

Monastic figures identify themselves with several titles indicating, most commonly, their general role as a monk or nun in addition to any

¹ Vidya Dehejia, 'The Collective and Popular Basis of Early Buddhist Patronage: Sacred Monuments, 100 BC – AD 250', in *The Powers of Art: Patronage in Indian Culture*, ed. B. S. Miller (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992), 36–37; Schopen, *Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monks*, 30–31.

administrative, residential and pedagogic roles they served. These are themselves indicative of a hierarchy within the monastic community, which is argued to be a product of the economic and social statuses that monastics brought with them upon entering the monastery.¹ This is entirely plausible and logically the microcosm of the monastic community must have mirrored the demographic of its wider environs, whether that be ethnic, for we know that society in the Northwest was populated by figures of Graeco, Iranian and Indic descent, or socio-economic, presuming that all manner of individuals, from rulers to beggars, could ordain. Yet, the identity and social standing of an individual prior to entering a monastery is difficult to determine, for the only means to establish such information is on the basis of onomastic data and any titles they bear which express a kinship or familial relation.

Names of monks are uniformly Indic and most often specifically Buddhist (e.g., Saṃgharakṣita, Buddhāmitra). This indicates, presumably, that monastics would adopt a new name upon ordaining, masking their ethnic and social origins. It is also very rare that they possess a kinship or familial title; their family structure, rather, was replaced by the internal institutional structure, whereby a preceptor (*upadhyāya*) or teacher (*ācārya*) appears where a parent would in attributes of relational identity. It is common that monastics refer to their mother and father (*mātāpitr*) in a standard formula as beneficiaries but, as far as I have been able to ascertain, these family members are almost never named with but a few exceptions that offer a glimpse into the social background of certain monks and nuns.

Four examples arise from the Brāhmī corpus. First, in the case of the Bodhisattva Statue of Dharmanandi (No. 51) from Mathura, the venerable Dharmanandi states he established a Bodhisattva in his own house of worship, along with his mother and father, and paternal aunt

¹ For a discussion of hierarchies in monasteries, see Njammasch, esp. p. 522.

Bhadrā [1.]...*bhadattasya dharmanadisya* [2] *boshisa[tv.] pratisthāpito svakāyaṃ cetiyākuṭīyaṃ sahā mātāpitahi sahā pitasikāye bhadrāye*. In this case, his aunt has a distinctly Indic name. Second, on an inscribed pillar from Dura, near Agra, dated 16 Kaniṣka I (143/144 CE), a monk, whose name is lost, identifies himself as being a member of the R̥ṣṭiṣeṇagotra (lit. spear-army lineage’): *bhikunā prati[ṭhitā]* [4.] [*thabho ri]ṣṭiṣeṇa [sa]gotreṇa*.¹ His lineage (*gotra*) is thus associated specifically with the *kṣatriya* class and a group of names ‘ending in army’ (*senānta*).² Third, in the Bodhisattva of Dhanavatī (No. 60) from Mathura, the nun Dhanavatī identifies herself as the niece of the nun Buddhāmitrā, Bearer of the Three Baskets, who is herself ordained and bears a distinctly Buddhist name. Finally, an inscribed Buddha from 93 Vāsudeva (220/221 CE) was donated by several monastic scribes (*kāyastha*) who appear to be brothers, for they name their father Śarvanandi and mother Jivaśiri,³ which are again Indic names. These few examples from the Brāhmī corpus leave the impression that it was primarily members of Indic families who would become monastic. However, since there are no examples of monks or nuns to name their family members from the Kharoṣṭhī corpus, the demographic of monastic institutions cannot be explicated further.

MONASTIC TITLES

Most common are titles that simply indicate an individual is a monk or a nun. However, these are not uniform. A notable difference is that monks in the North always bear the title *bhikṣu*, whereas in the Northwest they are far more commonly named *śramaṇa*; the title *bhikṣu* only appears later during the Kuṣāṇa Period. What difference in identity this indicates

¹ For an edition, see Sk 35.

² Pāṇ 4. 1. 152.

³ For an edition, see Sk 147.

is not clear. Nuns, on the other hand, always bear the title *bhikṣuṇī*. Surprisingly, there only two nuns mentioned in the Northwest, as opposed to 15 in the North. This dramatic finding in the case of the Northwest indicates either that nuns simply did not engage in the donative practice—their presence is in general very low—or that they did not have monasteries in the region. In comparison to monks, nuns also possess a far more limited set of titles pertaining to their roles within the institution, meaning that the nature of how they organised their institutional affairs is difficult to ascertain. Nonetheless, there are several titles indicative of residential and pedagogic status among both monks and nuns and in some cases, it is apparent that figures occupying higher positions in the respective residential or pedagogic hierarchies were afforded degrees of access to specific ritual contexts due to these institutional roles.

RESIDENTIAL TITLES

Both monks and nuns most commonly bear titles indicative of their residential status. As Shōno Masanori has shown, age was a central factor in determining the hierarchy of the monastery, with the position of first and second elder determined by the number of seasons an individual had ordained.¹ However, titles indicative of this form of structure are rare in inscriptions, with only two instances of an elder of the community (*saṅghasthavīra*) being mentioned. One pillar base from Jamalpur Mathura, dated 77 [Vāsudeva] (204/205 CE) records a gift of a venerable elder of the community, whose name is lost: *dānam saṅghasthaviryasyā bhadam[nta] ? ///*² One other highly fragmentary

¹ Masanori Shōno, 'Hierarchy of Buddhist Monks', in *Saddharmāmṛtam: Festschrift für Jens-Uwe Hartmann zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Oliver von Criegern, Gudrun Melzer, and Johannes Schneider (Wien: Arbeitskreis für tibetische und buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, 2018), 411–26.

² § 59.

inscription from Mathura records the donation of a niece (*bhāgineyī*) of an elder of the community, although both names are lost.¹

Monastic figures commonly express a student-teacher relation, whereby a monk or nun identifies themselves either as the pupil (*antevāsin*, *antevāsinī*) of a preceptor (*upadhyāya*) or co-resident (*sārdhamvihāra*) of a teacher (*ācārya*). These figures represent a hierarchy, with the preceptor being the highest, followed by the teacher and the pupils and co-residents.² Monk pupils occur in both Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions but nun pupils only occur rarely in Brāhmī. Consider the following two examples:

[1.] *bhayaṃtasa dharasa āntevāsisa bhikhusa phagulasa...*

[2.] *budhāvase ghoṣitārāme sava budhānāṃ pujāye śilā kā(rito)*³

The monk Phagula, the pupil of the venerable Dhara, had a stone table made in the dwelling of the Buddha at the Ghoṣitārāma, for the worship of all Buddhas.

*huviṣkasya [sa](ṃ) 30 1 [he 4] d[i] 20 dana bh(i)[k](ṣu)ṇiye dinnaye ant(e)vāsinīn[am] khudāye [gra] ///*⁴

Year 31 of Huviṣka, month 4 of winter, day 20. A gift of the pupils of the nun Dinnā and Khudā, the...

In the majority of cases, the preceptor or teacher of a male and female pupil is respectively the same gender. However, this does not always appear to have been the case.

¹ § 155.

² Falk, 'Two New Inscriptions from the Time of Huviṣka', 34.

³ Qu 2. 6. For other monk pupils, see No. 24, 49, § 20, Sk 56, 117, 222.

⁴ § 103. For other nun pupils, see Sk 63, 222.

Bodhisattva of Dhanavatī (No. 60)

[1.]...*bhikṣusya balasya trepiṭakasya antevāsin[ī]ye [bhi]-*
*kṣun[ī]ye tre(*piṭi)[kā]ye buddha[mi]trāy[e]* [2.] *bhāgineyīye*
bhikṣiṇīye dhanava[t]īye bodhisatvo p(r)atiṭhāpi(to)

A Bodhisattva was established by the nun Dhanavatī, the pupil of the monk Bala, Bearer of the Three Baskets, and niece of the nun Buddhāmitrā, Bearer of the Three Baskets.

Because the nun Dhanavatī is here the pupil of the monk Bala, it seems that the student-teacher relationship was not institutionally restricted by gender. This of course raises questions about the forum of their interactions, presuming they did not dwell in the monastic complex, since *Vinaya* regulations relate that a pupil should perform specific services for their preceptor.¹ However, Dutt points out that the role of preceptor was in name only and that the teacher (*ācārya*) was responsible for day-to-day instruction.² That the teacher and co-resident pupil were of the same gender is reflected epigraphically, simply because there are no examples of nun co-residents. For example:

Bodhisattva of Dharmanandi (No. 50)

[1.]...*bhikṣusya bodhisenasya sadhyevihārisya bhadattasya*
dharmanadisya [2] *boshisa[tv.] pratisthāpito*

A Bodhisattva of the monk Bodhisena's co-resident, the venerable Dharmanandi was established.³

¹ Silk, *Managing Monks*, 60–61.

² Dutt, *Early Buddhist Monachism. 600 B.C - 100 B.C*, 181.

³ For other co-resident pupils, see No. 49–53, 61, 66, CKI 111, 113–115, 369, 404, Sk 54, 59, 60, 107.

It is quite rare that a preceptor occurs as a donor¹ and a teacher never arises in this role. Rather, these two groups are encountered either implicitly as the named relation of a pupil or co-resident, as the above examples show, or as the beneficiaries of a dedication. Indeed, the title for a teacher in the role of a beneficiary occurs 17 times in Brāhmī inscriptions from the North and 31 times in Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions from the Northwest, where they arise as the legal recipients of the dedication.

PUNDITS, PEDAGOGUES, AND SPECIALISTS

It is not uncommon to find titles which designate a monk or nun's status as a learned pundit, pedagogue or specialist. These include bearers of the *Vinaya* (*vinayadhara*),² reciters (*bhaṣānaka*) of literature, Dharma-teachers (*dharmakathika*), and Bearers of the Three Baskets (*trepīṭaka*, *trepīṭakā*), and meditators (*prahāṇika*).³ The presence of these figures in donative contexts is not unsurprising, for in Buddhist literature they are often presented as fulfilling their specific duties at important ritual

¹ See No. 70, Sk 222.

² See Sk 38, 126. One Kharoṣṭhī inscription from Jaulian, Taxila, records the donation of a monk named Rahula who is entitled Skt. *vināyaka: Ra[hu]lasya v[*e]naeasa bhikṣusa daṇamukho*. CKI 80.

³ One pillar base from Jamalpur, Mathura, records the dedication of a pillar by two monks, Śurīya and Buddharakṣita, who are named as meditators: *ayaṃ ku[ṃ]bhako dāṇaṃ bhikṣuṇaṃ śurīyasya buddharakṣitasya ca prāhaṇīk[ā]-n[aṃ] an[e]na*. § 46.

occasions¹ and as deserving of equal respect from other monks for their abilities and knowledge of ritual practice.²

From an early phase in the oral transmission of Buddhist literature, reciters (*bhāṇaka*) were grouped according to specific collections of texts. For instance, in the *Milindapañha* we read:

Great King, in the Fortunate One's City of Dhamma, dwell such peoples as those who know the *Sutras*, *Vinaya* and the *Abhidharma*, the Dharma-teachers, the reciters of the *Jātakas* and of the long, middle, connected, numerical and short [discourses], and those who are endowed with moral conduct, concentration, and understanding, who delight in cultivating the limbs of awakening, who have insight...³

¹ For example: *aññatarasmin āvāse tadahu pavāraṇāya bhikkhūhi dhammaṃ bhaṇantehi suttantikehi suttantaṃ sagāyantehi vinayadharehi vinayaṃ vinicchinantehi dhammakathikehi dhammaṃ sakācchantehi*. Vin 1. 169. 'In a certain residence on the day of Pavāraṇa, the monks are reciting the Dharma, those versed in Suttas are chanting Suttas, the bearers of the Vinaya are determining the regulations, and the Dharma-teachers are discussing the Dharma.'

² In a further case, monks, in a certain residence dwell a number of young and inexperienced monks, who don't know the *uposadha*, the activity of the *uposadha*, the code, or the recitation of the code. There, another monk arrives, who has heard much, who has received the tradition (*āgatāgama*), who is a bearer of the Dharma, a bearer of the *Vinaya*, a bearer of the mother-lists, a scholar, experienced, intelligent, conscientious, scrupulous and desirous of training. He, monks, should be shown devotion and kindness, should be cared for and should be waited on by the monks...

³ *Bhagavato kho mahārāja dhammanagare evarūpā janāpaṭivasanti suttantikā venayikābhidhammikā dhammakathikā jātakabhāṇakā dīghabhāṇakā majjhima-bhāṇakā samyuttabhāṇakāṅguttarabhāṇakā khuddakabhāṇakā sīlasampannā samādhisampannā paññāsampannā bojjhaṅgabhāvanāratā vipassakā...* Mil 1. 341-342.

The title first arises in Brāhmī inscriptions from the c. 2nd century BCE, at Karli, Sāñcī, and Bharhut,¹ and in Sri Lanka.² Whilst it does not occur in inscriptions of the North and Northwest, the presumably related title for a reciter (*bhāṣaṇaka*) is found in two Brāhmī inscriptions from Jamalpur, Mathura, dated 77 [Vāsudeva] (204/205 CE):

[Torus] *danaṃ bhikṣusya buddhiśreṣṭhasya caturvvi(d)yasya
bhaṣa(ṇa)[k]āsyā saṃṅhe caturdd[iśe] saṃ 70 7 gr 4 di 20 5*
[Base]: *dan[a]ṃ buddh[i]śreṣṭhasya bhaṣana[kas]ya³*

A gift of the monk Buddhiśreṣṭha, one who has the four-fold knowledge and is a reciter, for the community of the four directions. Year 77, month 4 of summer, day 25.

Gift of the Buddhiśreṣṭha the reciter.

In this inscription, Buddhiśreṣṭha's role as a reciter is linked to his having a four-fold knowledge. Heinrich Lüders took this to be a reference to the four *Āgamas*—i.e., the *Dīrghāgama*, *Madhyamāgama*, *Samyuktāgama*, and *Ekottarikāgama*—stating it ‘was probably used in imitation or rivalry with the Brahmanical terms that designate “one who

¹ For example: *bhadatasa aya-Isipālita bhānakasa navakarmikasa dānaṃ*. Bhar 88. ‘The gift of the venerable noble one Isipālita, the reciter and overseer of new constructions.’ In this case, the reciter was also an ‘overseer of new constructions’ (*navakarmika*), implying that monks could maintain multiple roles pertaining both to the religious and administrative duties of the monastic institution. See also Bhar 77, Bhar 53, 101, 119, 131, 152, Sanc 515; 749, Karli 8, 9 in Tsukamoto, *A Comprehensive Study of The Indian Buddhist Inscriptions Part I: Text, Notes and Japanese Translation*. For further discussion, see James Burgess and Bhagvānlal Indrājī, *Inscriptions from the Cave-Temples of Western India: With Descriptive Notes, &c.* (Bombay: Government central press, 1881), 31; Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, 149ff.

² David Drewes, ‘Dharmabhāṇakas in Early Mahāyāna’, *Indo-Iranian Journal* 54 (2011): 333.

³ § 33.

knows the four Vedas”¹. On the basis of a passage in the *Ugraparipṛcchāsūtra*,² Michael Skinner has more recently suggested that it refers to the four baskets—i.e., the *Sūtrapiṭaka*, *Vinayapiṭaka*, *Abhidharmapiṭaka*, and *Bodhisattvapīṭaka*.³ Neither of these conjectures can be substantiated, however, and the role of the reciter, in this specific form, appears to have a quite distinct significance.

In the Sanskrit and Tibetan witnesses of *Pārivāsikavastu* of the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*, there is a single reference to a reciter, given in the context of what activities may or may not be performed by a probationary monk (*prāvāsika*):

When he [the *prāvāsika*] knows it is the time and has arranged the seats, the censer and incense must be set out. If there is one able to perform the Proclamation of the Qualities of the Teacher, he himself must perform it. If not, a reciter [*bhāṣanaka*] must be asked.⁴

When it is time to assemble, he must arrange the bedding and seats and set out incense and censer. He must recite the Qualities of the Teacher (*ston pa'i yon tan bsrags par bya*). He must announce the date, saying, ‘Reverend Ones, may the community hear! Today is the first day of the winter month. The verse for the benefit of the Owner of the Vihāra

¹ Skt. *caturvidya*, *cāturvidya*, *cāturvaidya*, *caturveda*, *caturvedin*. Lüders, *Mathurā Inscriptions*, 70.

² Ug-pr 20c, Jan Nattier, *A Few Good Men. The Bodhisattva Path According to The Inquiry of Ugra (Ugraparipṛcchā)*, Studies in Buddhist Traditions (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2003), 80; 274.

³ Skinner, ‘Marks of Empire’, 161.

⁴ *kālaṃ jñātvāsanaprajñaptiṃ kṛtvā dhūpakaṭacchūke dhūpaś copasthāpayitavaḥ. sacet pratibalo bhavati śāstur guṇasaṃkīrtanaṃ kartuṃ svayam eva kartavyam. noced bhāṣanakaḥ praṣṭavyaḥ. MSV 3. 97. Translation from Schopen, *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters*, 261. Parentheses are my own.*

(*vihārasvāmin*), and for the gods of the *vihāra* must be recited. But if he is not able to do it, he must entrust it to a monk.¹

In this passage, one duty of the reciter was to perform the ‘Proclamation of the Qualities of the Teacher’ (*śāstur guṇasaṃkīrtana*), and especially in lieu of probationary monastics who were not yet able. The exact nature of this practice is not entirely clear but, as Schopen points out, it may refer to a specific text and almost certainly involves ‘ritualized recitation’.² Perhaps such a text or direct passage may one day crop up; however, the usage of the term *śastu* to me signals a title belonging to the standard list of epithets of Buddha(s) that comprise the practice the ‘recollection of the Buddha’ (*buddhānusmṛti*): *vidyācaraṇasaṃpannaḥ sugato lokavid anuttaraḥ puruṣadamyasārathiḥ śāstā devamanuṣyāṇāṃ buddho bhagavān*. The structure of the probationary monk’s announcement also contains the same tenets of several epigraphs, including the date, a list of the Buddha’s epithets and the name of the donor.³ Thus, one of the more administrative duties of the reciter was to insure the ritual obligations of notable donors, such as the owner of a monastery (*vihārasvāmin*) were met.

In the *Abhisamācārikādharma* of the *Mahāsāṃghikalokottaravādins*, the title occurs once in a similar donative context at the performance of the *upoṣadha*:

Wenn es weder zu kalt noch zu heiß ist, keine Gefahr durch Räuber, Löwen oder Tiger droht, die Zellen nicht sehr weit entfernt liegen, die Mönche weder altersschwach noch von einer Krankheit geschwächt sind, sie bequem sitzen und (das

¹ Schopen, *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters*, 227.

² Schopen, *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters*, 227fn34.

³ For epithets of the Buddha in inscriptions, see No. 6, 33–34, 36.

Prātimokṣa-Sūtra) ausführlich hören möchten, dann soll das *Prātimokṣa-Sūtra* ausführlich rezitiert werden. Wenn (die *Poṣadha*-Feier) die ganze Nacht über veranstaltet wird, sind Redner aufzufordern, ‘Du sollst sprechen! Du sollst sprechen!’ Nachdem sie, wie aufgefordert, gesprochen und die ganze Nacht im *Dharma*-Regen verbracht haben, sollen die Geber/Gabenherren durch eine Predigt über den *Dharma* unterwiesen...usw...[angeregt, begeistert, entzückt und dann] (und) entlassen werden. (Danach) darf man tun, was man will. Stimmt freudig zu, oh Ehrwürdige! Man soll in Achtsamkeit streben. Auf diese Weise sollen alle (Mönche) bei der *Poṣadha*-Feier verfahren. Verfahren sie nicht (so), begehen sie eine Übertretung der Regeln.¹

Other duties of the reciter, therefore, were to recite the institutional code (*prātimokṣa*) for the monastic community, as well as teach (*kathā*) the Dharma in order that a donor (*dāyaka*) and master of donations (*dānapati*) may be enticed into making donations at ritual occasions, namely the *upoṣadha*.

¹ *yadi tāva nātiśītaṃ bhavati nātyūṣṇam vā corabhayaṃ vā na bhavati simhabhayaṃ vā vyāghrabhayaṃ vā na bhavati. na dūradūre vā pariveṇā bhavanti bhikṣū vā na jarādurbbalā vā vyādhidurbbalā bhavanti. sukhopaviṣṭā bhavanti vistareṇa śrotukāmā bhavanti. tato vistareṇa prātimokṣasūtraṃ uddiśitavyaṃ. atha dāni sarvvarātrikā bhavati. bhāṣaṇakā adhyeṣitavyāḥ. tvayā bhāṣitavyaṃ tvayā bhāṣitavyan ti. yathādhyeṣṭeḥi. bhāṣiyāṇaṃ sarvvarātri dharmmavrṣṭiyer vvitināmiyāna dāyakadānapati dharmyā kathayā saṃdarśayitavyā yāva [samādāpayitavyā samuttejayitavyā saṃpraharṣaayitavyā] udyojayitavyā. tato yathāsukhaṃ kartavyaṃ. abhipramodatu āyusmanto apramādena saṃpādayitavyaṃ. evaṃ sarvvehi poṣadhe pratipadyitavyaṃ na pratipadyanti vinayātikramam āsādayanti. Abhis 3. 11–13. For the abbreviated section following yāva in parentheses, see Karashima, Die Abhisamācārikā Dharmāḥ. Verhaltensregeln für buddhistische Mönche der Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravādins. Band I, 11; 15.*

The donation of Buddhiśreṣṭha was not made during an *upoṣadha* but rather on day 25, following the more common *pañcaratri* ritual rhythm which followed the civil calendar.¹ In the **Sarvāstivādinaya* 十誦律, this day is given as one of ‘six days of abstaining’ (六齋日), upon which a reciter or Dharma-teacher (說法人) is charged with reciting teachings.²

We may presume therefore that the roles of the reciter and Dharma teacher (*dharmakathika*) were highly similar, insofar as they are both tasked with teaching the Dharma at ritual occasions in order to garner donations. Figures to bear the title Dharma-teacher are regularly described in Buddhist literature as being ‘specialists in doctrinal discussion and debate’ and as ‘preachers, memorizers of texts, and people responsible for textual transmission.’³ These are known widely to inscriptions from c. 2nd century BCE across the Indic sphere,⁴ and arise four times in Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions of the North and Northwest. The earliest is the Reliquary Inscription of Gomitra (No. 6), dated 12 [Azes] (35/36 BCE), wherein the donor, the monk Gomitra, is described as a great sage and Dharma-teacher: [3]...*pra[ta]maheṣiṇa*⁵

¹ For further details see Chapter Eleven: Ritual Rhythms in Donative Inscriptions.

² T 1435. 420.

³ Drewes, ‘Dharmabhāṇakas in Early Mahāyāna’, 334.

⁴ See Amar 2, 10, 126, Sanc 385, BoGa 18, Naga 70 in Tsukamoto, *A Comprehensive Study of The Indian Buddhist Inscriptions Part I: Text, Notes and Japanese Translation*.

⁵ Salomon notes that the title *maharṣi* is unusual here and would be better associated with the list of epithets given to the Buddha. Since this is syntactically impossible, it ‘requires that it indeed be taken as a title of the donor Gomitra, who evidently was (or at least claimed to be) a person of extraordinarily high standing in the Buddhist community.’ Richard Salomon, ‘Observations on the Reliquary Slab Inscription of Gomitra [1 Plate]’, *Annual Report of The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology* 12, no. 7 (2008): 10.

Gomitreṇa śamaṇeṇa [4.] *dhamakasiṅgeṇa*. This implies that the role was reserved for figures of a certain status in the community. Indeed, in the Bodhisattva of Bh[...] (No. 52), dated 4 Kaniṣka I (130/131 CE), the monk Dharmanandin is also named as the donor's co-resident, both of whom are related to the Great General Hummikya, implying that the audiences of these Dharma-teachers were constituted of influential political figures.¹ Moreover, the relation between a reciter or Dharma-teacher and owners of monasteries (*vihārasvāmin*), may be found implied also in the Donation of Nagadatta, dated 11 Kaniṣka II (238/239 CE):

[1.] *maharajasya rajatirajasya devaputrasya Kan[i]ṣkasya saṃva[t]sare ekadaśe saṃ 10 1 Daśikasya masas[y]a divase aṭhaviśe di 20 4 4* [2.] *[a]tra divase bhikṣusya Nagadatasya dha[rma]kathisyā acarya Damatrataśiṣyasya acarya Bhava-praśiṣyasya yaṭhiṃ aropayata iha Da[ma]ne* [3.] *vihārasvamiṇi upasika [Ba]lanandī [ku]ṭumbini Balajayamata ca imaṃ yaṭhiprati[ṭhavaṃna] pa .i ? anuparivaraṃ dada[t]i sarvasatvanaṃ* [4.] *hitasukhaya bhavatu*²

In the eleventh 11 year of the Great King, Supreme King Among Kings, Kaniṣka, day 28 of the month Daisios. On this day, a staff of the monk Nagadatta, the Dharma-teacher, and student of the teacher Dharmatrata, student of the teacher, Bhava, was erected here in Damana. The owner of the monastery and lay-practitioner Balanandī, a householder (*kuṭumbinī*), and mother of Balajaya, gave an enclosure once

¹ Another Dharma-teacher arises on an inscribed pillar from 77 Vāsudeva (204/205 CE), Sk 100.

² CKI 147.

the staff had been dedicated. May it be for the welfare and happiness of all beings.

Whilst no specific ritual duties of the Dharma-teacher Nagadatta are here named, his very presence at this donation of the owner of the monastery Balanandī suggests he served specific ritual duties in this dedication.

A related pedagogue is also to be found in the title *trepīṭaka*; an appellation given to those individuals who knew, presumably from memory, the three baskets (*tripīṭaka*): the *Sūtrapīṭaka*, *Vinayapīṭaka*, and *Abhidharmapīṭaka*.¹ Assumedly, the ability to recollect all Buddhist knowledge was a rare feat and therefore the title was rarely conferred. Indeed, the title is rather uncommon to both the epigraphic and textual sources. In inscriptions, it arises in respect to but five individuals in all historical contexts.² Three derive from the corpora of Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions, the two aforementioned Sarvāstivādin monastics,

¹ In the colophons of the earliest Chinese translations from the 2nd century CE, several translators, such as Lokakṣema 支婁迦讖, adopt the title *trepīṭaka* 三藏人, which indicates that the title was perhaps more widespread than the few examples from epigraphy imply.

² A Brāhmī inscription from Bharhut records the gift of a railing (*suci*) from Noble One Jāta who is entitled *peṭaka*, indicating perhaps some notion of a textual collection in the c. 2nd century BCE: *aya-Jātasa peṭakino suci dānaṃ*. Bhar 175. A much later example from the c. 5th century also occurs much further south at Kanheri, in which a monastic named Dharmavatsa is entitled *traipīṭaka* in addition to several other titles:

[1.] *Buddhasya bhagavataś śāsanānukāritraipīṭakopāddhyāya*[2.]-*bhadantaDharmavatsaśiṣyasya bhikṣor Buddhaghōṣasya* [3.] *mahā-gandhakuṭīvārikasya bhagavatpratimēyaṃ deyadharmmah*. Kanh 7.

The image of the Fortunate One, the gift-worthy object of the monk Buddhaghōṣa, overseer of the great hall of fragrances and student of the venerable Dharmavatsa, imitator of the teaching the Buddha the Fortunate One, the Bearer of the Three Baskets and preceptor.

the nun Buddhāmitrā¹ and the monk Bala,² who are named in dedications from the years 3 (129/130 CE) and 33 (159/160 CE) of the Kaniṣka I era, in addition to another monk named Buddhānada who made a donation of a Buddha image in year 5³ of either Kaniṣka I (132/133 CE) or Kaniṣka II (232/233 CE).⁴

The importance of the two former figures for the political programme of Kaniṣka I has already been discussed above in *Chapter Eight Kaniṣka I*; there it was suggested that these two pundits ultimately served an instrumental role for the establishment of Kuṣāṇa imperial power at several sites in the Gangetic Basin. No doubt their elevated role as Bearers of the Three Baskets enabled them to serve such a function in at this specific historical moment. Now, I wish to consider the potential roles of this figure from the internal perspective of the Buddhist community. However, the title does not occur as often in Buddhist literature as one would expect, and thence it is difficult to determine precisely the status of these figures.

The P. *tepiṭaka* is entirely absent from the *Nikāyas* and occurs only once in the *Parivāra* to the *Vinaya*, in a list detailing the succession of teachers who have conveyed the words of the Fortunate One (*paraṃparābhataṃ*), one of whom is a *tipeṭakī* named Khema;⁵ K. R.

¹ See No. 48–49, 60.

² See No. 49–50.

³ *sa[m] 4 1 Phagunasa masasa di paṃcami Budhanadasa trepiṭakasa dāna-mukhe madapidarana adhvadidana puyaya bhavatu. CKI 232. 'Year 5, on the fifth day of the month Phalguna; may the donation of Buddhānada, Bearer of the Three Baskets, be for the worship of his deceased mother and father.'*

⁴ The date of this inscription has been the sources of endless debate among epigraphers and art historians alike, who have dated it to the eras of Kaniṣka II, III and III (this latter being in the reign of the Guptas) and even as late as the Hun ruler Khiliṅga in the 5th century CE. For a summary, see Fussman, 'Numismatic and Epigraphic Evidence for the Chronology of Early Gandharan Art', 67.

⁵ Vin 5. 3.

Norman regards this occurrence to be a Sri Lankan addition of 1st century CE.¹ It also occurs several times in the prologue of the *Milindapañha*,² wherein two *tepiṭakas* are named. Whilst Milinda is on the hunt for a worthy discussant, the *yonakas* (his Greek ministers) suggest a Bearer of the Three Baskets named Āyupāla; but Milinda swiftly defeats him in a debate concerning matters of causality.³ The second is Nāgasena, the main protagonist of the text, who is described as a Bearer of the Three Baskets on several occasions:

Dhammarakkhita said to Nāgasena, Nāgasena, just as a cowherd protects cows and others enjoy its taste, you, Nāgasena, remember the three baskets, the words of the Buddha, but do not participate in the life of the renunciant.⁴

Now at that time, the venerable Nāgasena was surrounded by a group of ascetics. He was the leader of an Order, the leader of a group, the teacher of a group. He was well known, famous, highly esteemed by the many folk; wise, experienced, clever, abstruse, learned, intelligent; disciplined, confident; he was one who had heard much, he was versed in the Three Piṭakas, a master of knowledge, grown in discretion; he was one to whom the tradition had been handed down, grown in analytical insight, expert in the nine divisions of the scriptures in the Teacher's Dispensation; he was one that had attained the perfections; he was skilled in the penetration of

¹ K. R. Norman, *A Philological Approach to Buddhism* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London), 1997), 133.

² Mil 1. 18; 19; 21; 22.

³ Mil 1. 18; 19, 90.

⁴ *Seyyathā pi Nāgasena gopālako gāvo rakkhati, aññe gorasaṃ paribhuñjanti, evaṃ—eva kho tvaṃ Nāgasena tepiṭakaṃ buddhavacanaṃ dhārento nā bhāgī sāmāññassātī.* Mil. 18.

the teaching on the substance of Dhamma (found) in the world of the Conqueror; he was prompt in answering a variety of questions, a speaker on a variety (of topics), of lovely enunciation; he was hard to equal, hard to overcome, hard to excel, hard to oppose, hard to cheek; he was imperturbable as the sea, immovable as the king of mountains; getting rid of conflict, dispelling darkness, bringing light, he was a mighty talker, confounding the followers (of teachers) of other groups, crushing the followers of other sects' he was revered, venerated, revered, esteemed and worshipped by monks, nuns, men and women lay-devotees, king and kings' great ministers; and the recipients of the requisites of robes, alms food, bedding and seating and medicines for the sick...¹

A few tenets of this passage tell us how the Bearer of the Three Baskets was depicted. The final description states 'he was revered, venerated, revered.... and the recipient of the requisites of robe-material, alms-food, lodgings and medicines for the sick.' As far as I can tell, this formula, in its entirety and integrity as a formula, is absent from Pali

¹ *Tena kho pana samayena āyasmā nāgaseno samaṇaṇaparivuto saṅghī gaṇī gaṇācariyo ñāto yasassī sādhusammato bahujanassa paṇḍito vyatto medhāvī nipuṇo viññū vibhāvi vinīto visārado bahussuto tepīṭako vedagu pabhinna-buddhimā āgatāgamo pabhinna-paṭisambhido navaṅgasatthusāsana-pariyattidharo pāramippatto jinavacane dhammatthadesanāpaṭivedhakusalo akkhayavicitra-paṭibhāno citrakathī kalyāṇavākkaraṇo durāsado duppasaho duruttaro durāvaraṇo dunnivārayo, sāgaro viya akkhobho, girirājā viya niccalo, raṇaṃjaho tamonudo pabhaṅkaro mahākathī paragaṇīgaṇamathano, paratiṭṭhiyappamaddano, bhikkhūnaṃ bhikkhunīnaṃ upāsakānaṃ upāsikānaṃ rājūnaṃ rājamahā-mattānaṃ sakkato garukato mānito pujito apacito, lābhī civara-piṇḍa-pātasenāsanagilāna-ppaccayabhesa-jjaparikkhārānaṃ... Mil 1. 21-22; I. B. Horner, trans., Milinda's Questions. Vol. I (London: Luzac and Company, 1963), 28-29.*

sources.¹ However, a broad equivalent does occur regularly in *Vinaya* and *Avadāna* texts of the Mūlasarvāstivādins, as a description of the Buddha,² which serves to indicate his being a field of merit (*puṇyakṣetra*) and thereby worthy of gifts (*dakṣiṇeya*). Second, there is a repeated emphasis placed on the figure's intimacy with the Dharma and his ability to propound that knowledge. This is a tenet encountered most often, for beyond an encyclopaedic knowledge of Buddhist literature, a number of other roles are associated with the figure, including administrator, pedagogue, and proselytiser.

Besides the aforementioned, all textual occurrences of the title arise in the Mūlasarvāstivāda corpus. This fact alone is of interest, since two of the Bearers of the Three Baskets in inscriptions were demonstrably Sarvāstivādins, implying that knowledge of the position was retained specifically within this institutional context. Furthermore, the fact that Buddhamitrā is a nun—the only nun to bear the title historically—is of interest in this regard, as it is only in the *Divyāvadāna* that such a figure arises. This nexus does not necessarily indicate that the figure was a phenomenon exclusive to the Sarvāstivāda; rather, it serves to perspicuously demonstrate that the role held an acute value among Sarvāstivādins during the Kuṣāṇa Period. Nonetheless, attitudes towards the Bearer of the Three Baskets in textual sources are unusually ambivalent and read more like cautionary tales: they detail, on the one hand, the rhetorical skill and eloquence such a figure should possess,

¹ Cf. AN 3. 242. SN 4. 119, 229.

² For instance, at the beginning of 99 Avadānas in the Avadānaśataka we read: *buddho bhagavān satkṛto gurukṛto mānitaḥ pūjito rājabhī rājamātrair dhanibhiḥ pauraiḥ śreṣṭhibhiḥ sārthavāhair devair nāgair yakṣair asurair garuḍaiḥ kinnarair mahoragair iti devanāgayakṣāsuraгарuḍakinnaramahoragābhyarcito buddho bhagavān jñāto mahāpuṇyo lābhī cīvarapiṇḍa-pātaśayanāsanaglānapratyayabhaiṣajyapariṣkāraṇām*. On this formula, see Alice Collett, 'List-Based Formulae in the Avadānaśataka', *Buddhist Studies Review* 23, no. 2 (2006): 160.

whilst invariably presenting them as rude and embedding them in narratives that ultimately serve to highlight their failures.

It is in the *Cūḍāpakṣāvadāna* of the *Dīvyāvadāna* that we find the only mention in Buddhist Sanskrit literature, as far as I am aware, of female Bearers of the Three Baskets:

Thereupon, the Fortunate One addressed Ānanda, ‘Go, Ānanda, and inform Panthaka he is to instruct the nuns.’ ‘Yes, sir.’, the venerable Ānanda [replied], and having listened to the Fortunate One he approached the venerable Panthaka. Having approached, Ānanda said this to the venerable Panthaka, ‘The teacher said that you, venerable Panthaka, are to instruct the nuns.’ The venerable Panthaka said, ‘For what reason does the Fortunate One, having excepted the monastic elders, order me to be the nuns’ instructor? It is as if my qualities should be proclaimed, I shall fulfil the teacher’s wish.’

The nuns who had abandoned desire approached Jetavana and asked the nuns, ‘Who has been ordered by the Fortunate One to be our instructor?’ ‘The venerable Panthaka’, they replied. The nuns said, ‘Sisters, consider how the female gender is despised; he [i.e. Panthaka], by whom a single verse was recited for three months but not even learnt, is to instruct the nuns who are Bearers of the Three Baskets and Dharma-teachers with excellent rhetorical skills.’

These nuns approached the assembly and asked, ‘Sisters, who will come to instruct us?’ They replied, ‘The Noble Panthaka.’ ‘Who is this Noble Mahāpanthaka? Is it not he, but actually another Cūḍapanthaka; the one to whom the twelve groups listen?’ They then complained, ‘Sisters, consider how the female gender is despised; how indeed shall

he [i.e. Panthanka], by whom a single verse was recited for three months but not even learnt, instruct the nuns who are Bearers of the Three Baskets and Dharma-teachers with excellent rhetorical skills.’ They replied, ‘Sisters, six women with twelve slender elephants should arrange the lion-throne and, having entered Śrāvastī, the six women must announce in the streets, alleys, squares and at crossroads, “Such an instructor shall come for us! One who will not show us the few truths and by means of whom more time will be spent in the cycle of existence!”—not any old bastard’s son with little learning is able to instruct nuns.’¹

¹ *tatra bhagavān āyusmantam ānandam āmantrayate. gaccha ānanda, panthakasya kathaya bhikṣuṇyas te avavaditavyā iti. evaṃ bhadantety āyusmān ānando bhagavataḥ pratiśrutya yenāyusmān panthakas tenopasaṃkrāntaḥ. upasaṃkramyāyusmantam panthakam idam avocat. śāstā tvām āyusman panthaka evam āha bhikṣuṇyas te avavaditavyā iti. āyusmān panthakaḥ kathayati. kim arthaṃ sthavirasthavirān bhikṣūn apahāya māṃ bhagavān bhikṣuṇyavavādakam ājñāpayati. mama iva guṇodbhāvanā kartavyeti śāstur manorathaṃ paripūrayiṣyāmīti. bhikṣuṇyaś chandahānisaḥ. Jetavanam āgatāḥ tā bhikṣūn pṛcchanti. bhagavatā ko ‘smākam avavādaka ājñaptah. te kathayanti. āyusmān panthakaḥ. tāḥ kathayanti. bhaginyaḥ, paśyata kathaṃ mātrgrāmaḥ paribhūtaḥ yena tribhir māsairekā gāthā paṭhitā, sāpi na pravṛttā bhikṣuṇyas tripiṭā dhārmakathikā yuktamuktapratibhānāḥ sa kila bhikṣuṇī avavadiṣyatīti. tāḥ parśadam āgatā bhikṣuṇībhiḥ pṛṣṭāḥ. bhaginyaḥ, ko ‘smākam avavaditum āgamiṣyati. tāḥ kathayanti āryapanthakaḥ. kim āryo mahāpanthakaḥ. na hy ayam, sa tv anyas cūḍāpanthakaḥ. dvādaśavargyābhiḥ śrutam. tāvad avadhyāyanti. bhaginyaḥ paśyata, kathaṃ mātrgrāmaḥ paribhūtaḥ. yena tribhirmāsairekā gāthā paṭhitā, sāpi na pravṛttā imā bhikṣuṇyas tripiṭā dhārmakathikā yuktamuktapratibhānāḥ, sa kila kim āsām avavadiṣyatīti. tāḥ kathayanti. bhaginyaḥ, ṣaḍjanyo dvādaśahastikābhir latābhiḥ siṃhāsanaṃ prajñāpayantu ṣaḍjanyaḥ śrāvastyāṃ praviṣya rathyāvīthicatvaraśṛṅgātakeṣv ārocayantu. so ‘smākaṃ tādrśo ‘vavādaka āgamiṣyati, yo ‘smākaṃ tanusatyaṇi na drakṣyati. tena saṃsāre ciraṃ vastavyaṃ bhaviṣyatīti. yena na kaścit putramoṭikāputro ‘lpaśruta utsahate bhikṣuṇī avavaditum. Divy 492–493.*

Having arrived, Panthaka notices the lion-throne and wonders if it had been arranged by devotees or by those who wish him ill-will. He observes the latter was the case but nevertheless takes a seat and, entering a meditative concentration, then sets about performing his miraculous powers, by making the seat disappear from its place and reappear above in the sky. Thereafter, he addresses the nuns:

I, sisters, recited a single verse for three months and after seven nights and days, I was able to understand it and to explain the meaning of the single verse in terms of different stanzas and syllables.

One should not do bad with mind, speech or body, being interested in the entire world,

Without desire, the one who is mindful and conscious should not know suffering, and be unattached to meaning.¹

This passage achieves two things. First, it reveals an underlying tension in the status of nuns, even those who were knowledgeable enough to receive the title Bearer of the Three Baskets, and that they felt hard done by in situations in which they required a male monastic instructor of a supposedly inferior ability. Second, and we must remember this text falls within a primarily male prism, it serves to highlight the preconceptions of these nuns, who simply lack faith and are quickly shown otherwise.

Beyond the textual and epigraphic uniqueness of the title for a nun, the bearing this passage has (if any) on *Buddhamitrā* is difficult to ascertain. The only relation that occurs to me is the shared social

¹ *mayā bhagīnyas tribhīr māsair ekā gāthā paṭhitā utsahetavyāni śrotum ekagāthāyāḥ saptarātriṃdivasāny anyaiḥ padair vyañjanair arthaṃ vibhaktum. pāpaṃ na kuryān manasā na vācā kāyena vā kiṃcana sarvaloke, riktaḥ kāmaiḥ smṛtimān saṃprajānan duḥkhaṃ na sa vidyād anarthopasaṃhitam iti.* Divy 494.

hierarchy the respective sources evince; namely, the subordination of a nun Bearer of the Three Baskets to a monk—we must recall that Buddhāmitrā is described as the pupil of Bala. It also turns out the Panthaka from the above passage was in fact a Bearer of the Three Baskets in a previous life, justifying, perhaps, his instruction of these nuns of equivalent punditry.¹

In other examples, Jonathan Silk has drawn our attention to some of the administrative duties attached to the role of the Bearer of the Three Baskets. In some cases, they are depicted as performing ‘religious service’ (*dharmavaivyaṅṛtya*) for monks,² and as having ‘responsibilities [that] seem to range widely, from feeding the monks, to the financial management of donations they have received.’³ In one passage of the *Karmaśataka*, a certain Bearer of the Three Baskets is mentioned as being an administrator (*vaiyāṅṛtyaka*): he ‘is famous and very meritorious...[and] since he possesses food and drink, bedding, cushions, and medicaments, we are pleased with him, and he will be our administrator, and permit us to pass the rain retreat’. The text recounts that he was to head 77,000 monks and that he managed to acquire a large amount of food and wealth. But he becomes greedy and buries the hoard, choosing not to feed the monks. The monks learn of this and challenge him. Becoming angry the Bearer of the Three Baskets says, ‘You only consume my own gifts of faith, while I am disgraced, so you should wallow in a cesspool, and eat shit and piss too!’ He subsequently loses his job and is reborn as a worm.⁴

¹ Divy 505.

² Divy 2. 54.

³ Silk, *Managing Monks*, 183.

⁴ Silk outlines two more stories from the *Karmaśataka*. One concerns a nun holding similar administrative duties and another a monk who is detailed with managing the rota of other monks who were to distribute drinks. See fn. above. Silk, *Managing Monks*, 181–87. *Ibid.*, 181–187.

Other cases to deal with this position follow a similar line. Our first two examples comprise bovine themed stories in which a Bearer of the Three Baskets makes a brash speech act (*kharaṃ vākkarma*) and suffers dire consequences in his later rebirth.

First, in the *Bhaiṣajyavastu*, there is a narrative concerning a certain Gopāla who had attained arhatship. The monks want to know why and the Buddha explains that in a previous existence Gopāla was a cow-herd (*gopālaka*) named Nanda, who had gone forth in the teaching of the Buddha Kāśyapa. He is described as follows:

A Bearer of the Three Baskets (*tripiṭa*), a Dharma-teacher with eloquent rhetorical skills, a retinue of five hundred, skilled in debate, and famed for having settled debates that arose periodically in the community.¹

He is pictured as being the head of the community and as having co-residents and pupils (*sārdhaṃvihāryantevāsika*) under him. However, on the occasion that two particularly arrogant and haughty (*stabdhau māninau*) monks have a debate (*adhikaraṇa*), he decides not to resolve their quarrel since these two monks never went to him for help and instead to put the issue to the community, who are also unable to quell the feud.

Whilst Nanda is away at a mountain village, the community set about again to resolve the issue and this time succeed. Nanda returns and inquires after the matter. His co-residents and pupils explain that it had been resolved and, presumably embarrassed, Nanda replies in brash (*khara*) manner, characterised as the speech of cow-herds (*gopālaka-*

¹ *tripiṭo dhārmakathiko yuktamuktapratibhānaḥ pañcaśataparivāraḥ adhi-karaṇakuśalaḥ. sa utpannotpannāni saṃghasyādhikaraṇāni vyupaśamayati.* MSV 1. 55.

vāda), and was subsequently reborn as a cow-herd for his next five hundred lives, until he went forth in the teaching of Śākyamuni.¹

The second story is the *Mahiṣāvadāna* of the *Avadānaśataka*. It tells of a certain buffalo (*mahiṣa*) and a group of buffalo herdsman (*mahiṣīpāla*), whom the Buddha encounters in a forest whilst travelling in Kosala. The herdsmen warn the Buddha of a particularly bad buffalo (*duṣṭamahiṣa*) living in the woods. Thereupon this buffalo charges at the Buddha, who subdues him with an illusory creation. The buffalo is frightened by the creation and, seeing that he is miserable, the Buddha gives a Dharma-teaching concerning origin (*yoni*) and existence (*gati*). The buffalo remembers his birth, begins to weep, and the Buddha tells him in verse that he may attain rebirth in heaven once he feels aversion (*virāga*) towards his animal origin. Thereupon, the buffalo despises his own basis (*svāśraya*) and practices abstinence. Quickly consumed by a fire, he dies and is reborn as the deity (*devaputra*) Mahiṣapūrvin (‘one who was previously a buffalo’) among the Trāyastriṃsa deities:

It is normal that three thoughts arise to the *devaputra*, *devakanyā* or *aciropapanna*, ‘Wherefrom has one fallen, where has one arisen and by means of what action?’ Mahiṣapūrvin observed, ‘I fell from the animals and arose among the Trāyastriṃśa deities due to having a tranquil thought in the presence of the Fortunate One.’²

Mahiṣapūrvin reflects that he only has this form because of the Buddha and thus should seek his presence. Worshipping the Buddha, he sits before him to hear the Dharma. Discerning Mahiṣapūrvin’s basis

¹ MSV 1. 55–56, Pravṛ-v 4. 31.

² *dharmatā khalu devaputrasya vā devakanyāyā vā aciropapannasya trīṇi cittāny utpadyante: kutaś cyutaḥ, kutropapannaḥ kena karmaṇeti. sa paśyati. tiryagbhyaś cyutaḥ praṇīteṣu deveṣu trāyastriṃśeṣūpapannaḥ, bhagavato ‘ntike cittam abhiprasādyeti. Avś 1. 332.*

(*āśraya*), nature (*dhātu*) and intention (*prakṛti*), the Buddha gives a teaching concerning the four noble truths, whereupon Maḥiṣapūrvīn attains the level of ‘stream-entry’ (*srotaāpatti*).

In the past narrative frame, set at the time of Kāśyapa in the Bhadrakalpa, we learn that five hundred existences before Maḥiṣapūrvīn were a Bearer of the Three Baskets, and the herdsmen, his students. Their unfortunate rebirth as a buffalo and herdsmen is for the reason of a short outburst that runs as follows:

There at this time, when the discussion of the monks was in progress, a monk, a Bearer of the Three Baskets with a retinue of five hundred, was engaged in discussion. There the monks were respectively students and graduates. They asked the Bearer of the Three Baskets a question and he was not able to explain. Angrily he uttered a brash speech-act, ‘Why do buffalos know?’ A student also said to him, ‘Why do buffalo herdsmen know?’¹

Another negative presentation in the *Kaṭṭhināvādāna* details a past-life story of Śākyamuni, in which he was once a Bearer of the Three Baskets:

Früher, ihr Mönche, in der Vergangenheit, als die Lebewesen 80,000 Jahre alt wurden, wurde auf der Welt der Meister Vipāśyin geboren, ein Tathāgata, Arhat, Vollkommen Erleuchter, ein Erhabener. Im Gefolge der Unterweisung des Vollkommen Erleuchteten Vipāśyin traten zwei Brüder,

¹ *atra ca kāle bhikṣūṇāṃ viniścāye vartamāne tripiṭo bhikṣuḥ pañcaśata-parivāro viniścāye ‘avasthitah. tatra ca bhikṣavaḥ śaikṣāśaikṣāḥ. te tripiṭaṃ praśnaṃ pṛcchanti. sa na śaknoti vyākartum. tena kupitena kharaṃ vākkarma niścāritam: ime ca maḥiṣā kiṃ prajānantīti. śiṣyair apy asyoktam. ime maḥiṣpālāḥ kiṃ prajānantīti.* Avś 1. 58. 334–335.

Vasiṣṭha und Bharadvāja, hinaus in die Hauslosigkeit. Vasiṣṭha realisierte durch Aufgabe aller Befleckungen die Arhatschaft. Bharadvāja aber lernte durch Studium und Rezitation die drei Piṭakas. Er wurde zum Tripiṭaka, “Kenner des drei Korbs”. Er war ein Prediger von (sach)bezogener und unbefangener Redegabe. Durch ihm wurde ein Haushalter bekehrt. Der ließ für ihn eine mit allen Notwendigkeiten ausgestattete Wohnstatt einrichten. Er wandte sich an seinen Bruder: “Komm, laß uns zusammen wohnen!” Als er dorthin ging, sah ihn der Haushalter. Da er den Arhat, Mönch, erfreulich an Körper und Geist, sah, wurde er von gläubiger Klarheit erfüllt. Zu gläubiger Klarheit gelangt, verehrte er ihn und bekleidete ihn mit einem sehr wertvollen Gewand...¹

Whilst this passage serves to demonstrate that an ideal Bearer of the Three Baskets was envisioned as a great proselytiser, here causing a householder to establish a monastery (*vihāra*) and ultimately creating the possibility of making further donations—in this case, the gift of robes (*vastra*) to Bharadvāja’s brother, the Noble One Vasiṣṭha—we do in fact later learn that Bharadvāja becomes extremely jealous that it was

¹ *bhūtapūrvam bhikṣavo ‘tīte ‘dhvani. aśīivarṣasahasrāyuskāyāṃ prajāyāṃ vipaśyī nāma śāstā loka udapādi tathāgato ‘rhan samyaksaṃbuddho bhagavān. vipaśyinaḥ samyaksaṃbuddhasya pravacanena dvau bhrātarau pravrajitau babhūvatur vasiṣṭho bharadvājas ca. vasiṣṭheṇa sarvakleśaprahāṇād arhattvaṃ sāksātkr̥tam. bharadvājenāpi paṭhatā svādhyāyatā trīṇi piṭakāny adhītāni. tripiṭakāḥ saṃvṛtāḥ. yuktamuktapratibhānaḥ. tena ḡḥapatir anvāvartitaḥ. tena tam uddiśya sarvopakaraṇasaṃpannavihāraḥ kārītaḥ. tena tasya bhrātuḥ saṃvṛttam āgaccaikadhye vāsaṃ kalpayāmaḥ. sa tatra gataḥ tena ḡḥapatinā dr̥ṣṭaḥ. arhad bhikṣuḥ kāyaprāsādikaś cittaprāsādikaś ca dr̥ṣṭvābhiprasannaḥ. sa tena prasādajātena pūjayitvā mahārheṇa ca vastreṇācchādītaḥ...Kaṭh-av. 34b, Almuth Degener, ed., Das Kaṭhināvādāna (Bonn: Indica et Tibetica Verlag, 1990), 62.*

his brother and not he that received the donation. His brother gives him the robe; however, in order to diminish the faith of the householder towards his brother, Bharadvāja, unbeknownst to the householder, presents the robe to his cleaner (*preṣyadārikā*), whom he orders to wear the robe whilst cleaning and, when asked, to say that she received it from a certain Noble One. The householder notices this, asks the cleaner, and receives her reply, as ordered by Bharadvāja. Thereupon the householder becomes unfaithful (*aprasāda*) towards Vasiṣṭha. Thus, due to his manipulating the circumstances in which his brother was falsely accused (*abhyākhyāta*) of passing the robe on, Bharadvāja was reborn in the hells for many hundred billion years.

One narrative in the *Tripitakāvadāna* of the *Avadānaśataka* presents the figure in a wholly positive light. This story relates how the son of King Prasenajit begot a son that was born wearing red robes like a monk and was able to remember his former lives. Upon his birth, the new-born asks, ‘Is the Fortunate One here in Śrāvastī ? Or even the great disciples Śāriputra, Maudgalyāyana, Kāśyapa, Ānanda and the rest?’¹ Learning of this miracle, Prasenajit invites the Fortunate One to his home and introduces him to the Fortunate One. Later, at the age of seven, the boy Tripitaka went forth in the teaching of the Fortunate One and soon realised the nature of the cycle of existence and attained arhatship.

The narrative then abruptly shifts to the outermost narrative frame, and the monks ask the Buddha what actions Tripitaka had performed that led to his having these unusual characteristics from birth. The Buddha then replies with a passage that illustrates precisely the Sarvāstivādin philosophy of causality.²

¹ *sa jātamātraḥ pṛcchati. kiṃ bhagavān ihaiva śrāvastyāṃ Śāriputra-maudgalyāyanakāśyapānandaprabhṛtayo vā mahāśrāvakā iti. Avś 2. 78.*

² See Chapter Thirteen: The Scholastic Basis of Avadānas: Performative Causality.

The actions Tripiṭa had performed in previous lives, monks, have accumulated and amassed, the causes have matured, and necessarily exist, as if in a river. Who else would experience the actions Tripiṭa performed and accumulated? These actions do not ripen in an external earth-element, water-element, light-element, or wind-element; rather they ripen, whether beautiful or ugly, in the acquired bodily elements and spheres.

Actions do not disappear even after a hundred billion aeons,
And aggregating at a certain time, they result in a like
body.¹

He then elaborates upon this philosophical position with a previous life story, where the son of King Kṛkin (our protagonist Tripiṭa) sees Kāśyapa Buddha and sits down in order to hear a teaching. The Buddha discerns his nature and communicates the Dharma in such a way that is emblematic of disgust for the cycle of existence (*tādṛśī saṃsāra-vairāgyikī dharmadeśanā kṛtā*). Hearing this, the prince asks his father if he may be permitted to go forth in the Buddha's teaching. But the king refuses since his consecration as his heir (*yūvarāja*) was nigh. The prince starved himself six times until a companion persuaded the king to concede, lest he die. The king then agreed that as long as he studies the three baskets his presence is not required in court. Studying the Three Baskets, he quickly becomes an eloquent speaker and Dharma-teacher.

¹ *tripiṭenaiva bhikṣavaḥ pūrvam anyāsu jātiṣu karmāṇi kṛtāny upacitāni labdhasaṃbhārāṇi pariṇatapratyayāny oghavatpratyupasthitāny avaśyaṃbhāvīni. tripiṭena karmāṇi kṛtāny upacitāni ko 'nyaḥ pratyānubhaviṣyati. na bhikṣavaḥ karmāṇi kṛtāny upacitāni bāhye pṛthivīdhātau vipacyante, nābdhātau, na tejodhātau, na vāyudhātau, api tūpātteṣv eva skandhasdhātāvāyataneṣu karmāṇi kṛtāni vipacyante śubhāny aśubhāni ca:*

*na praṇaśyanti karmāṇi kalpakoṭīśatair api,
sāmagrīm prāpya kālaṃ ca phalanti khalu dehinām. Avś 2. 79–80.*

However, he realises that having completed his learning, he shall have to honour the former agreement he had reached with his father. Upon returning, he shows his father the Dharma, who because of this allows his son to make offerings to the Buddha. The Buddha is pleased and the prince falls at his feet and makes an aspiration (*prañidhāna*),

By means of this good-root, the arising of this thought and the total relinquishing of this gift-worthy object, may I, wherever I should be born, be born wearing red-robles like a monk and be able to remember former lives.¹

Returning to the present narrative frame, the Buddha then explains that this prince was Tripiṭa and that it was for this reason that he was born a son of a wealthy royal family and able to remember his previous lives.²

These narratives present two views. On the one hand, they describe the Bearer of the Three Baskets as having great institutional power by virtue of their having certain rhetorical skills and an ability to acquire donations. However, the stories are notably suspicious in regards to the institutional power of these figures—the figures are either said to abuse their power or were wily in their usage of oratory abilities. The bearing these narratives have on Buddhāmitrā, Bala, and

¹ *anenāhaṃ kuśalamūlena cittotpādena deyadharmāparityāgena ca yatra yatra jāyeya tatra tatra kāṣāyavastraṇṇāvrta eva śramaṇaveśadhārī jātismaraś ca syām iti*. Avś 2. 81.

² In the *Dharmarucyavadāna* another past life story of Śākyamuni describes a monk and Bearer of the Three Baskets who has the nature of a Bodhisatva (*bodhisatvajānīya*). He taught a man who was doer of bad deeds (*duṣkarakarmakārin*) and had burnt down a monastery, killing many monks. The wrongdoer built a new monastery and sought a teaching from the Bearer of the Three Baskets, who taught him to recite, *namo buddhāya, namo dharmāya, namaḥ saṃghāya*, at all times and advised that if at any time he is able to hear the Buddha's voice he shall attain mindfulness (*smṛti*). When the monk he was reborn among the gods, whereas the man was reborn in the hells. Divy 261.

Buddhananda from inscriptions is thus difficult to determine, beyond their being viewed as exponents of the Sarvāstivāda and for their securing patronage from the Kuṣāṇas. It is perhaps, therefore, the descriptions that arise most often in connection with these titles, which describe them as being Dharma-teachers with eloquent rhetoric (*dharmakathikā yuktamuktapratibhānā*) and as having an ability to obtain donations, that are most applicable here and give a glimpse into the nature of the status of these historical figures.

The presence of these related monastic reciters, Dharma-teachers, and Bearers of the Three Baskets in donative inscriptions, therefore, indicates that these individuals served specific roles in ritual contexts, due to their ability to teach the Dharma effectively on ritual occasions and convince audiences of the merits of the Buddhist teaching. They were, namely, trained propagandists, tasked with furthering the institutional interests of the Buddhist community.

PART THREE: DONATIVE PRACTICE

It cannot be ignored that the social history detailed in the foregoing derives largely from inscriptions, whose primary purpose is to record acts of giving. Donative rituals thus constitute a primary context in which the individuals and institutions of this period interacted—it was the very forum of their social relation. Having detailed some of the historical and sociological dimensions of the institutions and individuals of the Indic North and Northwest, what remains to be considered is precisely how these agents liaised within the donative ritual, what tenets of Buddhist ideology informed their practice, and the individual elements that constitute the ritual frame.

For fear of turning well-trodden ground into bog, the purpose of the following chapters is not to analyse donative practice in its totality. Studies into giving practices are numerous, both in its theoretical aspects as a universal phenomenon as well as in the context of Indic Buddhism. The reason for these studies' abundance is simple: donative behaviour is quite simply ubiquitous. Doctrinally, the principle of generosity (*dāna*) is common to all strands of Buddhist literature and hence endless enumerations of this principle and modes of its enactment are bestrewn throughout these sources. Indeed, the very institutional existence of Buddhism was entirely predicated on the economic support of society

and therefore it was in the interests of institutional Buddhism to clearly define and propagate gifting behavioural norms among the populace in which it subsisted. More widely still, it would be no overstatement to say that every material object, every substantial thing one deals with, from entire monastic complexes, to pieces of art and architecture, manuscript, coin, or the smallest bead, was at some stage a gift in its biography. As a consequence, it would simply be unfeasible to focus on all modes of donative practice in the North and Northwest, for the multitudinous pieces of evidence for it present equally innumerable lines of possible analysis.

The task of the following chapters is to reconstruct the donative ritual, primarily on the basis of donative inscriptions and related Buddhist narrative literature. Donative inscriptions are designed to record an event—a donative act—and do so in a broadly formulaic fashion, stating a combination of the following: [1] the time at which a donation made, stipulating the year of a dynastic or regnal era and the month, day and constellation; [2] a named donation, ranging from pots to relics, stupas, statues and entire monastic complexes; [3] the names of donors, participants, and beneficiaries, along with titles identifying an individual relationally (e.g., in terms of kinship) or categorically (e.g., in terms of social status or occupation); and [4] the purposes of the donation—the epigraphic aspiration—stating the benefits that are to be experienced as a result of a donative act, which often draw on doctrinal formulas known to Buddhist literature. Indeed, at each of these levels, certain correspondences can be seen in strands of Buddhist narrative literature and a central purpose of the following is to establish these nexuses. Together, these factors enable a close analysis of the temporality, materiality, sociality, and ideology of donative practice in the Indic North and Northwest.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: TIME AND PRACTICE

Time in the context of donative epigraphy serves two functions. The first is political, insofar as dated inscriptions, in stipulating the years of a regnal or dynastic era, conform to politicised calendric norms.¹ This element affords the possibility of determining a political agenda or the historical significance of a donative act, for instance, if enacted in the inaugural years of a new ruler. The second is ritualistic, whereby specific times—a day (*divasa*), month (*māsa*), season (*ṛtu*), or constellation (*nakṣatra*)—held certain astrological significance and as such determined the temporal suitability of ritual practice. This latter component documents the relation between time and practice; if the time of a donation conforms to known ritual models, such as the commonly marked lunar and seasonal phases, then delineations of normative behaviours in texts may be extrapolated to epigraphic contexts to determine specific elements or qualities of the ritual on the ground. In the process of establishing an inscribed object, it was essential that knowledge concerning both functions were introduced, cementing both the social and ideological elements of the ritual.

Before turning to the specific dates and patterns of ritual temporality in inscriptions, it is necessary to take up the question of the general relationship between time and rituality in the Indic Buddhist tradition. Ritual practice is a notably understudied tenet of Buddhist

¹ See Chapter Two: Dynastic and Regnal Eras.

thought in the ancient Indic context and the ritual aspect of time also occupies a rather unusual place in Buddhist literature, the result being that both phenomena have little clarity in scholarship. An overview of their relationship is thus an imperative in determining the true informants of donative practice in the context of the North and Northwest. We shall observe that the relation between time and practice in inscriptions is to a certain degree textually normative and does indeed conform to known ritual modi. However, an overarching rhythm of behaviour was uncovered in these inscriptions, which does not strictly pertain to Buddhist ritual and rather, as will be shown, corresponds to broader patterning of administrative and economic behaviour.

CALCULATING TIME

A concern with time is perhaps one of the earliest identifiable and most prevalent aspects of Indic knowledge. Systems of calendric astronomy (*jyotiṣa*), first evident in the *Vedas* (c. 2000–400 BCE), traced the ecliptic of the sun (*sūrya*) in terms of its northern (*uttarayāna*) and southern (*dakṣiṇāyana*) paths as well as the progressions of the moon (*candra*) and other planets (*graha*) in respect to the twenty-seven (or twenty-eight) constellations (*nakṣatra*) in order to determine a specific temporal mensuration; including days-and-nights (*rātri*), half-months (*pakṣa*), months (*māsa*), and intercalary months (*adhimāsa*), seasons (*ṛtu*), half-years (*ayana*), and years (*varṣa*), as well as lengthier periods (*yuga*), and aeons (*kalpa*). Beyond specific calendric concerns, which were no doubt tied to agriculture, astronomy also informed modes of ritual behaviour and penetrated cosmological schemas; the cyclical motions of astral bodies were marked by regular ritual occasions and the array of constellations and planets personified by the gods. Ritual and

cosmological systems thus served as concrete behavioural markers and representations for what was observed in the sky above.

In the early period, the length of a year was calculated on the basis of a sexagesimal system and ideally constructed so that it lasted exactly 12 months, each lasting 30 days, which together totalled 360 days. The basis of the calendar was lunar, with the beginning of each month reckoned from either the new moon (*āmanta*) or full moon (*pūrṇimānta*) and determined by the conjunction of the full moon with a specific constellation (*nakṣatra*), whence the month takes its name—e.g., the lunar month *Pauṣa* is named after the conjunction between the full moon and the constellation *puṣya*. Since the true lunar year is approx. 354 days, six days shy of the ideal year, a five-year *yuga* was proposed to rectify the difference between the two, whereby an ideal month of 30 days would be intercalated every five years, i.e., $(360-354) \times 5 = 30$. Although this system was highly inaccurate, as it did not explicitly account for the solar year,¹ it was widely employed in Indic ritual praxis, Buddhist or otherwise, and thus certain ritual occasions that followed the lunar, seasonal, or yearly cycle were enacted at a pan-Indic level. These include such occasions as the *upavasatha*, practised in

¹ David Pingree argues that the lack of any precise mathematical basis for the calendar, namely, that a lunisolar calendar was not in use, indicates temporal calculations were purely ritualistic in nature. David Pingree, 'History of Mathematical Astronomy in India', *Dictionary of Scientific Biography* 15 (1978): 534–36. More recently, scholars such as Subhash Kak have expostulated against Pingree's views and sought to demonstrate that the *Vedas* do indeed evince lunisolar astronomy and precise numerical values that correspond to the movement of astral phenomena: thus the number of verses, syllables, and words in the *Ṛgveda*, as well as the number of bricks comprising the Vedic altar (*vedi*), relate to planetary movements. For some succinct views on this matter, see Subhash Kak, 'Birth and Early Development of Indian Astronomy', in *Astronomy Across Cultures: The History of Non-Western Astronomy*, ed. Helaine Selin (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000), 303–40.

accordance with the lunar phases of the month, the *cāturmāsya* (‘quadrimstral ritual’), practised thrice yearly to mark the end of the seasons, and the elusive *pañcavārṣika* (‘quinquennial ritual’), which was likely conducted every five years.¹

In successive stages of development, Indic astronomy became increasingly more mathematical. More precise calculations were introduced to the calendar, including the *muhūrta* (48 mins), calculated using the water clock or gnomon (*śaṅku*),² and the *tithi* (lunar day),³ which are first attested in *Jyotiṣavedāna* of Lagadha, composed in c. 4th century BCE. For some, and most notably David Pingree, these developments should be attributed to the influence of Babylonian astronomy transmitted during the Persian, Greek, and Mauryan Empires (6th–2nd century BCE). Similarly, later mathematical developments, producing ever more precise calendars, such as the 165-year solar *yuga* of Sphujidhvaja’s *Yavanajātaka*, translated in 269 CE,⁴ and systems of

¹ For an elucidation of the *pañcavārṣika* in Buddhist sources and some possible astronomical explanations for the temporality of the festival as relative to the sexagesimal system and the five-year *yuga*, see Max Deeg, ‘Origins and Developments of the Buddhist Pañcavārṣika – Part I: India and Central Asia’, *Nagoya Studies in Indian Culture and Buddhism* 16 (1995): 67–90.

² According to Jacobi, pre-Hellenistic India knew three methods of measuring a nychthemeron (*ahorātra*): a) the water-clock measures every sixtieth of water that escapes a vessel (*kumbha*) through a hole, which is equal to a *nāḍikā*=0.5 *muhūrta* (24 mins); b) the gnomon measures the length of a shade (*pauruṣī*) with a stick, thus determining the period of the day after sunrise. Hermann Jacobi, ‘Einteilung des Tages und Zeitmessung im alten Indien’, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 74 (1920): 250ff.

³ According to Pingree, the *tithi* is a Babylonian value. This surmise is far from certain, however, and the etymology is, as Mayrhofer describes, ‘schwierig’. Precisely it designates the ‘Zeitraum, den der Mond braucht, um auf seiner Bahn um die Erde sich 12° vorwärts zu bewegen’ and derives perhaps from *kathi-thá* – ‘what is the date’. Mayrhofer, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindiarischen. Band I*, 646.

⁴ See Chapter Two: The Era of Kaniṣka I.

divination and astrology are said to have been introduced under the influence of ‘Graeco-Babylonian’ thought.¹ Although the overly broad strokes of Pingree’s developmental model of Indic astronomy are perhaps as accurate as the textual sources allow, his apparent robbery of the Indic sphere of its own astronomical innovations has since been questioned with fervour, and such scholars as Harry Falk² have shown a lack of congruency between Mesopotamian and Indic astronomic systems and others such as K. S. Shukla³ and Bill Mak⁴ have bettered Pingree’s edition of the *Yavanajātaka* and refuted his claim that the text is based on Greek systems of astronomy, as it evinces a system entirely alien to any transmitted Greek knowledge.

By the time we reach the turn of the Common Era in the North and Northwest, the firm principles of mathematical astronomy had been long established. This is evinced by the corpus of Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions, which represent the first historically definable evidence of Iranian and Greek calendric systems in the Indic sphere. Month names therein are often derived from these respective calendars, and in some rare cases, systems of intercalation were demonstrably achieved on the basis of a

¹ David Pingree, ‘Astronomy and Astrology in India and Iran’, *Isis* 54, no. 2 (1963): 231; David Pingree, ‘Indian Astronomy’, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 122, no. 6 (1978): 361.

² Falk has demonstrated that certain Mesopotamian and Indic calendric structures—the number of months, for example—are decidedly incongruent. Harry Falk, ‘Measuring time in Mesopotamia and ancient India’, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 150, no. 1 (2000): 107–32.

³ K. S. Shukla, ‘The Yuga of the Yavanajātaka: David Pingree’s Text and Translation Reviewed’, *Indian Journal of History of Science* 24, no. 4 (1989): 211–23.

⁴ Mak, ‘The Date and Nature of Sphujidhvaja’s Yavanajātaka Reconsidered in the Light of Some Newly Discovered Materials’; Bill M. Mak, ‘The “Oldest Indo-Greek Text in Sanskrit Revisited: Additional Readings from the Newly Discovered Manuscript of the Yavanajātaka’, *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies* 62, no. 3 (2014): 1101–5.

Macedonian lunisolar calendar.¹ Equally, such textual works of astronomy and astrology as the *Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna*² and the aforementioned *Yavanajātaka* reveal that the Greek Zodiac and solar calendar had become amalgamated with the Indic *nakṣatra* system, whereby the year, which was previously lunar, came to be calculated according to a solar reckoning with the sun's transit (*saṃkrānti*) into Aries (Skt. *Meṣa*), the first month of the year at 0° on the ecliptic, whilst the months retained their Sanskrit appellations. Thus, when the new moon of the first lunar month *Caitra* falls in the solar month of Aries, the solar month takes the name *Caitra*, and if two new moons fall in the

¹ See Chapter Two: The Eras of Azes I.

² The only true Buddhist contribution to astronomy is represented by the *Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna*. This text was apparently quite popular and there are ten witnesses extant in four languages, including, Sanskrit, Chinese, Tibetan, and Uighur. The oldest is regarded to be the Central Asian version, a paper manuscript, written in a Gupta Brāhmī script (c. 4th century CE) that was found in the late 19th century in Kuigar, Xinjiang. This manuscript was recently edited and published by Miyazaki Tenshō, Jundo Nagashima, and Zhou Liqun. They observe that this version corresponds quite closely to the 舍頭諫太子二十八宿經, translated by Dharmarakṣa 竺法護, 307–313 CE. Miyazaki, Tensho, Jundo Nagashima, and Zhou Liqun, eds., 'The Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna from Central Asia', in *The St. Petersburg Sanskrit Fragments (StPSF)*, Buddhist Manuscripts from Central Asia 1 (Tokyo: The Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences and The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhism, 2015), 2. Another manuscript from Nepal, the first to be edited, was partially included by Cowell and Neil in their edition of the *Divyāvadāna*. Divy. 33. E. B. Cowell and R. A. Neil, eds., *The Divyāvadāna: A Collection of Buddhist Legends. Now First Edited from the Nepalese Mss in Cambridge and Paris* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1886), 611ff. This same manuscript has since received a full edition, Sujitkumar Mukhopadhyaya, ed., *The Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna* (Santiniketan: Visva-Bharati, 1954). Overall the text has received very little attention in scholarship. A short study and fairly helpful summary of its contents has been published by Sharmistha Sharma, *Astrological Lore in the Buddhist Shārdūlakarṇāvadāna* (Delhi: Eastern Book Linkers, 1992).

solar month *Caitra*, then there were two lunar months *Caitra*, one consistent (*nija*) and the other intercalary (*adhika*).¹

For the Buddhists in the Northwest, it was apparently this system that came to be used to determine the dates of the Buddha's biography. The notion arose that the Buddha, presumably for his having a bull-like quality (*vr̥ṣabhatā*), was born in the second solar month of Taurus (Skt. *vr̥ṣabha*), which in the Indic calendar corresponds to *Vaiśākha*. This assimilation can be seen rendered on relief art from the region, wherein Taurus is depicted in the form of a bull in the scene of the Great Renunciation.²

BUDDHISM AND TIME

Buddhism arose at a time when astronomy was already an entrenched feature of Indic knowledge and developed in environs where mathematical astronomy had become increasingly precise. As others have rightly noted, it is therefore highly unusual that precise details of astral phenomena are largely absent from early Buddhist sources.³ Explanations for this lacuna have tended to resort to the general premise

¹ For a summary and tabular presentation of the Indic and Greek calendric systems, see Golzio, 'The Calendar Systems of Ancient India and Their Spread to South-East Asia'.

² The development of this biographical tradition is detailed in Henry Albery, 'Astro-Biographies of Śākyamuni and the Great Renunciation in Gandhāran Art', in *From Local to Global. Papers in Asian History and Culture. Prof. A. K. Narain Commemoration Volume. Vol. II*, ed. Kamal Sheel, Charles Willemen, and Kenneth Zysk (Delhi: Buddhist World Press, 2017), 346–82.

³ Randolph W. Kloetzli, *Buddhist Cosmology: Science and Theology in the Images of Motion and Light* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1989), 46.

that Buddhists were diametrically opposed to Vedic knowledge.¹ For Johannes Bronkhorst, the very reason they did not make notable contributions in the fields of astronomy, astrology, and mathematics is for the simple reason they were regarded a Brahmanical ‘pseudo-science’ (*tiracchānavijjā*); the only Buddhist contribution to the knowledge of time, the *Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna*, is even framed as Brahmanical.² The ambivalence towards, or indeed outright rejection of time and its applications is certainly quite striking. It is not uncommon to come across injunctions against the very practice of astrology,³ and in a number of places the ontological status of astral phenomena is seen to be a degradation of worldly existence, attributed to the actions of beings.⁴

¹ The early Buddhists were aware of Vedic sacrifices, right down to the specific names of the rituals and the instruments that were used, and many texts contain polemics, expressing opposition to certain aspects of the Vedic ritual, such as the sacrifice of animals or *soma*. Harry Falk, ‘Vedische Opfer im Pali-Kanon’, *Bulletin des etudes indiennes* 6 (1988): 225–54.

² Bronkhorst, *Buddhism in the Shadow of Brahmanism*, 126ff.

³ Famously it is stated in the *Brahmajālasutta*: ‘Whereas some ascetics and Brahmins make their living by such base arts as predicting an eclipse of the moon, the sun, a star; that the sun and moon will go on their proper course—will go astray; that a star will go on its proper course—will go astray; that there will be a shower of meteors, a blaze in the sky, an earthquake, thunder; a rising, setting, darkening, brightening of the moon, the sun, the stars; and ‘such will be the outcome of these things’, the ascetic Gotama refrains from such base arts and the wrong means of livelihood.’ Maurice Walshe, trans., *The Long Discourse of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995), 72.

⁴ An aetiological account of the world’s origins in the *Agāṇṇasutta* (‘discourse on origins’), describes a process in which the ‘contracting’ (*saṃvaṭṭamāna*) of the world (*loka*) causes beings on the earth to be reborn in the ‘radiant’ (*ābhassara*) heaven where ‘they are mind-made, feed on joy, are self-luminous and fly through the air’: *te tattha honti manomayā pītibhakkhā sayampabhā attalikkha*. After some time begins the ‘expanding’ (*vivaṭṭamāna*) of the world (*loka*), beginning in a state of complete darkness without the moon, sun, or the stars. Beings retain their aforementioned state of self-luminosity, yet when they

With this aversion to the art of calculating time, it is perhaps unsurprising to find that early Buddhism is less concerned about establishing a normative relation between time and donative practice and more about its ‘timeliness’. Thus, in the *Kāladānasutta* five such ‘timelinesses’ (*kāla*) and ‘circumstances’ (*thāna*) are enumerated.

Monks, there are these five timely gifts. What five? One gives a gift to a visitor. One gives a gift to one setting out on a journey. One gives a gift to a patient. One gives a gift during the famine. One first presents the newly harvested crops and fruits to the virtuous ones.¹

Apart from the fifth donative act, which derives presumably from a seasonal agricultural model, we can see here that normative models of donative practice had not seen fit to establish a precise system of the ritual time.

Early Brāhmī inscriptions, for instance from Bharhut and Sāñcī (c. 2nd century BCE) are also silent in regards to ritual time; that is, in

eat the earth’s essence (*rāsapaṭhavī*), the astral phenomena of the heavens as we know them unfolds:

sattānaṃ sayampabhā antaradhāyi. sayampabhāya antarahitāya candi-masuriyā pātur ahaṃsu. candimasuriyesu pātubhutesu, nakkhattāni tārakārūpāni pātur ahaṃsu, rattindivā paññāyiṃsu. rattindivesu paññāyamānesu, māsaddhamāsā paññāyiṃsu. māsaddhamāsesu paññāyamānesu utusaṃvaccharā paññāyiṃsu. DN 3. 85-86.

The beings’ self-luminosity disappeared. When their self-luminosity had disappeared, the moon and sun appeared. When the moon and sun appeared, the constellations, the twinkling stars appeared, and night and day were discerned. Discerning night and day, half-months and months were discerned. Discerning half-months and months, the seasons and years were known.

¹ See AN 3. 41, translation from Bhikkhu Bodhi, trans., *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha. A Translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya* (Bristol: Wisdom Publications, 2012), 661.

distinction to donative inscriptions from the North and Northwest they are undated. Whether this indicates a lack of temporal knowledge in Buddhist circles, a lack of concern therewith, or simply that ritual time was important but not stipulated in writing, is not clear. (Although the former solution does have some textual precedence, to which we shall presently turn.)

We should not, however, apply without nuance or restriction, as Bronkhorst does, a generally observable reticence to engage with astronomy and define ritual time in early Buddhist sources to Buddhist practice *in toto*. Early textual sources in fact evince quite regularly both explicit and implicit elements of calendric astronomy. Basic premises of astral knowledge are therefore to be found underlying throughout Buddhist literary corpora. Examples predominantly concern phases in ritual behaviour,¹ or stray references to astral bodies and idiomatic uses of astral analysis that often have little context.² And whilst none of these

¹ For example, the night (*rātri*) is split into three units called ‘watches’ (*yāma*): a ‘first watch’ (*prathamayāma*), consisting of six *ghāṭikas* (equal to three *muhūrtas*, or 144 mins), ‘middle watch’ (*madhyayāma*), consisting of two *ghāṭikas* (equal to one *muhūrta*, or 48 mins) and the ‘final watch’ (*paścimayāma*), consisting of four *ghāṭikas* (equal to two *muhūrtas*, or 96 mins). This division is commonplace to literature and was widely used to stratify stages of meditative practice and to attribute specific attainments to each watch—the Buddha in his final meditation attained three types of knowledge (*viññā*) in each respective watch: [1] of past lives (*pubbenivāsaṃ*), [2] of beings’ causal arising (*yathākammūpaga*), and [3] the four noble truths. See e.g., AN 4. 177–179; MN 1. 21–23.

² It is not uncommon to find references to *osadhī tārakā*, the ‘healing star’, or ‘morning star’, i.e., Venus. For example, in an enumeration of the ‘eight stages of mastery’ (*aṭṭhamañ abhibhāyatanañ*): ‘Not perceiving forms internally, one sees external forms that are white, of white colour, of white lustre, just as the morning-star Osadhi is white.’ See DN 2. 11; MN 2. 14; 34, translation from, Walshe, *The Long Discourse of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*, 250. For further discussion, see Pingree, ‘Astronomy and Astrology in India and Iran’, 232.

features speak for a Buddhist contribution to astronomy by any means, they often serve as important reflections for the development of Indic astronomy—Buddhist sources are in many ways a mirror for the popular astral knowledge of a given period.

UPOṢADHA

Most fundamental of the Buddhists' applications of the time was to determine the occasions of ritual practices marking the lunar cycle. Most central and regular of these was (and indeed remains) the *upoṣadha*:¹ a quarter monthly event enacted on the eighth and the fourteenth or fifteenth days of the bright fortnight (*śuklapakṣa*) and dark fortnight (*kr̥ṣṇapakṣa*) of the lunar month, i.e., the days of the new, crescent, full and gibbous moons. These occasions represented a chief rhythmic component of monastics' lives, providing a consistent structure that not only regulated individual and group practice within a monastic context but also governed social interactions between monastic institutions and others outside it. For monastics, the primary purpose of the *upoṣadha* on the fourteenth or fifteenth days was to recite the *prātimokṣa*, a list of shared monastic rules and behaviours (*karma*)² that govern community cohesion, and to make confessions (*mānāpya/mānatva*) regarding one's poor conduct in order that a monastic may articulate their purity (*pariśuddhi*) and acceptability to attend ritual occasions. For male and

¹ BHS. *poṣadha, upoṣadha, poṣatha*; G. *uvosasa*; P. *posatha, uposatha*; Pkt. *posaha*; Skt. *pauṣadha, upavasatha*.

² Accurately defined as: '[*karma* ist] ins geregelte System des Zusammenlebens der buddhistischen Mönche (*bhikṣu*) eingebaut und weist einen stark rituellen Charakter'. Jin-il Chung, ed., *Die Pravāraṇā in den kanonischen Vinaya-Texten der Mūlasarvāstivādin und der Sarvāstivādin* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 17.

female lay-practitioners (*upāsaka/upāsikā*) the *upoṣadha* on the eighth day of the fortnight was primarily an opportunity to adopt semi-monastic observances (*vrata*), normally five or eight,¹ as well as to make donations² and to hear the Dharma.³

The origin of the *upoṣadha* itself is rather murky and no consensus has been reached as to the source and temporality of its genesis. Some suggest that it derives from the Brahmanical tradition of *upavasatha* (‘fasting’), enacted before sacrifice, whilst others challenge the bias of attributing Vedic origins to this and other practices and

¹ The P. *uposathaṅga* consists in abstaining from: [1] taking life (*pāṇātipāta*), [2] taking what is not given (*adinnadāna*), [3] sexual activities (*abrahmacariya*), [4] false speech (*musāvāda*), [5] a state of carelessness in respect to liquor, wine and intoxicants (*surāmerayamajjapamādaṭṭhāna*), [6] eating at night (*rattūparata*) and outside proper times (*vikālabhojana*), [7] dancing, singing, music, watching performances, wearing garlands, perfumes, and ointments and adorning oneself with decorations (*naccagītavādita-visūkadassanāmālāgandhavilepanadhāraṇmaṇḍanavibhūsanatṭhāna*), and [8] sleeping on raised and great beds (*uccāsayanamahāsayana*). AN 1. 211–212.

² For instance in the *Supriyāvadāna*, we are told that on the day of the ritual marking the end of the monsoon (*pravāraṇā*), a lunar and quadrimestral festival (*cāturmāsya*), a group of merchants gathered to worship the Fortunate One. Divy 91.

³ Haiyan Hu-von Hinüber makes a distinction between the usages of *poṣadha* and *upoṣadha*. She finds that the former designates the fourteenth and fifteen days of the lunar month upon which ordained monastics recite the *prātimokṣasūtra* and make confessions, whereas the latter refers to four days in the lunar month—the eighth and fourteenth or fifteenth days of each fortnight (*paṅsa*)—which, in distinction to the former, serve as ritual days for lay-practitioners. Upon these days lay practitioners either visit monasteries or invite monastics to their home in order to receive instruction in the Dharma and in reciprocation give food and drink, observe fasting (*upavāsa*), renew the five, eight or ten-fold vows of abstinence and meditate throughout the night. Haiyan Hu-von Hinüber, *Das Poṣadhavastu. Vorschriften für die buddhistische Beichtfeier im Vinaya der Mūlasarvāstivādins* (Reinbek: Verlag für Orientalistische Fachpublikationen, 1994), 9–10. This distinction is not ubiquitously observed in Buddhist texts.

maintain that it was a ‘broader cultural phenomenon, which was gradually adapted and factionalised’ among Buddhist, Jain, etc., renunciant movements.¹ As Haiyan Hu-von Hinüber points out, we can only be certain of its existence from the time of Aśoka, where the term *posatha* first arises in his edicts as a pan-Indic ritual behaviour and not a specifically Buddhist one.² In this case, when considered as a primarily collective behavioural mode, it would correspond perhaps to the beginnings of institutional Buddhism, as observed above.³ However, a minimum of four, three, or two monks (and in rare instances a single monk) was required to be within a residence (*āvāsa*) in order to conduct the ritual⁴ and this is hardly a sign of specifically gross institutional behaviour.

Some take the view that the introduction of the *prātimokṣa* recitations could well have occurred at an earlier stage and even at the time of the Buddha.⁵ Charles Prebish for example draws our attention to an important passage of the *Mahāpadānasutta*, set during the previous aeon of the Buddha Vipasīyin, which states monks are free to wander but should assemble every six years in order to recite the *prātimokṣa*.⁶ We

¹ Christian Haskett, ‘Uposatha and Posaha in the Early Histories of Jainism and Buddhism’, *Śramana* 62, no. 1 (2011): 39–52; Benjamin Schonthal, ‘Untangling Uposatha: Indology, Etymologic, History in Buddhist Studies’, *Sagar* 16 (2006): 51–65.

² Hinüber, *Das Poṣadhavastu. Vorschriften für die buddhistische Beichtfeier im Vinaya der Mūlasarvāstivādins*, 6–7.

³ See Chapter Nine: Monastic Institutions.

⁴ Vin 1. 124–125.

⁵ Dutt, *Early Buddhist Monachism. 600 B.C - 100 B.C*, 72ff.

⁶ DN 2. 46ff; see also MVS 14–15. Discussed in Charles S. Prebish, ‘The Prātimokṣa Puzzle: Fact versus Fantasy’, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 94, no. 2 (1974): 169. This *pātimokkha* is contained in a series of verses that are found as appendages to the full *Prātimokṣasūtras* of the various monastic traditions and are widely regarded as the oldest kernel and remnant of the original sutra. Those in the *Mahāpadānasutta* read as follows:

learn that counting the years, in this case, was not the responsibility of the wandering monks but rather, due to the inability to reckon time, the gods would announce annually how many years remain before the assembly was due.¹

Patient forbearance is the highest sacrifice,
 Supreme is Nibbāna, so say the Buddhas.
 He's not 'one gone forth' who hurts others,
 No ascetic he who harms another.
 Not to do any evil, but cultivate the good,
 To purify one's mind, this the Buddhas teach.
 Not insulting, not harming, restraint according to rule,
 Moderation in food, seclusion of dwelling,
 Devotion to high thinking, this the Buddha's teaching.

Translation from Walshe, *The Long Discourse of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*, 219.

¹ Assuming that the number of years between recitations was not plucked out of thin air, the six-year period is itself a matter of interest, representing a clue as to the awareness of astronomy amongst the Buddhist composers of these early suttas. It is likely that in the earlier phases of Vedic astronomy there was a six-year period (*yuga*), based on the sexagesimal system, in which a civil year consisted of 360 days, twelve months, each of thirty days, and five or six seasons. On the basis of a verse in the *Atharvaveda*, K.D. Abhyankar conjectures that this system, in its earliest phases, demanded an intercalary month (*adhikamāsa*) of thirty days be intercalated every six years—*saṃvatsara*, *parivatsara*, *idāvatsara*, *idvatsara*, *iduvatsara*, *vatsara*—in order to rectify the difference between the civil year and the tropical year of 365.25 days. K. D. Abhyankar, 'History of Indian Astronomy', in *New Challenges in Astrophysics*, ed. Thanu Padmanabhan (New Delhi: New Age International, 1997), 38ff.

*ahorātrair vimitaṃ triṃśadaṅgaṃ trayodaśaṃ māsaṃ yo nirmimīte,
 tasya devasya kruddhasyaitad āgo ya evaṃ vidvāṃsaṃ brāhmaṇaṃ
 jināti,*

udvepaya rohita prakṣiṇīhi brahmajyasya pratimuñca pāsān. Ath-v. 13. 3. 8, William Dwight Whitney and Rudolf von Roth, eds., *Atharvavedasamhitā* (Berlin: Ferd. Dümmler, 1856).

He (Rohita) who creates the thirtieth month, consisting of thirty parts and constructed with days and nights,

By all Buddhist accounts the *upoṣadha* is held to have existed among the Brahmin (Skt. *upavāsatha*), Jain (Pkt. *posaha*), Ājīvika and Gopālaka traditions prior to its introduction into Buddhist practice.¹ Narratives concerning the introduction of the practice are retained in various *Vinayas*, which differ, however, as to the reason for its adoption. For the Sarvāstivādins, Mūlasarvāstivādins, and Mahāsāṃghikas, the *upoṣadha* was instituted in response to the criticism of others for not observing these ritual days; for the Theravādins, Mahīśāsakas and Dharmaguptakas, it was King Bimbisāra of Magadha that persuaded the Buddha to initiate the event.² Taking the latter case as an example, at the beginning of the second chapter of the *Mahāvagga* in the *Theravādinaya*, King Bimbisāra says:

At present wanderers belonging to other sects, having collected on the fourteenth, fifteenth, and eighth days [?]³ of the half-month, speak the *dhamma*. These people go up to them to hear the *dhamma*. They gain affection for the wanderers, they gain faith (in them), the wanderers belonging to other sects gain adherents. Suppose the masters should

This angry god's transgression conquers the learned *brāhmaṇa*,
Make him tremble, Rohita, destroy and release him from the bonds of
Brahmas oppression.

There is no specific mention of the six-year *yuga* or the names of the individual years in the Vedas. A listing of the above named six years does occur in the rather late *Brahmāṇḍamahāpurāṇa*, BndP 3. 32. 15–16, Śrī-Venkateśvara, ed., *Brahmāṇḍa-Mahā-Purāṇa* (Bombai, 1857).

¹ AN 1. 205–206.

² See Hinüber, *Das Poṣadhavastu. Vorschriften für die buddhistische Beichtfeier im Vinaya der Mūlasarvāstivādins*, 3–4.

³ I mark the temporal mensuration of 'day' with '[?]', since the specific value is supplied as an interpretation by Horner and is not self-evidently correct.

also collect together on fourteenth, fifteenth, and eighth days
[?] of the half-month.¹

The same passage also states that there was a want in the monastics' knowledge of calendric astronomy and at times this became an issue. In *Vinaya* sources, monastics are often self-portrayed as being totally ignorant in regards to time, that they were subsequently the objects of social criticism, and thus at some point were forced to count the days. The fact that they were forced, coerced even, arises quite prominently again in the chapter of *Mahāvagga* just quoted.

At a time when the monks were walking for alms, the people asked them: 'Sirs, what [day?]² of the fortnight is it?' 'We do not know, friends', the monks replied. The people were annoyed, angered, and irritated: 'These monks, sons of Sakya, do not even know the reckoning of a fortnight, how then can they know anything else worthwhile (*kalyāṇa*)?' The monks made this matter known to the Fortunate One, [who said]: 'I allow you, monks, to take up the reckoning of a fortnight.' Then it occurred to the monks: 'Exactly who should take up the reckoning of a fortnight?' They made this matter known to the Fortunate One, [who said]: 'I allow you all, monks, to take up the reckoning of the fortnight.'³

¹ Vin 1. 101, translation from I. B. Horner, trans., *The Book of Discipline (Vinaya-Piṭaka) Vol. IV (Mahāvagga)* (London: Luzac and Company, 1951), 130.

² Here the exact temporal measure (e.g., day, night etc.) is not given and must be supplied. Since the question marker *katimī* is fem. it subsequently cannot agree with *diva* or *divasa* in the masc. and neut. respectively and would suggest *ratti* ('night'), *velā* ('time'), or perhaps *tithi*, although this latter is unlikely.

³ *tena kho pana samayena manussā bhikkhū piṇḍāya carante pucchanti: katimī bhante pakkhassā 'ti. bhikkhū evaṃ āhaṃsu: na kho mayaṃ āvuso jānāmā 'ti.*

This passage illustrates two points. First, at one time or another, monks were not able to tell the time, lacking either the capacity, the necessity, or will. Second, for society, knowledge of the time was ‘worthwhile’ (*kalyāṇa*),¹ and the monks were forced to concede in order to meet society’s demands. Perhaps their concession, as this short passage suggests, was simply to alleviate any misgivings that the people had as to the monks’ usefulness. However, in the wider context of the second chapter of the *Mahāvagga*, it becomes clear that the major ground for their compromise was exclusively ritualistic in nature—they needed to determine the time of the *upoṣadha*. It is therefore not unlikely that the introduction of reckoning (*gaṇanā*) coincided with the introduction of the *upoṣadha*. Thereafter, time became a necessary tenet of daily monastic activity: a monk was expected to announce the specific date before arranging bedding, seating and incense,² as well as to know the time of their ordination, which was used to determine their position in the monastic hierarchy and their order of access to certain items such as bowls and cells.³

Despite uncertainty as to the role of astronomy in the early period, what is abundantly clear is that time had become an integral component

manussā ujjhayanti khīyanti vipācenti: pakkhagaṇanamattam p’ ime samaṇā Sakyaputtiyā na jānanti, kiṃ pan’ ime aññaṃ kiñci kalyāṇaṃ jānissantīti. bhagavato etam atthaṃ ārocesum. anujānāmi bhikkhave pakkhagaṇanaṃ uggahetun ti. atha kho bhikkhūnaṃ etad ahoṣi: kena nu kho pakkhagaṇanā uggahetabbā ‘ti. bhagavato etam atthaṃ ārocesum. anujānāmi bhikkhave sabbe’ eva pakkhagaṇanaṃ uggahetun ti. Vin 1. 117.

¹ ‘Good’. Horner, *The Book of Discipline (Vinaya-Piṭaka) Vol. IV (Mahāvagga)*, 154.

² Schopen, *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters*, 227.

³ Śāy-v 314v8–314v9. The respective times of monks’ ordinations determined hierarchy within a monastic institution. Those who are ordained earlier, for example the *sthavira* and *dvitiyasthavira*, had the first choice when it came to receiving certain items such as bowls and cells. I would like to thank Shono Masanori for pointing me to this passage.

of Buddhist thought in the North and Northwest. This is evidenced by a concern with temporality across the sources; including, dated inscriptions, the introduction of astronomy into the biographies of Śākyamuni, and the influence of this tradition on astral and temporal representations in relief art,¹ an increasing usage of astral phenomena in other *Avadāna* and *Vinaya* texts, as well as the numerous Chinese translations from the 2nd century, in which we find astronomy and astrology informing monastic administration.²

In the *Uttaragrantha* of the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*, argued to derive from the North and Northwest in the early Common Era, an increasing concern with temporality is shown in a similar ‘origin tale’ of the *upoṣadha* to that found in the *Mahāvagga*, which, although broadly identical in form and flavour to the above, has some notable differences.³ Most significant is that monastics are explicitly required to

¹ Detailed in Albery, ‘Astro-Biographies’.

² Jonathan Silk found in some *Vinayas* a particular figure named *zhiri* 直日 (**iithidhara*), who was a monastic individual entrusted with calculating the day. Silk, *Managing Monks*, 155–56.

³ Schopen cites the following passage:

[...] when brahmins and householders came to the monks and asked them, “What is today’s date?” (*‘phags pa de ring tshes grangs du zhes dris pa*), the monks said: “Sorry we don’t know.” But the brahmins and householders said: “When members of the other religious groups know not only the date but the position of the sun and the stars and the moment as well, how can you, when you have entered the religious life, not even know the date? (*mu stegs can gyis kyang tshes grangs dang / nyi ma dang / skar ma dang / yud tsam yang shes na / khyed cag rab tu byung na tshes grangs tsam yang mi shes sam /*)....But when both the Elder-of-the-Community and the Guardian-of-the-Vihāra also forgot to do it [to count the day], their calculations were off (*nyes pa’i dmigs su gyur pa*). The monks reported to the Blessed One what had occurred, and the Blessed One said: “Fifteen small balls of clay must be made, and they must be strung and arranged on a cord; then each day one must be slid over (*‘jim pa’i ril bub co lnga byos la srad bu la brgyus te*

know the positions of the sun and moon as well as the moment (T. *yud*), and due to teething issues encountered with counting the days, they were required to develop a basic counting system in order to avoid miscalculations: fifteen clay balls representing the days of the fortnight would be attached to a piece of bamboo and slid across one by one as the days progressed. This method is hardly mathematical (they were not using the gnomon (*śaṅku*) for instance) and it indicates that monastics were employing an ideal lunar half-month of fifteen days. On the other hand, we do find a deepened concern with astronomy. For example, the calculation of a *yud* occurs, which I take here as a *muhūrta*, and this value is never found in the Pali *Tipiṭaka* and is only rarely encountered in later Buddhist sources such as the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya* and *Prātimokṣasūtra* and *Mahāvastu* of the Mahāsāṃghikalokottaravādins, where it is used to highlight the temporal significance of moments in Śākyamuni's biography.

DAYS AND NIGHTS

Claus Vogel has argued that some sections of the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya* evidence the introduction of a *tithi*: the precise value of a lunar day, used in the lunisolar calendar. According to him, the *tithi* was not used in epigraphy until the 4th century CE, on which basis he argued this corpus could not have been produced until after that time. This observation is premised on the phenomenon of declining date ordinals in the feminine in order to incorporate the reckoning of a *tithi*, rather than as the masculine or neuter declensions as we often find in Pali sources. In regards to the latter case, he cites a few references in the *Vinaya*,

zhog la nyin re re zhing drang bar gyis shig!"...But all the monks did the sliding. And their memories being bad, the Blessed One said: "The Elder-of-the-Community must slide the strips!" Schopen, *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters*, 270.

which employ neuter ordinals in respect to the *uposatha* on the fourteenth (*cātuddase*) and fifteenth (*pannarase*) days.¹ Yet this is not always the case and feminine ordinals are sometimes used. For example, in the very same passages that Vogel quotes:

anujānāmi bhikkhave cātuddase pannarase aṭṭhamiyā ca pakkhassa sannipatitun.

I allow you, monks, to assemble on the fourteenth, fifteenth and eighth of the fortnight.²

Here the ordinals (*cātuddase pannarase*) are declined as masculine or neuter and the noun they qualify is unspecified but was likely neut. *diva* or masc. *divasa* ‘day’, which Horner supplies in his translation.³ Yet, we

¹ Vin 1. 104, 111. Cited in Claus Vogel, ‘On the Date of the Poṣadha Ceremony as Taught by the Mūlasarvāstivādins’, in *Bauddavidyāsudhākaraḥ: Studies in Honour of Heinz Bechert on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, ed. Petra Kieffer-Pülz and Jens-Uwe Hartmann (Swisttal-Odendorf: Indica et Tibetica Verlag, 1997), 675.

² Vin 1. 102.

³ Horner, *The Book of Discipline (Vinaya-Piṭaka) Vol. IV (Mahāvagga)*, 130ff. It is not strictly a problem here that the numbers are cardinals and not ordinals, as one would expect. This is a phenomenon witnessed regularly in both Pali and Sanskrit, see Wilhelm Geiger, *A Pāli Grammar*, ed. K. R. Norman, trans. Batakrishna Ghosh (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1994), 115; William Dwight Whitney, *A Sanskrit Grammar: Including Both the Classical Language, and the Older Dialects, of Veda and Brahmana* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1879), 180. Masculine cardinals qualifying *uposatha* are encountered in many instances. ‘Today is the *uposatha*, the fifteenth (day).’ *ajj’ uposatho pannaraso*. Vin 1. 102; ‘Now at that time monks, thinking: “The recital of the Pātimokkha on an observance is allowed by the Lord” recited the Pātimokkha three times during the half month—on the fourteenth, the fifteenth and the eighth (days) of the half-month.’ Horner, *The Book of Discipline (Vinaya-Piṭaka) Vol. IV (Mahāvagga)*, 135. *tena kho pana samayena bhikkhū bhagavatā uposathe pātimokkhuddeso anuññāto ‘ti pakkhassa tikkhattuṃ pātimokkha uddisanti cātuddase pannarase aṭṭhamiyā ca pakkhassa*. Vin 1. 104. Elsewhere we

also find a loc. fem. sg. *aṭṭhamiyā* (*aṭṭhamiyaṃ* elsewhere), which of course can never qualify any terms for a ‘day’ (i.e., *diva*, *divasa*, *ahan*) and must designate another noun.¹ Thus, despite referring principally to the same thing—the time of the *uposatha*—we find an unusual mix of grammatical gender.

As far as I am aware, the phenomenon of using a feminine ordinal in Pali is largely restricted to the *Mahāvagga*, save for one instance in the *Jātakas*.² For instance, in the first passage of the *Mahāvagga* we considered above, another similar usage of the feminine arises: *katimī bhante pakkhassā ‘ti*, using *katimī* in the feminine. The substantive to which this question particle refers is not specified but it presumes a feminine noun, qualified in this case by the half-month (*pakkha*). Again, this cannot be ‘day’ and thus we are left with perhaps three options: *tithi*, *ratti* (‘night’) or *velā* (‘time’). If the former, this would provide isolated evidence, following Vogel’s logic, that these portions of the *Mahāvagga* also evince the influence of lunisolar astronomy and that they too should be dated to a post-4th century CE period. However, in Indic literature, the usage of feminine Skt. *rātri* (‘night’) is the far more prevalent temporal value of the three, and, as we shall observe below, was used in various economic, political, and ritual contexts.

broadly find that all the numerals in this context are declined as masculine ordinals, e.g., ‘[the king] observed the *uposatha* on the fourteenth, fifteenth and eighth of the fortnight.’ *uposathañ ca upavasti cātuddasiṃ pañcadasiṃ aṭṭhamiṃ ca pakkhassa*. MN 1. 74–75.

¹ E.g., *pakkhassa tayo divase cātudasse pannarase aṭṭhamiyañ ca āgacchati*. Ja 2. 369 . ‘He comes on three days of the fortnight, the fourteenth (day), fifteenth (day) and the eighth (?)’. It is perhaps interesting to note that alternative Mss. *Cs*, *Bi*, *Bd* read masc. accu. pl. *cātudassī*; *pañnarasī/pannarāsī*; and fem. loc. sg. *aṭṭhamīyañ*.

² See footnote above for reference.

The second premise Vogel forwards (in addition to feminine numerals) for evidence of the lunisolar calendar resides in the term *ūnarātri* ('lost night'), designating 'a lunar day to be struck out the almanacs' in cases where two *tithis* end in one solar day. The term arises in a passage of the *Pravrajyavastu* of the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya* concerning a monk who was attending the *poṣadha* of both non-Buddhists and Buddhists, and due to the *ūnarātri* was caught out.

The *poṣadha* of the non-Buddhists is on the fourteenth and of the monks, on the fifteenth. On the fourteenth, he attended the *poṣadha* in the presence of the non-Buddhists and on the fifteenth of the non-Buddhists. On another occasion a lost night was expunged and the *poṣadha* on the fourteenth was born.¹

Vogel argues that the usage of feminine ordinals and the term *ūnarātrīpatita* refer to *tithi*, on the basis of certain rules of Pāṇinian grammar concerning 'substantiate possessive compounds of feminine gender', which demand that one supply a feminine noun for *rātri*.² But the purpose of *ūnarātri* here does not belong to a lunisolar calendar of the variety he implies and is rather designed to balance the true lunar year with the ideal year of 360 days, as observed above. This very matter is elucidated in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*:

A night is sometimes intercalary (*adhikā*), sometimes lost (*ūna*), or sometimes the same (*samā*). A month is 30 days

¹ *tīrthyānām poṣadhaś cāturdaśiko bhikṣūnām ca pāṃcadaśikaḥ sa caturdaśyām tīrthikānām antike poṣadham pratyānubhavati paṃcadaśyām bhikṣūnām. yāvad apareṇa samayena ūnarātrīpatitaṃ bhikṣūnām api cāturdaśikaḥ poṣadho jātaḥ.* Pra-vr. 4. 29.

² Vogel, 'On the Date of the Poṣadha Ceremony as Taught by the Mūlasarvāstivādins', 682.

and nights. And there are 12 months. A year, along with the expunged night(s), consists of four months in winter, four months in summer, and four months in monsoon, and thus a year has 12 months, in addition to lost nights. Over a year, six lost nights are expunged. How is this achieved? When one and a half months of winter, summer or monsoon have elapsed, in the remaining half-month a lost night is expunged by the learned. ‘A lost night is expunged and relinquished by the learned Buddhists’ refers to the case of monks performing the *poṣadha* of the fourteenth. Thus when *Māgha* and half of *Phālguna* pass, the remaining half [month] is what remains of *Phālguna* and another lost night is expunged. Similarly, in summers, on the fourteenth of the dark (fortnight) of *Vaiśākha* and on the fourteenth of *Āṣāḍha* another two lost nights are expunged. And also in monsoons the fourteenth [night] of the dark (fortnight) *Bhādrapada* and on the fourteenth in the dark (fortnight) of *Kārttika*, another two lost nights are expunged.¹

This calendar begins in winter and not in the solar month of *Caitra*, the first in the lunisolar calendar, which is given here as the second month

¹ *kadācit tu rātrir adhikā bhavati, kadācid ūnā, kadācit samā. tridaśāhorātrā māsah. dvādaśamāsakah. saṃvatsarah sonarātraḥ. catvāro māsā hemantānām catvāro grīṣmānām catvāro varṣāṇām ity ete dvādaśa māsā saṃvatsarah sārddham ūnarātraḥ saṃvatsareṇa hi ṣaḍūnarātrā nipātyante. katham kṛtvā. hemantagrīṣmavarṣāṇām adhyardhe māsi nirgate. śeṣe ‘rdhamāse vidvadbhir ūnarātro nipātyate. ūnarātro vidvadbhir baudhair nipātyate tyajyate ity arthaḥ. cāturdaśiko ‘tra bhikṣubhiḥ poṣadhaḥ kriyate. evaṃ māghe phālgunārdhe ‘tikrānte śeṣe ‘rdhamāse phālgunāvaśiṣṭe punar apara ūnarātro nipātyate. tathā grīṣmeṣu vaiśākhakṣṇacaturdaśyām āṣāḍhacaturdaśyām cāparāv ūnarātrau nipātyete. varṣeṣv api bhādrapadakṣṇacaturdaśyām kārttikakṣṇacaturdaśyām cāparāv ūnarātrau nipātyete. Abhidh-k-bh 3. 88b–89c*

of summer, thereby indicating that the old lunar calendar was in use. Since the lunar year was 354 days and the ideal month thirty days, if the monks always celebrated on the fifteenth day, then there would be a difference of six days between this ideal year (360 days) and the lunar year. Hence, after only two months the *upoṣadha* would no longer fall on the day of the new or full moon. To correct this, the Theravādins and Mūlasarvāstivādins celebrated on the fourteenth night of every second *pūrṇimānta* month (reckoned from the full moon): *Pauṣa*, *Phālguna*, *Vaiśākha*, *Āṣāḍha*, *Bhādrapada* and *Kārttika*.¹ In fact, Vogel cites this very mechanism but, I would contend, instead of proposing that *tithi* be supplied, we may suggest that the feminine ordinals simply agree with *rātri* and that the term *ūnarātri* is taken as it stands.

There are, however, further instances from the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*, which evince the interpolation of certain tenets of lunisolar astronomy. For example, in the famous narrative in which it was predicted that if the Bodhisattva were to not go forth he would become a king and wheel-turning ruler,² his father, Śuddhodana, sought to tempt the Bodhisattva with female suitors and ‘arranged a lion-throne [upon which the Bodhisattva may sit and select his bride] within a pavilion in accordance with the constellation, *tithi*, and *muhūrta*’ (*nakṣatratithimuhūrtair maṇḍape siṃhāsanam prajñāpya*).³ Another example detailing a previous life of the Buddha as the Bodhisattva named Viśākha also states he was consecrated in rulership in conjunction with a certain day, *tithi*, *muhūrta* and constellation (*divasatithimuhūrtanakṣatrānupūrvyā rājye ’bhiṣiktaḥ*).⁴ Nevertheless the cursory, imprecise application of these values of astronomy does little to substantiate the

¹ Vogel, ‘On the Date of the Poṣadha Ceremony as Taught by the Mūlasarvāstivādins’, 677. *Abhidh-k-vy* 3. 89–92

² SBV 1. 62.

³ SBV 1. 62.

⁴ SBV 2. 117–118.

precise knowledge required to mathematically determine or ritually enact a lunisolar calendar.

Although the foregoing discussion may appear overly digressive, it was pertinent and necessary, for a very similar issue apropos feminine ordinals also arises in donative inscriptions. Following the date formula in many, one often encounters the expression Skt. *etasyāṃ pūrvāyāṃ* ('at this previous [?]'). Consider the following two respective Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī examples.

Copper Plate Inscription of Patika (No. 12):

[1.] *[saṃva]tsaraye aṭhasatatimae 20 20 20 10 4 4
maharayasa mahamṭasa Mogasa pa[ne]masa masasa divase
paṃcame 4 1 etaye purvaye...*

Statue of Buddhadevā and Puṣyahasthinī

[1.] *(mahārājasya [d](e)vaputrasa Huv[i]ṣkasya sa[m] 30 9
va 3 di 5 etasya[m] purva[y](aṃ)*¹

Since the expression is declined as a fem. loc. it cannot refer to the specified masc. *divasa* or neut. *diva* ('day') immediately preceding it. This grammatical incongruence has caused some issues; some scholars have supplied *tithau* ('lunar day'),² presuming therefore that the lunisolar calendar was current in popular usage in the Northwest at this time. If so, one could say that this correlates with the changes to the gender of ordinals witnessed in the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*, designed, according to Vogel, to account for the introduction of the lunisolar *tithi* reckonings. Even though the luni-solar calendar was indeed current, this

¹ § 126.

² Damsteegt, *Epigraphical Sanskrit*, 195fn265; D. C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions Bearing on Indian History and Civilisation. Vol I. From the Sixth Century B.C. to the Sixth Century A.D.* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1965), 220fn3.

conclusion is rather unlikely since the dates of our inscriptions are numbered in respect to the whole month and not the fortnight, and if they wished to provide a *tithi* reckoning, presumably they would have made it explicit.

North and Northwestern inscriptions are unusual in respect to their day numberings, because other contemporaneous corpora stipulated days in terms of a fortnight (*pakṣa*), which subsequently never exceeded fifteen. For instance in one Sātavāhana inscription from Karli, Maharashtra:

*siddha raño Vāsiṭhiputasa siri-Puḷumāvisa savachare
catuwise 24 hemaṃtāna pakhe tatiye 3 divase bitiye 2...*¹

Success! in the year 24 of King Vāsiṭhiputra Śri-Puḷumāvi,
in the third fortnight of Hemanta, on the second day...

Here the lunar day is given as *divasa* of the *pakṣa* and not the *tithi*. In other examples from this region such a date format also occurs alongside the *etasyāṃ pūrvāyāṃ* and thus we encounter the same problem.²

In solution to the *etasyāṃ pūrvāyāṃ* conundrum, Pingree suggested the phrase should correspond to *velā* ('time', e.g., day, hour, moment) and be identical in this respect to the time phrase used in Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions: *asmin kṣaṇe* ('at this moment')—found for example as G. *iśa kṣaṇammi*—in which *kṣaṇa*, as Burrow first argued,

¹ Karl 33, Tsukamoto, *A Comprehensive Study of The Indian Buddhist Inscriptions Part I: Text, Notes and Japanese Translation.*, 467–368. The usage of this date formula is consistent among other Sātavāhana rulers. See also, Nasi 3–4, 25, 26 in the same catalogue.

² E.g., [1.] *sidham raño Vāsiṭhiputasa sāmi-Siri-Pulu[2.]māisa saṃvachare 2 hemaṃtā pakhe 4 divase [8] [3.] etiya puvaya...* Nasi 26.

was an Iranian loan word meaning ‘time, ‘date’.¹ That it refers to *velā* seems plausible enough.² Yet one final solution is that it refers to *rātri*, which was the most common value of temporal calculation in the Indic sphere—this conclusion shall be underpinned below.

The issue of whether donative inscriptions are based on the Buddhist, and therefore lunar calendar, or whether they employ lunisolar reckoning, has further implications for determining the relation between time and ritual behaviour. Namely, it is necessary to establish the precise calendar in usage as this affects the start of the year, the month (which are rarely named and only numbered in Brāhmī inscriptions) and day of the month. If, for example, the month is calculated from the sun’s transition (*saṃkrānti*) into a constellation and not on the basis of the moon’s conjunction with a constellation, then the days within that calendar could diverge dramatically from the times one would expect to correspond to the lunar phases and ritual occasions such as the *upoṣadha*. An answer to this question that fulfils any desirable astronomic accuracy is beyond the evidence at hand. Nonetheless, that the majority of inscriptions were donated on the basis of a lunar calendar seems the more likely, as a sufficient number were dedicated on days of the month which would temporally coincide with lunar and other civil rituals.

¹ It is found in the G. Niya documents in the exact same format as the Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī inscriptions. Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharoṣṭhī Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, 92.

² Salomon opts not to choose either *tithi* or *velā* and accepts both as possibilities, Salomon, *Indian Epigraphy: A Guide to the Study of Inscriptions in Sanskrit, Prakrit and the Other Indo-Aryan Languages*, 81; 176. The expression *asmin kṣaṇe* is also found in a number of Jain inscriptions as well as a single Buddhist inscription from Mathura in the 1st–2nd century CE. As ever, Damsteegt argues that its usage in Mathura is evidence of a ‘North-Western influence’, Damsteegt, *Epigraphical Sanskrit*, 195. There is also the phrase: *iśa divasaṃmi* (‘on this day’) to be found on the Reliquary Inscription of Indravarma I (No. 14).

RITUAL RHYTHMS IN DONATIVE INSCRIPTIONS

Of all inscriptions from the North and Northwest considered in this study, 206 retain information regarding the time (excluding years)¹ at which a dedication was made, stipulating a combination of a season, month, or day of the month. These inscriptions were donated between the mid 1st century BCE and mid 3rd century CE and stem largely from the Buddhist (115) corpus, as well as the Jain (61), Brahmin (7), other cult (7), and secular (4) corpora, and those whose affiliation cannot be determined (10). 199 inscriptions name a month from the Indic (179), Macedonian (18) or Iranian (1) calendar or, in Brāhmī inscriptions specifically, the number of a month of a season (e.g., the first month of *Hemanta* [*Kārttika*]). 180 state the day of the month.

Analysis of this corpus in terms of the frequency at which dedications were made by month and by day reveals broader patterns of behaviour among religious and secular institutions at regional and inter-regional levels. Three major rhythms were observed, one in terms of the months during which dedications were made and two in terms of the days of the months.

It was found (Fig. 11.1) that Buddhist dedications are fairly evenly spread throughout all months of the year but that in the months of monsoon (*varṣa*), and specifically in the first, second, and fourth months of that season—*Āṣāḍha*, *Śrāvāṇa*, and *Bhādrapada*—there is a slight increase. The monsoon retreat lasts for four months between the full moon of *Āṣāḍha* and the full moon of *Kārttika*. Since we cannot conclusively determine in all cases whether months were reckoned from the full moon (*pūrṇimānta*) or new moon (*āmanta*)—meaning that dates numbered 1, 15, or 30 could be either—it is impossible to precisely say how many dedications fall within this frame. However, of the 100

¹ Patterns of donative activity by year are analysed above, see Chapter Two: Diachronic Patterns of Patronage.

inscriptions to name a month and season, those that fall within the five months concerned—*Āṣādha* (10), *Śrāvaṇa* (14), *Bhādrapada* (15), *Āśvayuj* (6) and *Kārttika* (12)—constitute more than half (57%) of all dedications.

If we follow Pingree's concordance of Indic, Macedonian and Mesopotamian month names,¹ this pattern increases with 2 in Loios (*Āṣādha*) and Gorpaios (*Śrāvaṇa*) and 1 in Apellaios.² A likely explanation for this trend (premised on the assumption monastics were semi-peripatetic) is that Buddhist donative activity was seasonal and conducted principally at times when the entire assembly was present.

¹ See David Pingree, 'A Note on the Calendars Used in Early Indian Inscriptions', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 102, no. 2 (1982): 355.

² Other dedications made in Macedonian months include four in *Artemesios* (*Caitra*), one in *Daisios* (*Vaiśākha*), one in *Panemos* (*Jyaiṣṭha*), three in *Audnaios* (*Mārgaśīrṣa*), and two in *Xandikos* (*Phālguna*). One is dated to the Iranian month *Aira* (*Vaiśākha*).

Fig. 11. 1 No. Inscribed Dedications by Month

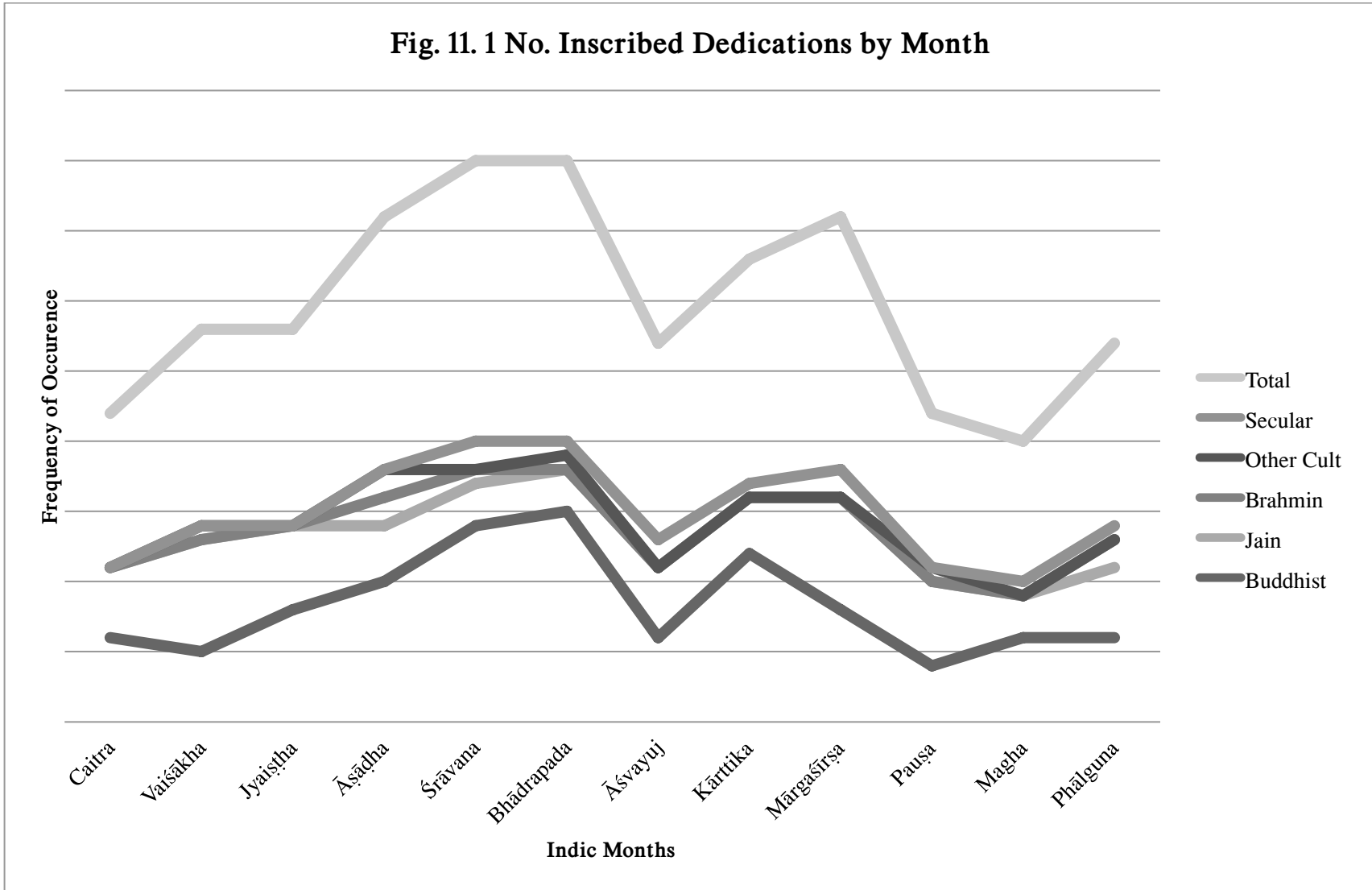
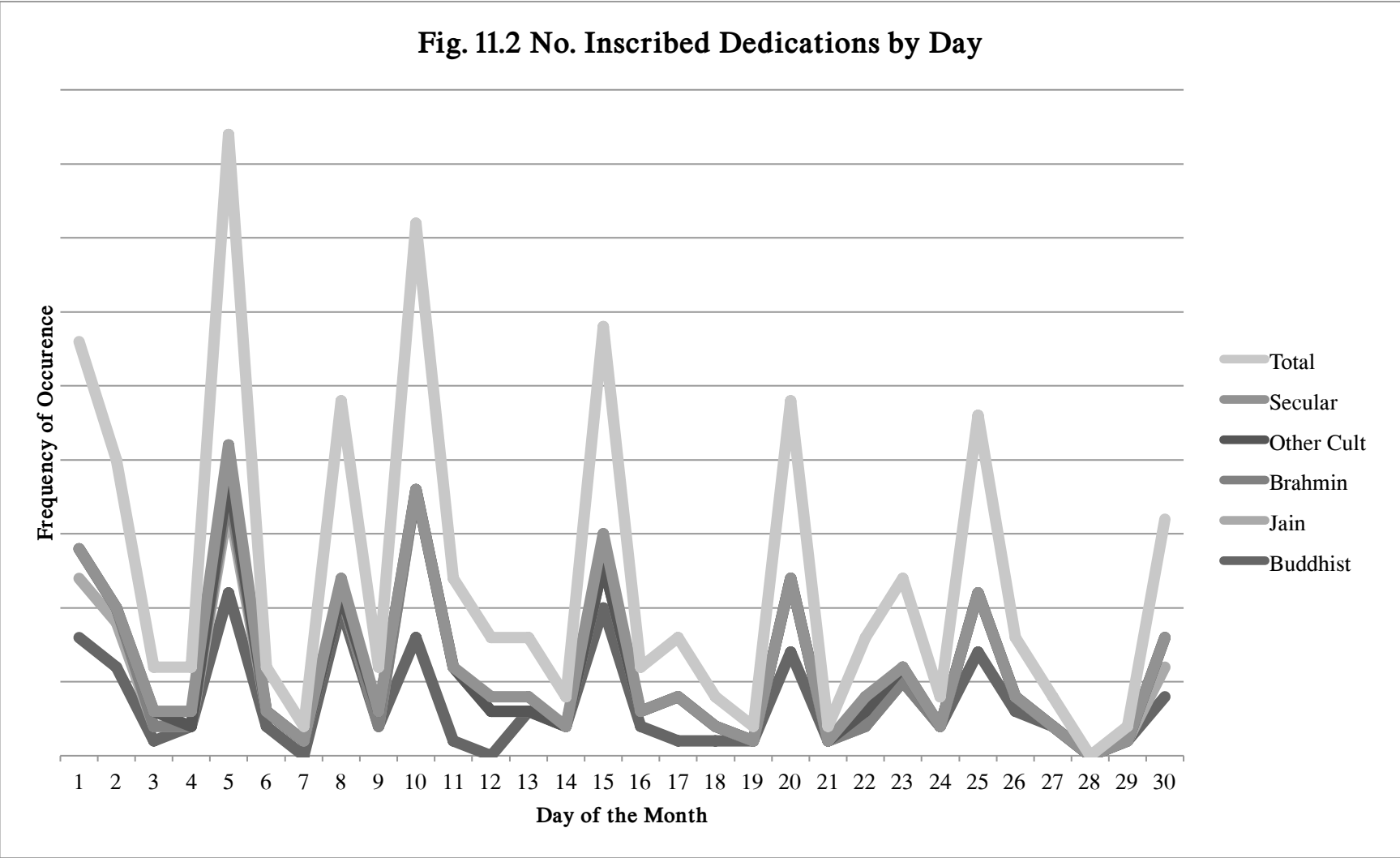


Fig. 11.2 No. Inscribed Dedications by Day



The second observation (Fig. 11.2), focusing now on the number of dedications by day, also follows expected institutional patterns. Many inscriptions of all religious affiliations, whether Buddhist, Jain, Brahmin, or other cults, were dedicated in accordance with the lunar rituals outlined above. Of the 180 inscriptions to record a day of the month, 53 (31%) fall on one of the five possible days of the *upoṣadha* to coincide with new, crescent, full and gibbous moons (i.e., days 1, 8, 14 or 15, 23, and 30). Buddhist inscriptions donated on such days account for the majority at 39, compared to the 10 Jain, 4 Brahmin, and 2 other cult inscriptions. Upon inspection of the above graph, it becomes clear that there is an increase in dedication on days occurring on *upoṣadha* rituals in the first half of the month (40) as opposed to those made in the latter (14). This most likely evidences that ritual activities occurred in the more auspicious ‘bright fortnight’ (*śukapakṣa*) when the moon is increasing, as opposed to the less auspicious ‘dark fortnight’ (*kṛṣṇapakṣa*) when the moon is waning. On the basis of this trend, we can presume also that the majority of months were reckoned from the new moon (*āmanta*) and not the full moon (*pūrṇimānta*).

The third rhythm in dedications by day emerged in fact as the strongest trend. But unlike those corresponding to lunar rituals, this pattern does not conform to normative religious rituals given in textual sources. We can see in the graph that the majority of dedications, regardless of religious affiliation, were made on days 1 (14), 5 (21), 10 (18), 15 (14), 20 (12), 25 (12), and 30 (8). These 99 dedications represent 55% of all dedications to specify a date. But to what ritual pattern do these dates correspond?

John Brough stated that the fifth is so ‘well esteemed in the religious calendar’¹ to warrant neither further comment nor citation of a

¹ John Brough, ‘A Kharoṣṭhī Inscription from China’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 16, no. 2 (1961): 521.

literary source on his part. He clearly must have been aware of something I am not, as I have been unable to find any conclusive explanation for this ritual pattern in the Buddhist textual tradition. A prosaic solution perhaps is that these dates are a product of mere coincidence; indeed the limited sample of data means this cannot be ruled out. Yet the significance surely goes beyond this lacklustre conclusion. At the very least we can regard them as not inauspicious and in the case of the fifth day in particular, which is recorded seven more times than the next highest, the first and fifteenth, there must be some underlying principle governing this structure, which we may term *pañcarātra*.

There are stray references to one or more of these dates within Buddhist textual sources that offer a possible explanation. In the case of the 25th day, which is found a reasonable number of times in Buddhist inscriptions (five in total) of both the Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī corpora, a passage in the **Sarvāstivādivinaya* 十誦律 names this day as one of ‘six days of abstaining’ (六齋日).

Regarding the meditation on the Dharma at the meeting of the elders of the community there are six [days] of abstaining in the month; namely, the eighth, fourteenth, fifteenth, twenty-third, twenty-fifth and thirtieth days.¹

Five of these dates coincide with the *upoṣadha* and present nothing unusual; however, the twenty-fifth stands out since it is the only date to diverge from the luni-calendric structure. According to this *Vinaya*, these days were reserved for recitations of the Dharma and for others to make offerings to their ancestors. Perhaps by coincidence two ‘bearers of the *Vinaya*’ (*vinayadhara*) in epigraphy made a donation on the 25th

¹ 僧上座會坐法者。月六齋。所謂八日十四日十五日二十三日二十九日三十日。T 1435. 420.13c–14c.

day,¹ which may support the relationship between this date and form of Buddhist practice specifically. Xuanzang also records that (much later of course) in Mathura these days were observed as rituals and were rich and colourful occasions of donative activity, involving the honouring of images in which monastics as well as local rulers and ministers participated.²

Significant, however, is that the *pañcarātra* pattern transcends denominational behaviour. For the Buddhists and the Jains alike these days are consistently the most favoured to make a dedication and day 5 specifically arises in the already limited number of Brahmin (1), other cult (1) and secular (2) inscriptions also. We are thus left with the likely conclusion (in absence of any textual precedence from the Buddhist, Jain, and Brahmanical literary canons) that the dates constituted part of a civil calendar. Time was not solely the concern of specifically ritual behaviour and it governed the enactment of civil affairs also. Indeed such a pattern of behaviour arises in the *Arthaśāstra*,³ wherein akin temporalities governing ritual behaviour also determine economic

¹ Sk 38, 126.

² Beal, *Buddhist Records. Vol. II*, 180–81.

³ The *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya is dated after the 1st century BCE period, due to it referencing two particular forms of coral—*ālasandaka* and *vaivarṇika*—and before the 2nd century CE, due to its not mentioning gold currency, first issued by Vima Kadphises (c. 113–127 CE). Olivelle, *King, Governance, and Law in Ancient India*, 27. The text states that in the month of *Āṣāḍha*, at midday, the shadow disappears: *āṣāḍhe masi naṣṭacchāyo madhāho bhavati*. AŚ 2. 20. 41. This corresponds to the time around the summer solstice and must have been calculated on or near the tropic of Cancer at Udayagiri in Andhra Pradesh, for instance, but more widely in a region that includes Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh. Michael Willis, *The Archaeology of Hindu Ritual: Temples and the Establishments of the Gods* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 23.

structures of the working or civil year (*karmasaṃvatsara*),¹ the operating times of ferries (*tara*),² as well as other activities such as military exercises (*vyāyāmayogya*) or expeditions (*yātrā*).³ Additionally, the same text provides a series of lunar days as appropriate times to conduct financial and legal affairs. In one instance the overseer (*adhyakṣa*) concerned with the ‘official records’ (*akṣapaṭala*) should wait five nights before issuing a fine (*daṇḍa*) to an individual who has not settled ‘a small debt on their accounts’ (*alpaśeṣalekhyānīvikāṃ pañcarātram ākāṅkṣet*).⁴ Also, he ‘should corroborate the [deposits in the treasury] by comparing them with the daily, five-day, fortnightly, monthly, quadrimestral, and annual accounts’: *divyasapañcarātrapakṣa-māsacāturmāsyaṣaṃvatsaraiś ca pratisamānayet*.⁵ And in yet another instance the *pañcarātra* model extends further to define the days upon which prisoners should be released.⁶

¹*triśataṃ catuḥpañcāśac cāhorātrāṇām karmasaṃvatsaraḥ. tam āṣādhīparya-vasānam ūnam pūrṇam vā dadyāt. karaṇādhiṣṭhitam adhimāsakam kuryāt. AŚ 2. 7. 6–8.* ‘The work year consists of 354 days and nights. He should define it as ending on the full-moon day of *Āṣāḍha* (June-July), whether it is short or full [i.e. with an intercalary month or not], and have a bureau of experts oversee the intercalary month.’ Translation from Olivelle, *King, Governance, and Law in Ancient India*, 112.

²*saptāhavṛttām āṣādhīm kārttikīm cāntarā tarāḥ. AŚ 2. 28. 27.* ‘A ferry shall operate from the eighth day after the full moon of *Āṣāḍha* (June-July) until the full moon of *Kārttika* (October-November)’. Translation from Olivelle, *King, Governance, and Law in Ancient India*, 162.

³AŚ 9. 1. 22–25; 34–36; Olivelle, *King, Governance, and Law in Ancient India*, 350–51.

⁴AŚ 2. 7. 26–28; Olivelle, *King, Governance, and Law in Ancient India*, 113.

⁵AŚ 2. 7. 28–30; Olivelle, *King, Governance, and Law in Ancient India*, 113.

⁶*bandhanāgāre ca bālavṛddhavyādhitānāthānām jātanakṣatrapaurṇamāsīṣu visargaḥ. pañyaśīlāḥ samayānubaddhā vā doṣaniṣkrayam dadyuḥ. divase pañcarātre vā bandhanasthān viśodhayet, karmaṇā kāyadaṇḍena hiraṇyānugraheṇa vā. apūrvadeśādhiḡame yuvarājābhiṣecane, putrajanmani vā mokṣo bandhanasya vidhīyate. AŚ 2. 36. 44–47.*

It is this precise enumeration of temporalities that coincides with the donative behaviour in epigraphy and text. The sense of it all is that a series of civil, economic, legal, and ritual activities were all structured according to a common calendric model, a framework which primarily included five lunar days, the lunar cycles of the new and full moon, as well as quadrimestral and annual events.

FESTIVALS IN DONATIVE INSCRIPTIONS

A striking absence in this corpus of Buddhist donative inscriptions is reference to specific festivals (*maha*). Such events arise elsewhere; several already at the time of Aśoka:

[11.] *tīsu cātuṃmāsīsu tisāyaṃ puṇṇamāsiyaṃ* [12.] *tiṇṇi divasāni cāvudasaṃ paṇṇaḍasaṃ paṭipadāy[e] dhuvāye cā*
 [13.] *anuposatha mache avadhiye no pi viketaviye etāni yevā divasāni* [14.] *nāgavanasi kevaṭabhogasi yāni aṃṇāni pi jīvanikāyāni* [15.] *na haṃtaviyāni aṭhamīpakhāye cāvudasāye paṇṇaḍasāye tisāye* [16.] *punāvasune tīsu cātuṃmāsīsu sudivasāye gone no nīlakhiyataviye* [17.] *ajake eḍake sūkale e vā pi aṃne nīlakhiyati no nīlakhitaviye* [18.] *tisāye*

Children, old people, the sick, and the helpless, moreover, are released from the prison the day of [their] birth constellation and on full-moon days. Pious men or individuals belonging to a group governed by conventions may pay a ransom for an offense.

Every day or every fifth day, he should discharge the prisoner through bonded manual or monetary compensation.

Release of prisoners is decreed when new territory is acquired, at the anointing of the crown prince, and at the birth of a son.

Translation from Olivelle, *King, Governance, and Law in Ancient India*, 177.

This temporal structure is a mode of behaviour also observable in Central Asia and Assyrian economic systems, governing for instance, the days upon which markets are open, see Lin Chao et al., 'Calendar', in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/science/calendar>.

punāvasune cātumṃāsiye cātumṃāsipakhāye asvasā gonasā
[19.] *lakhane...*¹

On the three quadrimestral festivals (*cāturmāsī*), under *tiṣya*, on the full moon day and on the three days of the fourteenth, fifteenth and first [lunar] days, as well as at the regular *anuposatha*,² fish may neither be killed nor sold and on these days at the elephant park no other groups of living beings may be killed. On the eighth lunar day of the fortnight, as well as on the fourteenth and fifteenth days, under *tiṣya* or *punarvasu*, on the three days of the quadrimestral festival, or on auspicious days,³ neither bulls may be castrated nor goats, sheep, pigs, and others are castrated, nor may be castrated. Under *tiṣya*, *punarvasu*, on the quadrimestral festival or during the fortnight of the quadrimestral festival, horses and cows may not be branded...

There is, therefore, evidence from as early as the 3rd century BCE for the quadrimestral festival—occurring every three months on the full moon days of *Āṣāḍha*, *Kārttika* and *Phālguna*⁴—and other celebrating specific constellations such as *tiṣya* and *puṣya*.

¹ Töp, V, Hultsch, *Inscriptions of Aśoka*, 125–28. Cf. Jau. Sep. I, 9; Jau. Sep. II, 15; Dhau. Sep. I, 17, 18; Töp. V, 11, 15, 18; Nand. V, 8; Ar. V, 7, Hultsch, *Inscriptions of Aśoka*.

² P. *anuposatha* = ind. *anvaḍḍhamāsaṃ*, *anvaddhamāsaṃ* (lit. ‘every half month’, ‘fortnightly’), see Cone, *A Dictionary of Pāli*, 156–57; Rhys-Davids and Stede, *The Pali Text Society’s Pali-English Dictionary*, 49.

³ Following the *Arthaśāstra*, ‘festival days’ such as the ‘kings birthday and local festivals are meant.’ Hultsch, *Inscriptions of Aśoka*, 128fn6.

⁴ The *cāturmāsya* occurs on the full-moon day of *Āṣāḍha*, *Kārttika* and *Phālguna* and is a social practice known from Aśokan inscriptions. Bühler, ‘Pillar Edicts of Aśoka’, 261; Hultsch, *Inscriptions of Aśoka*, 125–28.

One instance of the former trio is found in a Buddhist inscription from Andhra Pradesh, the *pravāraṇā*, which occurs on the full moon of *Kārttika* to mark the close of the monsoon retreat,¹ and certain of our corpus coincide with these seasonal festivals dates but do not name them. The Silver Scroll of Urasaka for instance, (No. 40) is dated to 15 Āṣāḍha, which, if an *āmanta* reckoning, corresponds to the *varṣopanāyika*, marking the ‘introduction to the monsoon’ retreat. In textual sources, this day is described as being a time for monastics to study the teachings, practice yoga, and ‘mental concentrations’ (*manasikāra*),² as well as cook food, clean robes and sew rags, before they proceed to the villages and towns for the duration of the monsoon.³ We also know that this was a day in which non-monastics engaged with the monastic community. In the *Saṅghabhedavastu* for example it is stated that it was practice for kings to attend this ritual day.

The Buddha, the Fortunate One, approached Rājagrha for monsoon season in the Mango Forest of Jivaka, the brother of the Prince. At that time, the king of Magadha, Ajātaśatru, son of the Videhas, summoned those of the highest faith together under the moonlit sky in Āṣāḍha, at the introduction to monsoon when the full moon is discernible, visible, and full. He addressed his ministers: ‘Hey chiefs! Since it is the sign that is the moonlit sky in Āṣāḍha, at the introduction to *varṣa* when the full moon is discernible, visible and full, what should we do?’... Jivika said: ‘Deva, under the sign that is the moonlit sky during Āṣāḍha at the introduction to

¹ Oskar von Hinüber, ‘Again on the Donation Made by the Vinayadhara Dhammasena and on Other Inscriptions from Phanigiri’, *Annual Report of The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology* 16 (2013): 10.

² Śay-v 34; Divy 1. 35.

³ Avś 1. 34; 183

monsoon when the full moon is discernible, visible and full, there is the Fortunate One, the head of the *saṃgha*, the group teacher, the teacher of the people, having the form of a Sadhu, the great one among the many peoples, attended by a body of peoples, who has arrived at Rājagṛha for monsoon and is in our Mango forest, the Deva should worship him. This, I think, is what should be done by the King.’¹

In the lines preceding this passage, the Ājīvika, Kāśyapa Pūraṇa, and the Nigrantha, Jñātiputra, are also recommended for worship. This particular night of *Āṣāḍha* was therefore considered significant for a variety of individuals and other religious traditions. Significantly, the Buddhists sought to present it as normative for a ruler to attend this

¹ *buddho bhagavān rājagṛhe varṣā upagato jīvakaśya kumārabhṛtasya āmravaṇe; atha rājā māgadhaḥ ajātasattur vaidehīputraḥ tadaiva jyotsnāyāṃ rātryāṃ āṣāḍhyāṃ varṣopanāyikāyāṃ abhijñātāyāṃ abhilakṣitāyāṃ pūrṇāyāṃ paurṇamāsyāṃ upariprāsādatalagataḥ amātyān āmantrayate: hambho grāmaṇyaḥ evaṃrūpāyāṃ jyotsnāyāṃ rātryāṃ āṣāḍhyāṃ varṣopanāyikāyāṃ abhijñātāyāṃ abhilakṣitāyāṃ pūrṇāyāṃ paurṇamāsyāṃ kim asmābhiḥ karaṇīyaṃ syāt...sa kathayati: evaṃrūpāyāṃ deva jyotsnāyāṃ rātryāṃ āṣāḍhyāṃ varṣopanāyikāyāṃ abhijñātāyāṃ abhilakṣitāyāṃ pūrṇāyāṃ paurṇamāsyāṃ ayaṃ devaḥ bhagavān saṃghī ca gaṇī ca gaṇācāryaś ca sādhurūpasammatō bahujanasya mahatā gaṇena ca saṃpuraskṛtaḥ asminn eva rājagṛhe varṣā upagataḥ asmākam eva āmravaṇe; taṃ devaḥ paryupāsīta; idam ahaṃ devasya karaṇīyaṃ manye. SBV 2. 216–218.*

This passage is almost identical to that of the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*, save for the fact that the calendar date is different and corresponds to the P. *pavaraṇā*.

Tena kho pana samayena rājā Māgadho Ajātasattu Vedehi-putto tadahu ‘posathe pannarase Komudiyā cātumāsiniyā puṇṇāya puṇṇamāya rattiya... DN 1. 47.

And that time at the *uposadha* on the fifteenth day, at the *Komudiyā* (full moon of the month *Kattikā*), at the quadrimestral [ritual] on the night of the full moon, the king of Māgadha Ajātasattu, son of the Vedehis ...’.

ritual day. Whilst the historicity of the narrative cannot be verified, its on-going propagandist purpose would serve to proliferate the Buddhist institution as being an object of worship on what is clearly a very open, public, and political day. Resultingly, whether the events narrated are historical or fantastical is of little importance. What is likely is that they were normative, and therefore accurate in so far as they articulate the idealised type of royal comportment. To this extent, the passage must have some precedence in actuality. Applying this knowledge to our inscription we can say that this day in Taxila, the fifteenth of *Āṣāḍha*, was certainly a political affair. It is conceivable that the king, the Kuṣāṇa ruler Kujula Kadphises, mentioned as the beneficiary of the inscription, was in attendance or indirectly involved with the processes of dedication.

The names of many constellations are also given in inscriptions of the Northwest¹ but none of these appear to correspond to textually attested festivals. Unusually the constellation *puṣya/tiṣya*, which was of notably high import in the Indic sphere, never arises. Such discordance between known Buddhist ritual behaviour and evidence from epigraphy raises questions regarding the extent to which astrology exerted an influence on Buddhist donative rituals in the North and Northwest. This is made the more curious as there are certain texts and instances of relief art, which indicate that astrology had indeed grown in importance² and had been introduced to structure the emergent Buddha biographical tradition.

¹ *Citrā* (No. 14), *āśvayuj* (No. 20), *proṣṭhapāda* (No. 33), *uttaraphālguna* in a well donation inscription (CKI 148), dated 11 Kaniṣka (137/138 CE), and *pūrvāṣāḍha* in another well donation inscription (CKI 160), dated 61 [Huviṣka] (187/188 CE). For further discussion, see Falk, 'Pious Donation of Wells', 27, 31.

² See Albery, 'Astro-Biographies'.

CHAPTER TWELVE: DONATIVE OBJECTS

Within this corpus of 586 Buddhist, Brahmin, Jain, and other cult inscriptions, the types of inscribed objects vary widely, ranging from architectural pieces, such as bricks, capitals, doors, paving stones, pillars, pillar bases, tori, and railings, to monastic items and utensils, such as bowls, ewers, incense burners, lamps, pots, and seals of pottery, and stone, ladles, saucers, sieves of copper and silver, to pieces of relief art and sculpture, and reliquaries. Of these, three sets of objects stand out among Buddhist donative objects for their numerosity: 63 pots and potsherds, in addition to other monastic items, 65 inscribed objects recording the donation of relics, which include reliquaries, as well as metal scrolls and plates of copper, gold, and silver,¹ and 98 Bodhisattva and Buddha statues. Moreover, the types of donations to which inscriptions refer varies further still, ranging from entire pieces of land, including gardens, monastic complexes, and individual buildings, to water related items and features, such as wells, jugs, and, lotus ponds, as well as stupas and relics, amongst others.

Several chronological, geographical, and sociological patterns are to be observed in regards to specific types of donative objects, which in turn afford certain conclusions to be made about the social contexts in which donations were enacted. This chapter shall focus specifically on

¹ See Chapter Fifteen: Relics and Stupas.

the terms for Buddhist donations, the practice of writing in inscriptions in monastic contexts, and the donation of monasteries; relics and statues are addressed in subsequent chapters.

TERMS FOR DONATIONS

There is a limited set of terms that mark an object as a donation. The earliest of these in both Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions is *dāna* ('donation'), found widely in the North and Northwest from the c. 1st century BCE and much earlier of course in epigraphic corpora from Madhya and Andhra Pradesh, where it is the only term used to refer to donative objects. More common, however, and a peculiarity to Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions, is the term *dānamukha*, which was introduced around the turn of the Common Era.¹ The meaning of this term is unclear and scholars typically opt to translate it with 'principal gift', taking the latter member of the compound, *-mukha*, in its sense of 'principal', 'foremost'.² Its usage in the general sense of a 'donation' is clear and is the only meaning we can derive, despite its imprecision. However, in what shade *-mukha* means 'principal' is not obvious and other solutions have been proposed.³ Such difficulties derive from the fact the term is rare in literature, no doubt due to it being limited in usage, it seems, to the Northwest. There are, however, some instances in Pali to be found.

¹ For a doubtful exception, see Damsteegt, *Epigraphical Sanskrit*, 170–71.

² Sircar, *Indian Epigraphical Glossary*, 79.

³ F. W. Thomas regards *mukha* in the sense of 'account' and suggests that *dānamukha* it 'is best to recognise a mere synonym for *dāna*, a misapplication of technical term, "gift department", "gift heading", "gift account"'. F. W. Thomas, 'Notes on the Edicts of Asoka', *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1915, 99.

The term *dānamukhe* here means ‘by way of a gift’, where *-mukhe* denotes a ‘means’ (i.e., means of giving) and is used adverbially in the sense of ‘as a gift’. Only one occurrence is noted in the *Sasajātaka*,¹ and translators have essentially agreed on the sense, translating ‘as a free gift’², ‘als Gabe’³, or, perhaps, with ‘an older and fuller meaning “under the head of alms”’⁴. The majority of terms in Kharoṣṭhī occur in the form *daṇamukhe*, which would perhaps imply an adverbial locative. Yet there are several variations also, including *daṇamukha* and *daṇamukho*,⁵ which indicate the term is also used frequently in nominative or accusative cases.⁶

The next most commonly encountered term in inscriptions is *deyadharmā* (‘gift-worthy object’).⁷ From early Buddhist literature, this

¹ ...*tikkhattuṃ sarīraṃ vihūnitvā sakalasarīraṃ dānamukhe datvā*. J 3. 55. ‘[The Bodhisattva] thrice shook his body and gave his entire body as a gift.’ It also occurs in the same sense in the *Upāsakajanālaṅkāra: so rājānaṃ pabbajjaṃ anujānāpetvā sattāhena sabbaṃ attano dhaṇaṃ dānamukho vissajjetvā*. H. Saddhatissa, ed., *Upāsakajanālaṅkāra: A Critical Edition and Study* (Pali Text Society, 1965), 153.

² H. T. Francis and R. A. Neil, trans., *The Jātaka or Stories of the Buddha’s Former Births* (London: Pali Text Society, 1957), 37.

³ Dutoit, Julius, trans., *Jātakam. Das Buch der Erzählungen aus früheren Existenzen Buddhas. Dritter Band* (Leipzig: Lotus-Verlag, 1911), 65.

⁴ Konow, *Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions: With the Exception of Those of Aśoka*, 52.

⁵ For variations, see Stefan Baums and Andrew Glass, ‘A Dictionary of Gāndhārī’, *gandhari.org*, 2017, https://gandhari.org/n_dictionary.php, s.v. *danamuha*.

⁶ For a summary of this discussion, see Konow, *Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions: With the Exception of Those of Aśoka*, 51–52.

⁷ P. *deyyadhamma*: ‘eine Sache, die gegeben werden muß oder darf, eine Spende’ Wilhelm Geiger, ‘Pali Dhamma: vornehmlich in der kanonischen Literatur’, in *Wilhelm Geiger: Kleine Schriften zur Indologie und Buddhismuskunde* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1973), 191. See also Oskar von Hinüber, *Die Kolophone der Gilgit-Handschriften* (Reinbek: Verlag für Orientalistische Fachpublikationen, 1980); Hinüber, *Die Palola Śāhis: Ihre Steininschriften, Inschriften auf Bronzen, Handschriftenkolophone und*

denotes a limited set of objects considered as requisite (*pariṣkāra*) for a monastic lifestyle: robes, alms-bowls, bedding and seating, and medicine to cure illness,¹ in addition, in some cases, to food, drink, clothing, transport, garlands, fragrances, bodily oils, bedding, housing, and lamps.² However, this sense was subsequently modified from the early Common Era to include, in inscriptions, a host of other items, such as pots, wells, relics, statues, and so on.³ Whilst certain inscribed objects

Schutzzauber – Materialien zur Geschichte von Gilgit und Chilas, 178. The term is also understood as something that has ‘a characteristic or quality which should be given’, Michael Willis, ‘The Sānchī Bodhisattva Dated Kuṣāṇa Year 28’, *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* 6 (2000): 270. In two instances from the *Theravādinaya*, the *deyyadhamma* is found in a medical context and should be construed more in the sense of a ‘payment’. In both examples the master of medicine (*komārabhacca*) Jīvika applies a treatment: [1] a nasal treatment (*natthukamma*), given to the wife of a merchant (*seṭṭhibharyā*), for which Jīvika receives a *deyyadhamma* comprising sixteen thousand of an unspecified currency, a female slave, and a chariot, Vin 1. 270–271; [2] in an example of brain surgery, consisting in the removal of two entities (*sibbāni*), one small and the other large, from the brain, a banker householder (*seṭṭhigahapati*) pays one hundred thousand of an unspecified currency each to the doctor Jīvaka and King Bimbisāra, Vin 1. 273–274.

¹ This enumeration occurs throughout all Buddhist literature. For Pali: *cīvarapiṇḍapātasenāsanagilānapaccayabhesajjaparikkhāra*, see, e.g., DN 1. 61. For Sanskrit: *cīvarapiṇḍapātaśayanāsanaglānapratyayabhaiṣajyaparīṣkāra*, see e.g., Divy 89.

² Nidd 1. 373.

³ Gouriswar Bhattacharya, ‘Dāna-Deyadharma: Donation in Early Buddhist Records (in Brāhmī)’, in *Investigating Indian Art: Proceedings of a Symposium on the Development of Early Buddhist and Hindu Iconography Held at the Museum of Indian Art Berlin May 1986*, ed. Marianne Yaldiz and Wibke Lobo (Berlin: Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, 1987), 39–65. Several scholars have argued that variants of the term, e.g., *devadharmā* (‘object of the gods’), indicate it had lost its etymological meaning during this period, see Damsteegt, *Epigraphical Sanskrit*, 43; Oskar von Hinüber, ‘Die Kolophone der Gilgit-Handschriften’, in *Kleine Schriften Teil II*, ed. Harry Falk and Walter Slaje (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009), 688–721.

fit this standard list, quite evidently several do not fit the scheme, such as relics and statues. Michael Willis attempts to argue that such items are conceptually ‘an extension’ of the listed requisites, citing the Buddha Image of Madhurikā (No. 71), in which the stone shrine (*śailagrha*)—the *deyadharmā*—may be construed within this paradigm as a form of ‘dwelling’ (*śayanāsana*).¹ Such arguments could well be made in the case of other objects; a well (*kūpa*), for example, quite clearly fits into the category of drink (*pāna*). But it is to a certain extent regardless whether the intention of donors was to theoretically conform to the normative list of gifts stipulated in literature, because in reality whatever is regarded as gift-worthy is of course sanctioned by those worthy of gifts, namely monastics, and on that account, this expanded list of items less requisite to monastic life evidences a material recasting of donative behaviour that may certainly be attributed to the institutionalisation of Buddhism, as observed above in foregoing chapters.

DONATIVE INSCRIPTIONS AND FORMULAE IN THE VINAYA

Certain passages of the *Vinaya* specifically refer to inscribed gift-worthy objects. Gregory Schopen was the first and to the best of my knowledge the only scholar to have draw attention to such references. He considered several passages in the Tibetan witness of the *Mūlasarvāstivādivinaya*, which he argues is unique in it being ‘the only such Code’ to refer to inscriptions. He suggests this supposed idiosyncrasy is unsurprising, insofar as this corpus of monastic regulations in all likelihood derives from institutions active in the early

¹ Michael Willis, ‘Relics and Reliquaries’, in *Buddhist Reliquaries from Ancient India*, ed. Michael Willis (London: British Museum Press, 2000), 271.

Common Era in the North and Northwest.¹ The former component of this observation is not wholly accurate. There are in fact several other cases to be found in the Chinese witnesses of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*, which parallel those he considers, as well as the *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya*. These new passages to be introduced below dovetail for the most part with those considered by Schopen, as they present the practice of writing inscriptions as both an issue of monastic ownership and a donative activity. These regulations, in turn, correspond in several respects to inscribed objects from monastic contexts in the North and Northwest.

Several passages indicate that monastics were actively encouraged not to inscribe objects with their personal name. Schopen cites a case from the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* in which the monk Aniruddha wrote his name upon his bowl, because some confusion over ownership had arisen when his student washed both his master's and his own bowl. However, having inscribed their name, Aniruddha's bowl was subsequently borrowed by a lay-practitioner, who used it to take food to his favourite prostitute. She, upon reading that it belonged to a monk, erected a shrine for it and when another of her clients discovered the bowl, it was assumed that Aniruddha too was her client, which of course endangered the reputation of the Buddhist institution.²

A close, but much shorter, parallel to this story is also to be found in the *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya*. However, there is an important difference in that the issue is not only of institutional reputation but also of ill-intending monks.

Two monks were in dispute. One monk wrote the other's name on a bowl and placed it before the door of a prostitute.

At one time a literate Brahmin lay-practitioner entered the

¹ Schopen, *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters*, 21.

² Schopen, *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters*, 22–23.

brothel and saw the bowl was inscribed; he exclaimed, ‘Monks also enter this brothel!’ The monks heard this gossip and became disquieted; they related the matter to the Buddha. The Buddha said, ‘From today on, it is not permitted to write a name atop a bowl. If one writes a name atop a bowl it is a misdemeanour (*duṣkṛta*). As it is for a bowl, so it is for all other items. It is not a crime to make a mark.’¹

A written name was thus considered potentially dangerous. In signifying possession and identifying a monastic individual it could lead to undesirable results if the inscribed object, as the above examples show, were to wind up in the wrong place. However, it was nonetheless necessary to distinguish individual property and thus a personalised sign was allowed. To my knowledge, no such examples of personalised marks are attested archaeologically.

These stories correspond to rules concerning the monastic ownership of bowls in the *Mūlasarvāstivādinayasamgraha* 根本薩婆多部律攝. And it is in such regulations also that the phenomenon of donative inscriptions is also introduced.

Ordinarily, atop a bowl [a monk] should not write one’s own name. If one makes a personal mark, it is not a crime; this should be allowed in the case of other individuals’ objects. At the time of writing the name, one obtains a misdeed (*duṣkṛta*). If an individual possesses an object that is a gift for the three treasures [i.e., the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṃgha], one should atop the object to be given [*deyadharmā*] write

¹ 有二比丘共鬪，一比丘書他鉢作字，著姪女門前。時有識字婆羅門居士入是舍，見鉢有字作是言：比丘亦入是舍。比丘聞是語心不喜，是事白佛，佛言：從今不得鉢上作字。若鉢上作字者，突吉羅。如鉢，一切餘物亦爾。不犯者，作幟。T 1435, p. 351a21–26.

the name of the donor: ‘This object is the meritorious donation of such-and-such.’¹

Inscriptions were also of utility in resolving issues of inter- and intra-institutional possession. In the *Mūlasarvāstivādinayavibhaṅga* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶, the inter-institutional issue of possession arose when a festival was organised by two monasteries that had been established by a prominent donor, one located in the forest and another in a garden complex. Monks of the latter monastery borrowed seats and mats from the former for the gathering. However, during the proceedings, the property of the respective monasteries became mixed up and could no longer be distinguished. By way of solution, the Buddha instructed:

Atop the object one should write the name of the monastery, and one can [i.e., optionally] also write the name of the donor specifying: “This is the donative object of such-and-such”.²

An example of intra-institutional possession is to be found in the *Sarvāstivādinaya*, wherein another case states that following a fire at the Jetavana monastery, the monks could not determine to whom and to which living quarters (*vihāra*) the surviving beds had belonged.

On this matter, they asked the Buddha. The Buddha said: ‘Make a sign’—[but] in making a sign the [beds] could not be distinguished—‘Make a mark then’—[but] in making a mark they could not be distinguished —‘Make a cakra’,

¹ 凡於鉢上不應書己名字，若作私記者無犯，別人之物皆應准此。若書名時得惡作罪。若人持物施三寶者，應於所施物上鐫題施主名字，此是某甲福施之物。T 1458. 562a7–10.

² 佛言：於其物上應書寺名，并可書彼施主名字，云是某甲施物。T 1442. 782b5–15. Parentheses are my own. On the Tibetan parallel to this episode, see Schopen, ‘What’s in a Name: The Religious Function of the Early Donative Inscriptions’, 62; Schopen, *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters*, 23–24.

‘Make a written record’, ‘Make an auspicious symbol’— [but] in the same manner they could not be distinguished. The Buddha said, ‘One should write: “This is such-and-such an object, the donation of such-and-such householder, it belongs to such-and-such [monk], and to such-and-such living quarters”.’¹

This latter example thus diverges from the rule encountered earlier in the same corpus, as well as in the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya* as a whole, as it allows for the name of an owner—which I take to denote a monk—to be inscribed upon an object donated to a monastic institution.

Schopen correctly observed that the regulations in the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya* do not strictly conform to epigraphic evidence from the Indic Northwest, as there are many instances where the name of a monk is found atop an object. However, it is a thin line that differentiates a donation from an object of possession, and to that extent, it is not patently evident whether the name of monk on an inscribed object refers to him as an owner or as a donor. We also do not know when this regulation was instituted and one would expect to find the names of monks, as it was precisely against this issue that the rules were created, implying the practice was common. It is therefore the extended regulation in the *Sarvāstivādinaya* that speaks most to donative inscriptions from the Northwest in allowing for the identification of an owner.

Before turning to some concrete examples, however, it is important to consider the importance of these passages for understanding donative inscriptions. In each of the monastic regulations, we find that the wider concern of recording donative activity is

¹ 佛言：應作幟。作幟故不可分別，應更作異相。作異相故不可知，應作輪、應作券文、應作德字。如是作故不識，佛言：應作字。是物某甲、某甲居士所布施，屬某甲、某甲房舍。T 1435. 468b7–12.

introduced to the narrow monastic issue of individual and institutional ownership. They state, collectively, that an object intended for the Buddha, Dharma, or Saṃgha should be inscribed with a donative formula, stipulating that a given object is the donation of such-and-such a donor. Schopen does not cite any such formulae from the Tibetan corpus but he does refer us to another passage (likely based upon the above formulae) in the Tibetan witness of *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya* that states, ‘This thing is a religious gift of King Bimbisāra’, which was deemed necessary so that the donation would be permanently associated with the ruler when put on display.¹ He also identified a Sanskrit parallel for the underlying text in Guṇaprabha’s *Vinayasūtra: deyadharmā* ‘yam amukasya’ (‘This is the gift-worthy object of such-and-such’). This formula can now be confirmed on the basis of the two close parallels in the Chinese witness of the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya* and the *Sarvāstivādinaya*, which, as an addendum to the inscribed name of the monastery, read respectively:

[1.] 此是某甲²福施之物

This is the meritorious gift of such-and-such

[2.] 是某甲施物

This is the donative object of such-and-such.

[3.] 是物某甲、某甲居士所布施³，屬¹某甲、某甲房舍²

¹ Schopen, *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters*, 24.

² Skt. *amukasya*.

³ Skt. *deyadharmā* or *deyadāna*. Cf. above 所施物. These passive constructions quite literally render the Sanskrit that an ‘object’ or ‘donation’ (*dharma*) is ‘to be given’ (*deya*). For a discussion of this term, see below in Chapter Twelve: Terms for Donations.

This donation is such-and-such, the gift-worthy object of such-and-such householder, belongs to such-and-such [monk], and such-and-such monastery’.

These regulations and formulae parallel epigraphic evidence from the Northwest in several formal and linguistic respects. Given the narrow material basis of the regulations in these *Vinaya*, they would appear to only apply to the types of requisite objects used by monks in monasteries (i.e., bowls, lamps etc.), although it seems plausible a broader range of objects (e.g., relics, statues) were theoretically included under the rule. Indeed, whilst it is primarily on inscribed monastic objects that such formulae are found, stipulating that such-and-such a gift-worthy object (*deyadharmā*) of such-and-such a donor belongs to (*parigraha*) such-and-such a monk or monastery, the same structural elements also arise on statues and reliquaries also.

MONASTIC ITEMS

In archaeological contexts, very few monastic items have survived. Within the corpus considered in this study, these objects number 77 and include such items as bowls, doors, ewers, ladles, lamps, and pots and potsherds, whose inscriptions specify any combination of the following: the names of the [1] donative object, [2] donor, [3] owner, [4] monastic institution, and [4] monastery or location. The extent to which they conform to the formulae of the monastic regulations thus varies and this is of course to be expected due to the heterogeneity of the epigraphic

¹ Skt. *parigraha*. This term is found commonly in inscriptions in the locative to state that an object is given into or is in the possession of a monk or monastic institution.

² Skt. *vihāra*.

corpus. It is, therefore, neither profitable nor feasible to assess the degree to which all individual inscriptions relate to the rules and a few examples shall therefore suffice.

Common to pots and potsherds is that only a name in the genitive is stated. For example, two Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions from Shahbazgarhi, Pakistan read: /// *Budhamitrāsa* ///¹ and *(*Bu)///dhap(*r)iasa*²; and two others from Guldara, Afghanistan, read: *Śavimara[sa]* ///³ and *Sa[gha]ra///(*kṣita...*⁴ Many more examples can be added from sites across the Northwest⁵ and several of these also state the names of monks; for example, one potsherd of unknown location reads: *[Dhamavajā]ṇ[e] śama[ṇa]*.⁶ On the basis of the above *Vinaya* regulations, one may wish to interpret such examples as aberrant inscriptions of possession and potential candidates for those to cause issues for monks. However, it cannot be ruled out these objects may well have been donations also.

There are also a large number of inscriptions of the corpus that correspond to the most basic form of the regulation, which states the object is the possession of a monastic institution or monastery. For example, one pot from Mingora, Swat reads:

saghami ◇ *caūdiśami* ◇ *acaryaṇa* ◇ *Sarvasthivaṇa* ◇ *pari-*
grahami ◇ *parvadiae* ◇ *utarae* ◇ *Śpu[ṭha]sa-*
[v]()///(*harami)*⁷

¹ CKI 224.

² CKI 695.

³ CKI 238.

⁴ CKI 700.

⁵ E.g., CKI 384, 385–7, 1170.

⁶ CKI 1167.

⁷ CKI 1111. Three other ewers read similarly, see CKI 1109–10, 1112.

In the possession of the Sarvāstivāda teachers of the community of the four directions at the rocky-ford¹ [and] in the Śpūṭhasa-monastery.

Another example of a vase from Afghanistan reads:

*...budhaputrasa Ana...pasa deyadhamma saghe catudiṣe
Staraya Baliyaphāṁkavihare acariyaṁ Dhammagutakana
parigrahe savasatvaṇṇaṁ h[i]tasukhaya²*

The gift-worthy object of the son of [...]budha, Ana[...]pa, in the possession of the Dharmagutpaka teachers of the four directions at the Baliyaphāṁkavihāre in Starā; for the welfare and happiness of all beings.

It is predominantly on such objects of monastic utility that one encounters formulae of this variety, not only on pots³ but also on fragrance boxes,⁴ ladles,⁵ lamps,⁶ sieves,⁷ amongst other items. All of these objects specify that the object has been transferred into the possession of a monastery. However, there are also examples where the recipient and owner is a monastic individual, corresponding in this case to the formula from the *Sarvāstivādavīnaya*:

*bhadanta [Ca]t[ula]sa Saghapriyasadham-viharisa
pratigraha [a]yaṇ pānayaḥade deyaṁdharṇe Va[sa]va-
datae Su<*ha>somabharyae atmanasa arogadaḥṣinae*

¹ On this term, see Falk, “‘Buddhist’ Metalware from Gandhāra’, 44.

² CKI 182

³ CKI 66, 362, 370–3, 399, 510, 514, 1111–13.

⁴ CKI 145.

⁵ CKI 67.

⁶ CKI 68.

⁷ CKI 233.

*svamiasa Suhasomasa saṃmepratyāśae madapi[t]rina
saṃmepratyā(*śae) + + + + saṃmepratyāśae mitra-
ñāṭisalohitana saṃmepratyā[śa]e bhava[tu]*¹

In the possession of venerable Catula, co-resident of Saghapriya. This water-pot is the gift-worthy object of Vasavadatā, wife of Suhasoma; may it be for the reward of her own health, for the perfect share of Lord Suhasoma, for the perfect share of [her] mother and father, for the perfect share of..., for an equal share among friends, relatives and kin.

*Budhapriyaṣamaṇasa Somahotisadharmviharisa [S]ra[thu]-
ṇagajatahomagasa daṇamuhe io Vajrakuḍae ṇiyatati thubami
Mahamitraputrasa Mahilasa viharami Ṇabīnagami ayariaṇa
Dhamāiṭtagaṇa pariḡrahami matapito puyae sarvasatvaṇa
puyae du[kha]daīae bhoto*²

The principal gift of the monk Budhapriya, co-resident of Somahoti, and *homaga* of Srathuṇagajata. He transfers it to the Vajrakuḍa stupa at the monastery of Mahila, son of Mahamitra, into the possession of the Dharmaguptaka teachers. For the worship of [his] mother and father, for worship of all beings, may it be for the removal of suffering.

Regulations concerning inscribed objects in the *Vinaya* do not appear to encompass other objects, such architectural items, reliquaries, statues, wells, etc., which constitute a far greater part of the donations attested in the material record. From the perspective of the formula, however, one finds identical constructions in the corpus of inscribed relic donations:

¹ CKI 569.

² CKI 404.

Reliquary Inscription of Priavaśa (No. 38)

[1.] *savatsaraye śaviśavaśaśatimae* [2.] *maharayasa mahata-*
sa Ayasa kalagada[3.]*sa Aśadāsa masasa divasami* [4.]
treviśami iśa divasami [5.] *yaiūasa ra[j]jami i* [6.] *maharayasa*
ṇai[mi]tra[7.]*[bha]jao* [8.] *tre[haṇi]a[y]jao puyae* [9.] *yeṇa*
io vihare pratiṭha[10.]*vide* [11.] *i śarira aḍi pradethavida*
[12.] *Priavaśara śamaṇasa* [13.] *ime ya śarira pra-*
dethavi[14.]*da i daṇamuhe Priava*[18.]*śasa śamaṇasa* [15.]
madapida puyāida [16.] *Mahiśadagaṇa aīri*[17.]*aṇa pari-*
grahami

In the one hundred and twenty-sixth year of the Great King, the Great Azes, deceased, on the twenty-third day of Āṣāḍha. On this day in the reign of the Yabgu, the Great King, for the worship of Trehaṇī, wife of Ṇāimitra by whom the monastery was here established, relics were established by the monk Priavaśa. These relics were established as the principal donation of the monk Priavaśa. [His] mother and father are honoured. Into the possession of the Mahīśāsaka teachers.

Pillar Base of Buddharakṣita and Dharmarakṣita (No. 61)

[1.] *maharajasa devaputrasya hūveśkasya saṃ 30 3 he 1 di 2*
etasya purvaya buddharakṣitaddhamarakṣitanam bhraṭṛṇā
somaputraṇam brahmaṇaṇam opavaṇasa-gotraṇam
takhaśīlākaṇam dānaṃ kubhakaṃ svake vihare toyīyaṃ
saṃṅghe catudiśe ācaryanaṃ sarvastivadinam pariḡrāha [2.]
atmanasya ārogadaḡṣinaya mātapīṭṛṇam pujartha sarvasyeva
parīvarasya dīrghāyūkataya sarvasatvanaṃ hitasukhartha

Year 33 of the Great King, Son of Gods, Huviṣka, month 1 of winter, day 2. At this previous time, a pillar, the gift of the brother Buddharaṣita and Dharmaraṣita, sons of Soma, Brahmins of the Opavaṇagotra, and Taxilans, [was given] into the possession of the Sarvāstivādin teachers of the four directions, at their own monastery in Toyī; for the reward of their own health, the worship of their mother and father, for the longevity of the entire retinue, and for the welfare and happiness of all beings.

There are also several elements of inscriptions not contained in the *Vinaya* formulae, including the time, the donors' titles and attributes of identity, and, most notably, the purposes and wishes of the donation to effect certain benefits, the epigraphic aspiration. However, there are certain narrative texts to deal certain of these phenomena in inscriptions, where the practice of writing is treated in terms of the doctrine of causal action (*karma*); this causal aspect shall be treated in the following chapter on donative practice.

MONASTERIES

In the *Vinaya*, the aetiological story of the monastery is illustrated through the donative actions of the famous devotee, Anāthapiṇḍada, who beseeches Prince Jeta to allow him to build a monastery for the Buddha in the garden (*ārāma*) of Jetavana; thereby indicating that land, or more specifically beautiful land, was owned by the ruler, and that in order for the monastics to acquire it they needed an influential and wealthy go-between.¹ Being donated by a specific individual, the monastery would

¹ Vin 2. 157ff.

typically be named after that figure, and several such monasteries are mentioned in early Buddhist literature, such as the Purvārama in Śrāvastī and the Ghoṣitārama in Kauśāmbī. Indeed, this latter donation of Ghoṣita is mentioned quite regularly in Brāhmi inscriptions found at the site.¹ However, there is no archaeological evidence for established monasteries from the proposed time of the Buddha and this only arises in the North and Northwest from the 2nd–1st century BCE² but more predominantly in the 1st–2nd century CE. On this basis, many scholars have questioned the degree to which Buddhist was institutional prior to the Common Era.³ In epigraphic terms also, reference to such sites only arises from the early 1st century CE, indicating that specific donors only took charge of these constructions from this time or shortly before.

Terms for monastic sites in Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions differ and include monastic complexes (*saṃghārāma*), monasteries or living quarters (*vihāra*), gardens (*ārāma*), forests (*vana*) and later forest dwellings (*araṇya*).⁴ These sites arise either as a donation themselves or as the location where another donation, which largely include pots, relics, Bodhisattva, and Buddha statues, was made. A total of 78 inscriptions mention one of these monastic sites (Fig. 12.1). Most are

¹ See Qu 2. 6 and the Bodhisattva Statue of Buddhāmitrā (No. 48).

² Elizabeth Errington records only a small number of stray coin finds at monastic sites from the Indo-Greek Period, Errington, 'Numismatic Evidence for Dating Buddhist Remains', 192–94; Appendix 1.

³ Cf. Siglinde Dietz, 'Buddhism in Gandhāra', in *The Spread of Buddhism*, ed. Ann Heirman and Stephan Peter (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 57; Heitzmann, 'Early Buddhism, Trade and Empire'; Marshall, *Structural Remains*; Neelis, *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade*, 221; Schopen, *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters*, 1–3. It is in the 2nd–1st centuries BCE when we first encounter the earliest monastic sites in the valleys of the Yamuna and Ganges rivers, the Western Ghats, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh. Fogelin, *An Archaeological History of Indian Buddhism*, 124–27.

⁴ During the Kuṣāṇa period the term *araṇya* comes to replace *saṃghārāma*, Strauch, 'Two Inscribed Pots from Afghanistan', 80.

undated and have been ordered below in accordance with palaeographic approximations, which are naturally inaccurate. However, several are dated, of which the earliest derives from the beginning of the 1st century CE and the latest from the mid 3rd century CE.

These inscriptions afford a certain insight into the geographical locations of specific monastic institutions, of which the Dharmaguptakas, Kāśyapīyas Mahāsāṃghikas, Mahīśāsakas, Sāṃmitīya, and Sarvāstivādins are mentioned.¹ On the basis of the objects that have provenance, it can be concluded that the majority of monastic complexes were situated either within or nearby urban sites, such as Haḍḍa in Afghanistan, Peshawar, Mingora in Swat, Taxila in the Punjab, and Mathura in Uttar Pradesh. These sites in turn represent key locations on the major trade routes, indicating a relation between Buddhist institutions, economic and political centres, and trade.² Several inscriptions suggest monasteries were positioned in secluded suburban areas, such as the Mahavana, likely in Swat, and the Jambuvana and Mathurāvana, near Mathura.

¹ See Chapter Nine: Monastic Institutions.

² Heitzmann, 'Early Buddhism, Trade and Empire', 124f.

Fig. 12.1 Monasteries in Donative Inscriptions

No	Title	Provenance	Date	Donation	Monastic Institution	Monastery	Individuals		Ref.
							Name	Title	
1	Slab of Phagula	Kauśāmbī, India	—	<i>śilā</i>	—	Ghoṣitārāma	Phagula et al	<i>bhikṣu</i>	Qu 2.6
2	Copper Plate of Patika (No. 12)	Taxila, Punjab, Pakistan	78 Maues (3/4 CE)	<i>śarīra saṃgh- ārāma</i>	—	—	Patika Liaka	<i>mahādāna- pati putra mahā- kṣatrapa</i>	CKI 46
3	Mathura Lion Capital (No. 25)	Mathura, India	—	<i>śarīra stupa saṃgh- ārāma</i>	Sarvāstivāda	<i>svaka</i> Busavihāra	Yasi Rajuvula	<i>agramahiṣī mahā- kṣatrapa</i>	CKI 48
4	Bodhisattva Statue of Amohāāsī (No. 46)	Mathura, India	—	<i>pratimā</i>	—	<i>svakavihāra</i>	Amohāāsī Buddharakṣita	<i>mātr</i> —	§ 1
5	Bodhisattva Statue of Dharmaka	Mathura, India	—	<i>bodhi- sattva</i>	Sāṃmitīya	Śirivihāra	Dharmaka	<i>upadhyāya</i>	Math 70
6	Volute Bracket of Savatrata and Devadata	Taxila, Punjab, Pakistan	—	—	—	<i>vihāra</i>	Savatrata Devadata	— —	CKI 93
7	Seal of Sata	Taxila, Punjab, Pakistan	—	<i>mudrā</i>	—	<i>ātmavihāra</i>	Sata	—	CKI 95

8	Seal of Therakula-vihāra	Afghanistan	—	<i>saṃgh-ārāma</i>	—	Therakula-vihāra	—	—	CKI 183
9	Dharmaguptaka Pot	Haḍḍa, Afghanistan	—	—	Dharmaguptaka	Sreṭharanya	—	—	CKI 362
11	Dharmaguptaka Pot	Haḍḍa, Afghanistan	—	—	Dharmaguptaka	[...]aranya	—	—	CKI 514
12	Dharmaguptaka Pot	Haḍḍa, Afghanistan	—	—	Dharmaguptaka	Sreṭharanya	—	—	CKI 399
13	Vase of Ana[...]pa	Afghanistan	—	<i>deya-dharma</i>	Dharmaguptaka	Baliyaphaiṃ-kavihare	Ana[...]pa et al	—	CKI 182
14	Seal of Khamti-wardhanavihāra	Haḍḍa, Afghanistan	—	<i>mudrā</i>	—	Khamtivardha-navihara	—	—	CKI 542
15	British Library Pot B	Haḍḍa, Afghanistan	—	<i>pānīya-ghaṭa</i>	Sarvāstivāda	Purnagaraña	—	—	CKI 370
16	Pitcher of Budhasena	—	—	—	—	Pravadiavihara	Budhasena	—	CKI 1115
17	Pot from Mingora	Mingora, Swat, Pakistan	—	—	Sarvāstivāda	Śpuṭhasavihara	—	—	CKI 1110
18	Ewer from Mingora, 1	Mingora, Swat, Pakistan	—	—	Sarvāstivāda	Śpuṭhasavihara	—	—	CKI 1109
19	Ewer from Mingora, 2	Mingora, Swat, Pakistan	—	—	Sarvāstivāda	Śpuṭhasavihara	—	—	CKI 1111
20	Ewer from Mingora, 3	Mingora, Swat, Pakistan	—	—	Sarvāstivāda	Śpuṭhasavihara	—	—	CKI 1112

23	Door from Mingora	Mingora, Swat, Pakistan	—	<i>deya-dharma</i>	—	Bhadradhavihara	Duśa	—	CKI 1113
22	Pedestal Donation for Mahāsāṃghika	Mathura, India	—	—	Mahāsāṃghika	Ālānakavihāra	—	—	Math 73
23	Bowl of Buddhapriya	—	—	<i>dāna-mukha</i>	Dharmaguptaka	Ñabiṇagavihāra	Budhapriya	<i>śramaṇa homage sārđham-vihārin</i>	CKI 404
24	Reliquary Inscription of Teyamitra	Swat, Pakistan	—	<i>śarīra</i>	—	Bodhisattvagarbavihāra	Teyamitra Et al	—	CKI 457
25	Reliquary Inscription of Priavaśa (No. 38)	—	126 Azes (78/79 CE)	<i>śarīra dāna-mukha</i>	Mahīśāsaka	<i>vihāra</i>	Priavaśa —	<i>śramaṇa yabgu mahārāja</i>	CKI 331
26	Copper Ladle of Iśparaka	Taxila, Punjab, Pakistan	—	<i>dāna-mukha</i>	Kāśyapīya	Uttarāma	Iśparaka	—	CKI 66
27	Sieve of Driḍha	Begram, Afghanistan	—	<i>dāna-mukha</i>	Kāśyapīya	Śerianavihāra	Driḍha	<i>śramaṇa</i>	CKI 233
28	Reliquary Inscription of Khadadata (No. 43)	—	157 [Azes] (109/110 CE)	<i>stupa</i>	—	Mahavana	Khadadata et al	—	CKI 225

29	Reliquary Inscription of Utaraya (No. 42)	—	157 [Azes] (109/ 110 CE)	<i>dhātu</i>	—	Kharala- mahavana- raña	Utaraya	<i>bhikṣuṇī</i>	CKI 226
30	Well Donation of Travaśakura Corporation	—	168 [Azes] (120/ 121 CE)	<i>kūpa dāna- mukha</i>	—	Khudaca- vihāra	Travaśakura	<i>sahaya</i>	CKI 61
31	Bodhisattva Statue of Buddhamitrā (No. 48)	Kauśāmbī, India	3 Kaniška I (130 /131 CE)	<i>bodhi- sattva</i>	Sarvāstivāda	Ghoṣitārāma	Buddhamitrā	<i>bhikṣuṇī treṭṭakā</i>	Sk 18
32	Bodhisattva Statue of Bh[...] (No. 52)	Mathura, India	4 [Kaniška I] (131/132 CE)	—	—	Sakkavihāra	Bh[...] Hummiyaka Et al	<i>sārdham- vihārin mahā- daṇḍānāyak a</i>	Sh 17
33	Buddha of Ṣuṣa Haruṣa	Anyor, Mathura, India	—	<i>pratimā</i>	—	Haruṣavihāra	Ṣuṣa Haruṣa	<i>śākyopāsaka</i>	§ 135
34	Bodhisattva of Śirika	Mathura, India	—	<i>bodhi- sattva, deya- dharma</i>	Mahāsāṃghika	Jambuvana	Śirika et al	<i>upāsaka sārthavāha</i>	Sk 213
35	Buddha of Buddhadāsī	Mathura, India	8 Kaniška I (135/136 CE)	—	—	Hakiyavihāra	Buddhadāsī	<i>bhikṣuṇī</i>	Sk 30
36	Bodhisattva of Nāgadatta	—	16 Kaniška I (142/143 CE)	<i>pratimā dāna</i>	Mahāsāṃghika	Kāṣṭhikīya- vihāra	Nāgadatta	<i>bhikṣu vihārin</i>	Sk 34
37	Bodhisattva of Śivadhara et al	Śrāvastī, India	—	<i>bodhi- sattva dāna</i>	—	Jetavana	Śivadhara et al	—	SaMa 1

38	Reliquary Inscription of Lala (No. 54)	Manikyala, Pakistan	18 Kaniška I (144/145 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	—	<i>ātmāvihāra</i>	Lala Veśpaśī Budhila Burita et al	<i>mahādaṇḍa- nāyaka mahā- kṣatrapa navakarmika vihāra- karaka</i>	CKI 149
39	Reliquary Inscription of Śveḍavarma (No. 55)	Kurram, Pakistan	20 Kaniška I (146/147 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	Sarvāstivāda	<i>āraṇya</i> Navavihāra	Śveḍavarma Et al	—	CKI 153
40	Bodhisattva of Puṣyadattā	Sonkh, Mathura	23 Kaniška I (149/150 CE)	<i>bodhi- sattva</i>	—	<i>vihāra</i>	Puṣyadatta Gunda	<i>duhitṛ vihāra- svāmin</i>	Sk 43
41	Jar of Buddhaghoṣa	—	—	<i>dāna- mukha</i>	—	Masenaraṇya	Budhaghoṣa	—	CKI 360
42	Seal of Vhumiaga- mazivihāra	—	—	<i>saṃgha- mudrā</i>	—	Vhumiaga- mazivihāra	—	—	CKI 220
43	Reliquary Inscription of Saṃghamitra (No. 59)	Haḍḍa, Afghanistan	28 [Huviška] (154/155 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	—	Rāmāraṇya	Saṃghamitra Rama	<i>navakarmika</i> —	CKI 155
44	Maitreya of Unknown Nun	Mathura, India	29 Huviška (155/156 CE)	—	Dharmaguptaka	<i>vihāra</i>	—	<i>bhikṣuṇī</i>	Sk 51
45	Reliquary Inscription of Mahasena and Saṃgharakṣita (No. 57)	Shah-ji-ki- Dheri, Peshawar, Pakistan	—	<i>gandha- karaṇḍa deya- dharma</i>	Sarvāstivāda	Kaniṣkavihāra	Mahasena Saṃgharakṣita	<i>agniśāla- karmia</i>	CKI 145

46	Bodhisattva of Dhanavatī	Caubara, Mathura, India	33 Huviṣka (159/160 CE)	<i>bodhi-sattva</i>	Sarvāstivāda	Mathuravana	Dhanavatī Buddhamitrā Bala	<i>bhikṣuṇī āntevāsini</i> <i>bhikṣuṇī trepiṭakā</i> <i>bhikṣu trepiṭaka</i>	Sk 57
47	Pillar Base of Buddharakṣita and Dharmarakṣita (No. 61)	Mathura, India	33 Huviṣka (159/160 CE)	<i>kumbhaka dāna</i>	Sarvāstivāda	<i>svakavihāra</i>	Buddharakṣita Et al	<i>upāsaka brāhmaṇa</i>	Sk 58
48	Pillar Base of Buddharakṣita and Dharmarakṣita	Mathura, India	33 Huviṣka (159/160 CE)	<i>kumbhaka dāna</i>	Sarvāstivāda	<i>svakavihāra</i>	Same as above		Sk 59
49	Buddha of Khvasicā	—	45 Huviṣka (172/173 CE)	<i>bhagavat</i>	—	Rośikavihāra	Khvasicā	<i>upāsikā</i>	Sk 66
50	Bodhisattva of Saṃghadāsa	Mathura, India	46 [Huviṣka] (173/174 CE)	<i>bodhi-sattva dāna</i>	—	Mahādaṇḍa-nāyakavihāra	Saṃghadāsa	—	Sk 68
60	Reliquary Inscription of Vagamarega (No. 62)	Wardak, Afghanistan	51 Huviṣka (177/178 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	Mahāsāṃghika	Kadalayigava-gamarigavihāra	Vagamarega et al	—	CKI 159
61	Reliquary Inscription of Vagamarega's Daughter (No. 63)	Wardak, Afghanistan	51 Huviṣka (177/178 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	Mahāsāṃghika	Kadalyage-vihāra	— Vagamarega et al	<i>duhitṛ</i> —	CKI 509
62	Stone Bowl of Vaira (No. 64)	Charsadda, Pakistan	51 Huviṣka (177/178 CE)	<i>dāna-mukha</i>	Kāśyapīya	Puyakavihara	Vaira	—	CKI 367

63	Buddha Statue of Budddhavarma (No. 65)	Mathura, India	51 Huviṣka (177/178 CE)	<i>bhagavat</i>	—	Mahārājadeva-putravihāra	Buddhavarma	<i>bhikṣu</i>	Sk 77
64	Buddha Statue Pedestal of Saṃghasena	Mathura, India	53 Huviṣka (179/180 CE)	<i>dāna</i>	Mahāsāṃghika	<i>svakvihāra</i>	Saṃghasena	—	Sk 82
65	Donation of Poda	Jamālgaṛhī, Mardan, Pakistan	359 [Yoṇa] (183/184 CE)	—	Dharmaguptaka	<i>āraṇya</i>	Poda	<i>śrāvaka</i>	CKI 116
66	Buddha Statue of Unknown Donor at Masaravihāra	—	—	<i>bhagavat</i>	—	Masaravihāra	—	—	1 183
67	Statue of Dharmahastika	Naugava, Mathura, India	—	<i>pratimā</i>	—	<i>svakvihāra</i>	Dharmahastika	<i>bhikṣu</i>	Math 91
68	Pot of Yolamira (No. 67)	Dabar Kot, Balochistan, Pakistan	—	<i>prāpa deya-dharma</i>	Sarvāstivāda	Yolamira-vihāra	Yolamira	<i>vihāra-svāmin</i>	CKI 165
69	Oil Lamp of Ṣakea	Dir, Pakistan	—	—	—	Budhama-ṣamaṇaraṇā	Ṣakea	—	CKI 731
70	Buddha of Nandika	Mathura, India	74 Vāsudeva (201/202 CE)	<i>bhagavat dāna</i>	Sarvāstivāda	Mihiravihāra	Nandika	<i>bhikṣu</i>	Sk 93
71	Torus of Jivaka	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	77 Vāsudeva (204/205 CE)	<i>kumbhaka dāna</i>	—	Huviṣkavihāra	Jivaka	<i>bhikṣu oḍinayaka</i>	Sk 96
72	Bodhisattva of Sandhika	Caubara, Mathura, India	79 Vāsudeva (206/207 CE)	<i>bodhi-sattva dāna</i>	—	Majavihāra	Sandhika	<i>bhikṣu vinayadhara</i>	Sk 126

73	Stupa of Grāmaśesika	—	92 Vāsudeva (219/220 CE)	<i>stupa</i>	—	Veṇḍavihāra	Grāmaśesika	<i>bhikṣu</i>	Sk 145
74	Buddha of Unknown Donor in Pravārikavihāra	Mathura, India	22 [Vāsiṣka] (249/250 CE)	<i>pratimā</i>	—	Pravārika-vihāra	—	—	§ 74
75	Stone Fragment for Mahāsāṃghikas	Mathura, India	—	—	Mahāsāṃghika	Cutakavihāra	—	—	§ 79
76	Buddha Image of Madhurikā	Sāñcī, India	28 Vāsiṣka (255/256 CE)	<i>bhagavat</i>	—	Śrīdharmadevavihāra	Madhurikā et al	—	Sk 186
77	Buddha Image of Ariṣṭikā (No. 72)	—	—	—	—	Dharmadevavihāra	Ariṣṭikā	—	Sk 211
78	Pot of Sihaṣuda	Haḍḍa, Afghanistan	—	<i>deya-dharma</i>	Sarvastivāda	Samamṭapaśa-mahapriyaraṃṇa	Sihaṣuda	—	CKI 223

A monastery is typically named after the person or group by whom it was established, whereby the terms for a monastery are compounded with a name. Beyond the self-evident social prestige this would garner for the donor, as James Heitzmann suggests, ‘the association of Buddhist monastic sites with urban elites was a symbolic system expressing differences within an urban hierarchy’,¹ Schopen has also shown that subsequent to the donation, it was the responsibility of monastics to recite a prayer for the donor with the view to exponentially increase their merit.

Not all examples of monastery donations, however, are evidently the names of specific individuals, and many could also be toponyms. At Haḍḍa, for instance, there are seven monasteries attested: the Ramaraṃṇa, the Mahapriyaraṃṇe at Samantapaśa, the Saṃghilavihāra and the monastery at Heḍaghṛijākūṭa, related to the Sarvāstivādins, and the Śreṭharaṃṇa of Dharmaguptakas, as well as the Rāmaṃṇa, Purnakaraṃṇa and a monastery at Rayagaha (Rājagrha) of an unknown affiliation. Several of these are certain named after donor but two, the monastery at Rayagaha and Heḍaghṛijākūṭa (Vulture Peak at Haḍḍa) recall names and common ‘haunts’ of the Buddha as described in literature.²

Clearer instances arise only when the name of the donor occurs together with the name of the monastery. For instance, the Kadalayigavagamariḡavihāra, the site of relic dedication made by Vagamareḡa (No. 62), the Rāmāraṃṇa, in which Rāma is named as a beneficiary, or the Yolamiravihāra, where a pot was given by the owner of monastery (*viḡārasvāmin*) Yolamira (No. 67). In several inscriptions, donors also state the site is their own monastery. One Brāhmī example state that Puśyadattā, daughter of the owner of the monastery

¹ Heitzmann, ‘Early Buddhism, Trade and Empire’, 133.

² Tarzi, Salomon, and Strauch, ‘An Inscribed Bowl’, 151ff.

(*vihārasvāmin*), Gunda, donated a Bodhisattva statue in her own (*svaka*) monastery.¹ Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions render the same notion a little differently, for instance, in the Reliquary Inscription of Lala (No. 54), the General and Master of Donations of the Satrap Veśpaśi, establishes various relics of the Buddha in his own (*ātman*) monastery.²

Due to limited data, it is difficult to determine the social groupings of individuals who would fund the construction of a monastery. No doubt such figures were wealthy and in several cases, satraps and rulers are encountered. Thus, two related figures, the Satrap Patika (No. 12) and Queen Yasi (No. 25) respectively established a monastic complex in their political centres, one in Taxila and the other in Mathura, as did the Kuṣāṇa rulers Kaniṣka I and Huviṣka, each of whom gave their name respectively to the Kaniṣkavihāra in Peshawar and Huviṣkavihāra in Mathura. However, this was not always the case and many figures who donated monasteries do not bear a title indicative of their social status. This is particularly true of monasteries constructed during the middle of the Kuṣāṇa Period, when we know that wealth had become more widely disseminated.

In the *Vinaya*, a monastic complex is said to comprise a standard set of features: cells, porches, attendance halls, fire-halls, huts, privies, places for pacing up and down, wells, halls for the wells, bathrooms, halls for the bathrooms, lotus ponds, sheds, etc.³ Looking to the

¹ [1.]...*v[i]hārasv[ā]m[i]sya gun[d]asya dhitā puśyada* [2.] *bodhisattvaṃ prat[i]ṣṭa[p]ay[ati]* [3.] *svake vihāre*. Sk 43.

² [2.]...*Lala* [3.] *daḍaṇayago Veśpaśisa kṣatrapasa* [4.] *horamurt[o] sa tasa apanage vihare* [5.] *horamurto etra ṇaṇabhadgavabudhaz[a]va* [6.] *p[r]atistavayati*.

³ *atha kho Anāthapiṇḍada gahapti Jetavane vihāre kārāpesi, pariveṇāni kārāpesi, koṭṭhake kārāpesi, upaṭṭhānasālāyo k., aggisālāyo k., kappiyakuṭṭiyo k., vaccakuṭṭiyo k., caṅkame l., cāṅkamanasālāyo k., udapāne k., udapānasālāyo k., jantāghare k., jantāgharasālāyo k., pokkharāṇiyo k., maṇḍape kārāpesi...* Vin 2. 146ff; esp. 159.

archaeological and epigraphic material of the North and Northwest, there are several points of intersection with the description found in that text. Many of these architectural features have been identified in fieldwork conducted in the Northwest, notwithstanding the possibility archaeologists were led by such textual accounts in identifying rooms with specific functions, who found that a site of this period typically comprised a central courtyard surrounded by cells for living, a refectory that was masked from public view, as well as an adjoining open-air stupa court, containing one or more stupas, where ‘monastic-led’ ritual occasions would be conducted.¹

Schopen observes that the terms *vihāra* and *ārāma*—used to denote at once a ‘pleasure ground’ or ‘garden’ as well as monastic complex—are described in Buddhist literature as being carefully designed, possessing beautiful art and architecture, as well as gardens tended to by dedicated gardeners (*ārāmika*), with trees, water features such as lotus-ponds (*puṣkariṇī*), and a variety of birds, which were all designed to enhance sensual pleasure. Those Buddhist monks sought to assimilate these suburban parks of characteristically secular amusements with their own place of habitation was, as Schopen argues, to attract wealthy members of the urban community, and particularly women, who would go on excursions to such places.²

To his observations, it is worth adding that several such items are mentioned in inscriptions found at monastic complexes. A large number

¹ Various reports are summarised in Fogelin, *An Archaeological History of Indian Buddhism*, 130ff.

² Such descriptions of aesthetic beauty are also to be found in the reports on the surrounding landscape of monastic sites that were written by archaeologists of the colonial period such as Stein in Swat and Marshall at Taxila, see Gregory Schopen, ‘The Buddhist “Monastery” and the Indian Garden: Aesthetics, Assimilations, and the Siting of Monastic Establishments’, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 126, no. 4 (2006): 487–505; Schopen, ‘Art, Beauty and the Business of Running a Monastery in Early Northwest India’, 306ff.

of wells (*kūpa*, *toyada*, *prāpa*) are to be associated with such sites, a practice limited, it seems, to locales in the Northwest.¹ However, it is more common to Brahmin and other Nāga cult inscriptions to find references to other garden features, such as reservoirs (*udapāna*) and lotus ponds (*puṣkariṇī*).²

From the number of monasteries recorded in inscriptions—and these represent but a fraction of others excavated in the region—one would assume that monks and nuns constituted a sizeable sample of the population as a whole. The population of monasteries can not be determined conclusively of course and only estimated on the basis of the principle given in the *Vinaya* that a preceptor (*upādhyāya*) and a co-resident pupil (*sārdhamvihārin*) would reside in the same cell.³ Following this premise, it seems that a monastery would contain between 30 and 200 monks, which varied across individuals locales. For instance, both the Takt-i-bahi monastery near Peshwar and Saidu Sharif monastery in Swat contains 15 cells each, implying a population of the 30.⁴ However, around Taxila the population was much higher.

Of the ‘scores and scores’ of monasteries to litter the region, most notable is the Dharmarājikā site, near Taxila, which underwent several phases of reconstruction, with each witnessing an increase in monastic numbers. Court A, dated to the Ind-Scythian period, comprises a stupa courtyard with several chambers surrounding it; Court and Monastery G date from the 2nd–3rd centuries CE, and comprise a large

¹ I am aware of 13 references to wells to occur in Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions. CKI 47, 51, 56, 61, 830, 156, 461, 829, 148, 159, 110, 833, 165. Many of these are discussed more thoroughly in Falk, ‘Pious Donation of Wells’.

² See CKI 57, 166–7, 169, 179, Qu 1.2, 1.6, 1.10, § 68, 98

³ Vin 1. 45.

⁴ Pierfrancesco Callieri, *Saidu Sharif I (Swat Pakistan). The Buddhist Sacred Area. The Monastery* (Rome: Istituto Italiano Per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1989), 10–11.

courtyard surrounded by 32 cells; Court J is of the same period and comprises a smaller courtyard, surrounded by 13 cells; Court H was built over a portion of Court G at a later date and has two tiers, each with 19 cells; and to the northwest of the Dharmarājikā stupa, one finds Monastery M5, dated to the 2nd century CE, that comprises two large rooms, likely an assembly hall and common rooms, in addition to approximately 15 cells. At full capacity in the c. 2nd century the Dharmarājikā site could, therefore, have held around two hundred residents.

The nearby site at Kalawan, located 1.5 miles to the southeast of Dharmarājikā site, is another large site with several stupas and monastic buildings, which are broadly contemporaneous to those at Dharmarājikā (c. 1st–3rd century CE). The monastic complex comprises three courts: Court C has 13 cells as well as ‘apartments’ (D1–7, E1), whose function was likely communal; Court F has three rows of cells on the south, west and north sides on two tiers, the lower having 23 cells (although cell 12 contains a stupa and was not used for dwelling) and the upper, 25 cells thus numbering 48 in total; and in Court F there is a total of 41 cells. Thus, the monastic site at Kalawan had the potential to hold just over two hundred monastics.¹

Extrapolating the percentage of the monastic population in respect to society as a whole is impossible. Logically the size of the monastic population must be positively correlated with the general population, since the latter needs to be sufficiently large enough to support the monastic institution or alternatively a small group of donors is required to have sufficient expendable wealth. We may expect that the sites were not overly large since, as the archaeological record shows, they were in initial phases of construction around the turn of Common Era. They certainly don’t have the scale recorded by Faxian in the 5th

¹ Marshall, *Structural Remains*, 274–86.

century CE, who records a flourishing region comprised of several hundred monastic complexes with large populations numbering the thousands. Nor do they compare to the large monastic populations that Xuanzang records in respect to a by gone age, although at the time of his travels in the 7th century CE almost all of monastic complexes across the Northwest lay in ruin. These accounts unfortunately represent the only means available to compare the frequency and size of monastic complexes and whilst these travellers provide detailed information, the precision of their accounts is wholly doubtful. Often the scale of the monastic populations they observed appears to be pure hyperbole and therefore must be taken with a very large pinch of salt. In Swat for example, Faxian records a flourishing Buddhist society with several hundred monasteries in the region, which, by the time of Xuanzang has descended into ruin, although the latter states that there were 1800 monasteries and that they previously held a population of 18000 monastics!¹

Despite uncertainties as to true to extent of monastic culture in the North and Northwest, it is clear, both archaeologically and epigraphically, that around the turn Common Era, monastic institutions experienced a burgeoning, receiving injections of capital from political figures and, later, a broader spectrum of society, who funded the construction of entire monastic complexes and all features to make up the complex, from water features to pots and utensils. Consequently, monks began to devise rules and regulations governing how these donations were made and recorded in epigraphy to ensure that matters of ownership and merit were clarified.

¹ Beal, *Buddhist Records. Vol. II*, 120.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: NARRATING DONATIVE PRACTICE

It is from being in the presence of three things, monks, that a faithful son of a good family produces much merit: Being in the presence of faith the faithful son of a good family produces much merit, being in the presence of a gift-worthy object the faithful son of a good family produces much merit, being in the presence of those worthy of gifts the faithful son of a good family produces much merit. There is thus your faith, there is a gift-worthy object, and I [the Buddha] am the recipient...¹

Giving is characterised by the giver, the object, and the field [of merit]. The giver is characterised by his or her faith.²

As a theoretical system, Buddhist donative practice can be summarised as a dynamic between three key players: a donor, a gift-worthy object,

¹ *so evam āha. tiṇṇaṃ sammukhībhāvā saddho kulaputto bahuṃ puññaṃ pasavati; saddhāya sammukhībhāvā saddho kulaputto bahuṃ puññaṃ pasavati. Deyyadhammassa sammukhībhāvā saddho kulaputto bahuṃ puññaṃ pasavati. Deyyadhammassa sammukhībhāvā saddho kulaputto bahuṃ puññaṃ pasavati. Dakkhiṇeyyānaṃ sammukhībhāvā saddho kulaputto bahuṃ puññaṃ pasavati. Tumhākañ c' evāyaṃ saddhā atthi. Deyyadhammo ca saṃvijjati. ahañ ca paṭiggāhako.* Nidd 1. 462. See also, AN 1. 150; Vsm 25.

² *dātrvastukṣetraviśeṣataḥ. tatra tāvat dātā viśiṣṭaḥ śraddhādyaiḥ.* Abhidh-k-bh 3. 114c–15a.

and a recipient who is worthy of a gift.¹ These players interact in order that the former, the donor, makes an offering to the worthy recipient at a timely (*kāla*) moment and from the latter's field of merit cultivates their own. The worthy recipient is broadly defined as the Buddha, an Arhat, a disciple, the monastic community, or one's ancestors. Basically all forms of giving directed to these individuals are beneficial. But some forms are better than others, depending on the type of position the donee occupies within the hierarchy of the worthy recipient. For instance, donating to a Buddha is always the highest form, a monastic is good (although monks are more worthy than nuns), and donating to ancestors is considered the least productive.²

Donors and donees are classified in terms of their societal opposition: the former group has material wealth and is described as having a duty to donate, since they have 'received clothes, material things and collected [wealth]',³ whereas the latter has 'gone forth' (*pravrajita*) from the life of a householder, has renounced society, and is an ascetic (*śramaṇa*). In the early period, monastics were truly

¹ Broadly in Indic literature, donative practice is seen to have six dimensions: the donor (*dātr*), the donee (*pratigrahitṛ*), faith (*śraddhā*), a worthy gift (*deya*) and the place and time (*deśākālo*). Matthew Milligan, 'The Development and Representation of Ritual in Early Indian Buddhist Donative Epigraphy', *Pacific World* 15 (2013): 173.

² On the hierarchy of worthy recipients, see Torkel Brekke, 'Contradiction and the Merit of Giving in Indian Religions', *Numen* 45, no. 3 (1998): 297ff. For a comparative study of textual enumerations, see Ingo Strauch, 'The Bajaur Collection of Kharoṣṭhī Manuscripts: Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī and the Order of Nuns in a Gandhāran Version of the Dakṣiṇāvibhaṅgasūtra', in *Women in Early Indian Buddhism: Comparative Textual Studies*, ed. Alice Collett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 17–45.

³ *vastralābhaḥ āmiṣalābhaś ca samudānītaḥ*. Var-v. 1.8.1b; 1.8.2.1.2. Masanori Shōno, ed., 'A Re-Edited Text of the Varṣāvastu in the Vinayavastu and a Tentative Re-Edited Text of the Vārṣikavastu in the Vinayasūtra', *Acta Tibetica et Buddhica* 3 (2010): 1–128.

envisaged as beggars (*bhikṣu*) and the list of gift-worthy objects (*deyadharmā*) are classified quite specifically as requisites for that lifestyle: robes, alms-food, bedding and seating, and medicine to cure illness, etc. Ascetics are advised to acquire such requisites, as long as they are of poor (*lūkha*) quality, in order that householders may know that they are truly detached from society.¹ This tripartite system has theoretically maintained its structure—and this is true for both the textual and epigraphic sources—yet the specific players and goals involved in the dynamic necessarily change according to distinct social contexts.

As a social system, Buddhist donative practice can be measured on a scale of inclusivity and exclusivity: it is inclusive to the extent that all manner of individual, regardless of gender, class, occupation, etc., may perform an act of giving and exclusive insofar as certain rewards were only available to specific social groupings. A cursory overview of Buddhist literature would lead one to conclude unhesitatingly that donative practice represents the former, more inclusive variety. Mabbeth and Bailey have shown that in early Buddhist literature, the donor is typically situated within the inclusive and horizontal social category of the householder (*gṛhapati*):² a male head of the family and wealthy

¹ Buddhaghosa clarifies that one who desires requisites in fact refuses (*paccakkhāti*) and actively devalues them by acquiring clothing from cemeteries and piles of rubbish, by gathering only lumps and morsels of food, by dwelling at the foot of a tree, in a cemetery or out in the open, and by making medicines from urine and herbs. Vsm 24–25.

² P. *gahapati*. Oskar von Hinüber has recently suggested that Vedic notion of a householder in Buddhist sources increasingly came to hold the sense of ‘treasurer’. In support of this contention, he references the fact that the *gṛhapati* is one of the seven treasures wheel-turning ruler in Buddhist literature. He also notes that in the Gold Scroll of Seṇavarma (No. 36), a certain Valia, son of Makaḍaka, is entitled as such and described as weighing the gold of donation: *io ca suañe solite Valiṇa Makaḍakaputreṇa ga[m]hapatina*. See Oskar von Hinüber, ‘On the Early History of Indic

landowner of agrarian society, who is not defined hierarchically by the vertical social categories of birth embodied in the Vedic caste system, and is described quite generally as a lay-practitioner (*upāsaka*) or as the son or daughter of a good family—this principle of inclusivity was a deliberate social project, pitted against the hierarchy of the Vedic caste system.¹ Equally, one also finds discourses directed to specific social groupings and individuals from all walks of life, including, beggars and commercial, mercantile, and political figures. The purpose of narrating donative practice is to depict a given individual engaging in Buddhist normative behaviour and cultivating much merit, with the typical result of being a good rebirth in a heavenly realm. The early instalment of this principle of inclusivity was a good one, since it could ensure a high number of supporters from all social spheres—this is one of two requirements for institutional success.

The second requirement is the acquisition of material wealth. Therefore, it is common to encounter narratives which highlight those in individuals in society who possess capital as being active in the donative sphere. A cursory overview of the epigraphic material of the North and Northwest demonstrates that donative practice here belongs to this exclusive category² and thus renders quite a different picture of donative practice to that propagated in textual discourse as a whole. Persons who recorded their activity with an inscription naturally had a certain amount

Buddhist Colophons’, *International Journal of Buddhist Thought and Culture* 27, no. 1 (2017): 49fn12.

¹ Bailey and Mabbett, *The Sociology of Early Buddhism*, 49ff. Richard Gombrich defines the son of a good family (P. *kulaputta*) and daughter of a good family (P. *kuladuhītā*) in simply general terms of address, as in ‘ladies and gentlemen’. He notes that they are rarely applied to monastic figures, see Gombrich, ‘Organised Bodhisattvas: A Blind Alley in Buddhist Historiography’, 48.

² See Chapter Ten: Individuals in Inscriptions.

of expendable wealth to fund the material cost and workmanship involved. This is reflected quite simply by the economic worth of the donations that have arisen in the archaeological record, in comparison to the stereotypical listing of gift-worthy objects provided in texts, and by the picture of the monastic figure in the North and Northwest, gleaned from epigraphic and textual sources, who was unlikely to have embodied the beggar image of early Buddhist society and rather was expected to be wealthy and regularly engaged in donative activities.¹ This substantial change, predicated on an embedded form of institutional monasticism, thus materially redefined what was regarded as gift-worthy and is accordingly reflected in the range of inscribed objects that were offered as donations, as seen in the previous chapter.

AVADĀNA LITERATURE

The literature that most corresponds to this material recasting of donative practice is represented by a genre termed *avadāna*, which exhibits several congruencies with archaeological and epigraphic materials at formal, historical, linguistic, and sociological levels. *Avadānas* constitute a nebulous form of narrative literature, today collected in extensive anthologies in Chinese, Gāndhārī, Pali, Sanskrit, and Tibetan, whose central purpose is to propagate Buddhist ideology and philosophy. Broadly defined, this is achieved by exemplifying the workings of causal action (*karman*)—the inexorable principle that all acts are consequential—and other tenets of discipline, doctrine, and ethics. In a given narrative, a protagonist typically performs an act in

¹ For further discussion on wealthy monks in the North and Northwest, see Schopen, *Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monks*, 72ff; Schopen, *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters*, 1–18.

conformity with or in contravention of Buddhist normativity (e.g., constructing or destroying a stupa) and thereafter experiences the associated results (e.g., birth in heaven or hell). These narratives are therefore moral and illocutionary or ritualistic and perlocutionary, inasmuch as they illustrate concrete modes of orthocognition and orthopraxy as defined by Buddhist institutions.

Within the genre, several sub-streams can be identified, which deal with the meritoriousness of individuals' causal actions (*karman*) and their results (*vipāka*). These include narratives of actions in previous births, entitled 'threads of action' (*karmaploti*), 'past connection' (*pūrvayoga*), and 'past life' (*pūrvaniveśa*) stories, as well as examples that detail actions in present existences and which often, in their more developed form, include an elucidatory previous existence (*bhūtapūrvam*) narrative frame, establishing the causal link between a past action and present state, and an explanation or prediction (*vyākaraṇa*) of a resulting future state effected by a present act. With the purpose of including all these literary streams, it is now common, following Richard Salomon's proposition, to refer to such narratives as constituting an 'avadāna-type'.¹

The history and nature of this literature is a complicated matter, the details of which shall not be fully considered here. This section of the thesis shall briefly recount how the genre is understood within Buddhist contexts and scholarship, offer evidence from several collections that localise many works within the context of the North and Northwest, and explore their relation to archaeological and epigraphic materials.

¹ This category was first proposed by Salomon, *Ancient Buddhist Scrolls from Gandhāra: The British Library Kharoṣṭhī Fragments*, 35–39.

CLASSIFYING THE GENRE

The terms *avadāna* or *apadāna*,¹ both variations occurring in the Sanskrit and Pali, are of uncertain derivation. The Skt. *avadāna* is analysed as a semantic obscuration of *ava+√dai* ('to purify'), from which such derived forms as *avadāta* ('purified', 'excellent') are found,² or *ava+√do/dā* ('to cut'), meaning 'something cut off; something selected', with the extended sense of 'notorious fact; and finally 'glorious achievement', 'legend' or, 'Heldentat'.³ The latter etymology is to be found quite literally in the usage of P. *apadāna* in the *Agāṇṇasutta*, where it occurs as specific piece of agricultural jargon meaning 'reaping' or 'harvesting', on which basis some have abstracted an idiomatic usage of 'what one reaps' (i.e., the fruits of one's actions).⁴

Presumably the earliest evidence for the term as a text is the *Mahāpadānasutta* of the *Dīghanikāya* and its Sanskrit counterpart, the *Mahāvadānasūtra* of the *Dīrghāgama*.⁵ The implicit sense of the term in

¹ G. *avadana*, *avadana*, *avaṣaṇa*.

² See Sally M. Cutler, 'The Pāli Apadāna Collection', *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 20 (1994): 3.

³ See J. S. Speyer, ed., *Avadānaśataka: A Century of Edifying Tales Belonging to the Hīnayāna* (The Hague: Mouton & Co, 1958), iii–iv; M. Winternitz, *Geschichte der indischen Litteratur. Zweiter Band: Die buddhistische Literatur und die heiligen Texte der Jainas* (Leipzig: C. F. Amelangs Verlag, 1920), 128. This sense corresponds to the Tibetan translation *rtogs par brjod pa'i sde* (lit. 'genre of teachings on accomplishments') in Candragomin's *Śiṣyalekha* ('Letter to a Disciple'), see Hahn, Michael, *Invitation to Enlightenment. Letter to the King Kaniska by Mātṛceṭa and Letter to a Disciple by Candragomin*, 52.

⁴ See DN 3. 88–90; translated at Walshe, *The Long Discourse of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*, 411–12. For further discussion of this specific meaning, see Cone, *A Dictionary of Pāli*, 163; Chris Clark, *A Study of the Apadāna Including an Edition and Annotated Translation of the Second, Third and Fourth Chapters. Phd Thesis* (University of Sydney, 2015), 5.

⁵ For an edition and discussion of this work, see Takamichi Fukita, ed., *The Mahāvadānasūtra: A New Edition Based on Manuscripts Discovered in North Turkestan* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003).

the title is of a dharmic narration regarding the former lives (*pubbenivāsapaṭisaṃyuttā dhammī kathā*) of the past six and present Buddha, dealing specifically with their final life in which they attained *parinirvāṇa*.¹ *Mahāvadāna* could perhaps be understood not as ‘legend’, but rather ‘great example’ or ‘great allegory’, in so far as it pertains analogically to all Buddhas by way of an archetypal exemplar.

Indeed, the Buddhist tradition provides precisely this type of definition. For example, the *Śrāvakabhūmi* states:

What is an *avadāna*? It is an example explained. Through an example, there is refinement of an original meaning. This is an *avadāna*.²

¹ DN 2. 1–55. The narrative describes the life of the Bodhisatta, eventually becoming the Buddha, according to common set: [1] the specific aeon (*kappa*) in which each arose, [2] whether they were born to a ruling or Brahmin family, [3] the name of the lineage (*gotta*) to which they were born, [4] the life-span (*āyupamāṇa*) of beings in their aeon, [5] the type of tree under which they attained awakening, [6] their two foremost (*agga*) disciples, [7] the number of disciples in their assemblies (*sannipāta*), [8] their highest attendant (*aggupaṭṭhaka*), [9] the names of their mothers and fathers, and [10] the contemporaneous king and the name of his capital city. The unfolding of certain key events in the Bodhisattas’ biographies are elaborated in the single case of the Bodhisatta Vipassin, with each event narrated according to the pre-defined rule (*dhammatā*); these include, for example, womb-entry (*kukkiṃ okkamati*) and birth (*jāti*), the identification of the thirty-two characteristics of a super-human (*dvattiṃsamahāpurisalakkhaṇa*) by an astrologer (*nemitta*) Brahmin and the prediction that he will become a wheel-turning ruler, a righteous king of Dharma (*cakkavattī dhammiko dhammarājā*), or, should he go forth into homelessness (*anagāriyaṃ pabbajati*), a perfectly awakened Buddha (*sammāsambuddha*), and so forth.

² *avadānaṃ katamat. yat sadṛṣṭāntakam udāhṛtam, yena dṛṣṭāntena yasya prakṛtasyārthasya vyavadānaṃ bhavati. idam ucyate ‘avadānam. Śrāv-bh 1. 230, Śrāvakabhūmi Study Group, Śrāvakabhūmi, Revised Text and Japanese*

In Chinese, the term was translated either as *yuan* 緣 (lit. ‘causal condition’)¹ or equally as common with *piyu* 譬喻 (‘simile’).² For instance, in the *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣa* 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論:

What is a simile? It is defined as the variegated and manifold similes that are narrated in respect to all the texts: the *Dīrghāvadāna*, *Mahāvadāna*³ etc.⁴

Similarly, the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* of Asaṅga (c. 4th century CE) defines it as follows:

What is an *avadāna*? It is that which is spoken as an example in respect to the sutras.⁵

Translation, The First Chapter (Tokyo: Institute for Comprehensive Studies of Buddhism in Taishō University, 1998).

¹ For instance the Chinese translation of the *Avadānaśataka* 撰集百緣經, T 200. And all individual *Avadānas* in the 4th century **Samyuktaratnapīṭakasūtra* 雜寶藏經, T 203, are entitled 緣.

² Transcribed variously into Chinese as *abotuona* 阿波陀那, *abotuona* 阿波陀那, *abotana* 阿波他那.

³ It is not clear if this 大譬喻 should be equated with the P. *Mahāpadānasutta* of the *Dīghanikāya* and the Skt. *Mahāvadāna*. Chinese versions bear distinct titles: 大本經 (‘The great sūtra of previous [existences]’), 大本緣經, T 1. 1b11; 佛說七佛經 (‘Sutra of the Buddha’s teaching on the seven Buddhas’), T 2. 150a4; 七佛父母姓字經 (‘Sutra of the seven Buddhas’ father, mother, and family name’), T 4. 159a25.

⁴ 譬喻云何。謂諸經中所說種種衆多譬喻。如長譬喻大譬喻等。 T 1545. 660a17–18.

⁵ *avadānaṃ katamā. sūtreṣu sadrṣṭāntakaṃ bhāṣitaṃ*. Abhidh-s 78, Pralhad Pradhan, ed., *Abhidharma-Samuccaya of Asanga* (Santiniketan: Visva-Bharati, 1950). For a French translation, see Walpola Rahula, *Le Compendium de la super-doctrine (philosophie) (Abhidharmasamuccaya) d’Asaṅga* (Paris: École Française d’Extrême-Orient, 1971), 132. The commentary elaborates further: *avadānaṃ sadrṣṭāntakaṃ bhāṣitaṃ, tenārthavyavadānād abhivyañjanād ityārthaḥ*. Abhidh-s-bh 96, Nathmal Tatia, ed., *Abhidharmasamuccaya-*

For the authors of these commentaries, an *avadāna* constitutes an example, an allegorical illustration that clarifies some original meaning as found, for instance, in a sutra. The sense that an *avadāna*'s purpose is primarily one of clarification led several Japanese scholars to etymologise the term as *ava-√dā* ('to unbind'), insofar as an *avadāna* 'disentangles' the sense of something.¹ In this sense, the function of the narrative is specifically pedagogic; it is a tool designed to illustrate a specific point of doctrinal import. As Fukita Takamichi recently remarked, the narratives 'serve as prooftexts showing how good actions culminate in the attainment of ultimate religious aims in a future life. The story is nothing but a "precedent" or "illustration"'²—we shall return to this point in greater detail below.

The classificatory status of *avadāna* literature also varies. The Theravādins did not include the genre within the nine divisions (*aṅga*) of the Buddha's word (*buddhavacana*),³ whereas in other twelve-fold classifications of the so-called 'northern traditions' it is considered as distinct, along with other additional genres, such as *nidāna* ('occasion'), *vaipulya* ('development'), and *upadeśa* ('instruction'), in differing

Bhāṣyam (Patna: K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute, 2005). 'An *avadāna* is that which is spoken with allegory, by this 'the sound etc., from the separation of meaning' is the sense.' In explaining *avadāna* with *vyavadāna*, Sthiramati conceivably had *√do* ('to cut') in mind.

¹ For discussion and further referenes, see Takamichi Fukita, 'The Original Meaning and Role of Avadāna', in *Saddharmāmṛtam: Festschrift für Jens-Uwe Hartmann zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Oliver von Criegern, Gudrun Melzer, and Johannes Schneider, Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde 93 (Wien: Arbeitskreis für tibetische und buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, 2018), 144–45.

² Fukita, 'The Original Meaning and Role of Avadāna', 143.

³ Discourse (*sutta*) narration in verse (*geyya*), explanation (*vyakaraṇa*), stanza (*gāthā*), solemn expression (*udāna*), as it was said (*itivuttaka*), previous birth stories (*jātaka*), miracles (*abbhutadhamma*) and development (*vedalla* = Skt. *vaipulya*(?)). E.g. AN 2. 6ff.

positions within the enumeration.¹ In terms of the basket (*piṭaka*) system, *avadānas* variously arise within the *Sūtra*-, *Vinaya*- and *Kṣudraka-piṭakas*. However, as something of a fixed genre, Buddhaghosa, in the c. 5th century, and using the nine-fold classification of *buddhavacana*, attributed the *apadāna* implicitly to the *Suttapiṭaka* and *vyakaraṇa* genre.² Distinctly, Asaṅga attributes the *avadānas* to the *Vinayapiṭaka*:

The *nidāna*, *avadāna*, *itivr̥ttaka* and *jātaka*; these four are included in the *Vinayapiṭaka*, which includes the *Parivāra*, of both [i.e., *śrāvaka*- and *bodhisatva-piṭaka*] baskets.³

By extension, Asaṅga's attribution logically demands that the *avadānas* were transmitted by the textual specialists responsible for the *Vinayapiṭaka*; namely, the *vinayadharas* ('bearers of the *Vinaya*'). This finding goes against the grain of current thoughts on the matter, whose

¹ *dharmaviniścayaḥ katamaḥ. āryasāsanam dvādaśāṅgadharmāḥ. katamāni dvādaśāṅgāni. sūtram geyam vyākaraṇam gāthā udānam nidānam avadānam itivr̥ttakam jātakam vaipulyam adbhutadharmāḥ upadeśas ca. Abhidh-s. 78.* 'What is the exegesis of the Dharma? The noble teaching, the Dharma, consists of twelve divisions. What are the twelve divisions? Discourse, narration in verse, explanation, stanza, solemn expression, occasion, allegory (see above), as it occurred (see also Ch. 本事經 'former occurrences', T. 17. 662b–699b, and P. *itivr̥ttaka* above), previous birth stories, development, miracles and instruction.' For a French translation, see Rahula, *Le Compendium de la super-doctrine (philosophie) (Abhidharmasamuccaya) d'Asaṅga*, 131. See also Mvyut 1273, I. P. Minaev, ed., *Mahāvvyutpatti*, Reprint ed. (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1992). In some instances it occurs in sixth place, see T 2. 300c5–8; T 223. 220b25–28. Sometimes in eleventh place, see T. 310. 436–14-16.

² Cutler, 'The Pāli Apadāna Collection', 19.

³ *nidānam avadānam itivr̥ttakam jātakam caitāni catvāri dvayoḥ piṭakayoḥ saparivāre vinayapiṭake saṅgrhīte bhavanti. Abhidh-s. 79.* For an alternative translation in French, cf. Rahula, *Le Compendium de la super-doctrine (philosophie) (Abhidharmasamuccaya) d'Asaṅga*, 133. The commentary states: *nidānam sotpattikaśikṣāprajñaptibhāṣitasamgrhītam vinayapiṭakam, avadāna-ādikaṃ tasya parivāro veditavyaḥ. Abhidh-s-bh. 96.*

proponents broadly argue for the distinct specialism of an ‘avadānist’. Although such titles do indeed arise, albeit much later—the *āvadānika* (‘avadānist’) and *avadānārthakoviḍa* (‘one experienced in the meaning of the *avadānas*’), both found in the *Kalpadrumāvadānamālā*¹—and many scholars, following John Strong, argue that such a specialism was prominent and comprised a ‘self-conscious group of specialists interested in the Avadāna’,² there is simply no evidence of this self-

¹ *dharmataḥ sukhino bhūtāḥ pāpato duḥkhabhāgiṇaḥ, miśrato miśrabhuktāra ity uktam avadānikaiḥ*. Kd-av. 106, P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Avadāna-Śataka* (Darbhanga: The Mithila Institute, 1958), 272.

From the Dharma beings have bliss, from evil they have their share of suffering,

And from their being mixed, they have a mixture’, thus spoke the avadānists.

Later we read:

guṇadharmapramāṇena jāter naiva pramāṇatā, tathā ca procyate baudhair avadānārthakovidaiḥ. Kd-av. 162, Vaidya, *Avadāna-Śataka*, 275.

According to the standard of *dharma* quality is not measured by birth,

Thus speak the Buddhist experts in the *avadānas*.

² John Strong, ‘The Buddhist Avadānists and the Elder Upagupta’, in *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R. A. Stein*, ed. Michel Strickmann (Bruxelles: Institut Belge des Hautes Études Chinoises, 1985), 864. The author of the *Kalpanāmaṇḍitikādr̥ṣṭāntapan̄kti* (‘Collection of allegories adorned with Imagination’), a Taxilan and Sarvāstivādin, Kumāralāta (c. 330 CE), whose work bears striking resemblances to Aśvaghōṣa’s *Sūtralaṃkāra* and the *Dīvyāvadāna*, is termed by Kuiji 窺基 (632–582 CE), the student of Xuanzang, as a ‘master of similes/examples’ (*piyushi* 譬喻師). Typically this term is taken to mean Dār̥ṣṭāntika (Sautrāntika), the specific branch of Abhidharma scholasticism, and Kuiji also regards Kumāralāta as the founder or ‘root teacher’ (*benshi* 本師) of that branch, T 1830. 358a12–13. For further discussion, see Robert Kritzer, ‘General Introduction’, *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 26, no. 2 (2003): 203. However, according to Strong, 譬喻師 should be understood in the literal sense of a ‘master of similes’ i.e., an ‘avadānist’. Strong, ‘The Buddhist Avadānists and the Elder Upagupta’, 868. Cf. Palumbo, *Early Chinese Commentary*, 284. Moreover, the title in Chinese is not to be found in any early translation, apart

awareness, neither in text nor epigraph, besides these notably late examples.¹ Rather, in the early period of these texts' geneses, specialists who engaged in the composition and didacticism of *avadāna* literature were apparently *self-conscious* enough to not advertise their specialism beyond any other already established, such as the *vinayadhara* or *dharmakathika*.²

The only indications of monastics being dedicated to the genre are circumstantial. For instance, the earliest evidence we have for the genre, represented by Kharoṣṭhī manuscripts that contain the *Pūrvayoga* and *Avadāna* narratives, were written by the same scribe, on which basis Lenz concludes:

The monk who wrote these *avadānas* and...*pūrvayogas* appears to have been an *avadānist*, a specialist in the writing and presumably reciting and teaching of *pūrvayogas* and *avadānas*, a state of affairs that is suggested by the fact that all his extant writings are *avadāna* type texts.³

from within the name of a Tathāgata, Piyushizi 譬喻師子如來 ('lion of similes'), T 443. 327c11. More widely it arises in commentarial literature in the meaning *Dārṣṭāntika*, e.g., T 1562. The *Kalpanāmaṇḍitikādrṣṭāntapaṅkti* is only extant in several fragments from Qizil, Central Asia and in Chinese translation, the *Da zhuangyan lun jing* 大莊嚴論經 of Kumārajīva (384–401 CE), see Lüders, *Bruchstücke der Kalpanāmaṇḍitikā des Kumāralāta*. (SHT 21); T 201. Discussed further in Charles Willemen, 'Remarks on the History of Sarvāstivāda Buddhism', *Rocznik Orientalistyczny*, T LXVII, no. 1 (2014): 263.

¹ *Avadānamāla* collections, such as the *Kalpadrumāvadānamāla* and *Aśokāvadānamāla*, have been dated rather vaguely to the 4th–10th centuries CE. Cf. Speyer, *Avadānaśataka: A Century of Edifying Tales Belonging to the Hīnayāna*, xxxvi; Winternitz, *Geschichte der indischen Litteratur. Zweiter Band: Die buddhistische Literatur und die heiligen Texte der Jainas*, 227.

² On these titles, see Chapter Ten: Pundits, Pedagogues, and Specialists.

³ Lenz, *Gandhāran Avadānas*, xiii.

These texts are typically appended to the end of other written works and, in this case, the ‘avadānists’ are therefore not limited to any specific genre. In another comparable instance, Demoto notes that the scribe who composed the c. 6th century Giglit manuscripts of the *Avadānaśataka*¹ and *Itivṛttaka* is one and the same, and that the former was likely again appended to another manuscript. She argues, ‘though the two works belong to different literary genres’, this is ‘no coincidence’ in light of the *Jātakas* present in chapters two and four of the *Avadānaśataka*, and that both the *Jātaka* and *Itivṛttaka* genres belong to the **Kṣudrakapiṭaka*.² Other *avadāna*-type texts, such as the *Milindapañha* and the *Anavatapta-gāthā*, are also conjectured to have belonged to this collection.³

These stray instances thus indicate that individual scribes, from quite distinct periods, were indeed specialists in a certain collection of texts of the *avadāna*-type. Nonetheless, they can hardly be used to justify an unattested ‘avadānist’. Rather, the case of the latter two scribes, discussed respectively by Lenz and Demoto, serves to indicate that specialists in *avadāna* literature were intimate with broader collections and the *avadāna* category itself was simply a mode contained

¹ Mitsuyo Demoto, ‘Fragments of the *Avadānaśataka*’, in *Buddhist Manuscripts. Vol. III*, ed. Jens Braarvig et al. (Oslo: Hermes Academic Publishing, 2006), 207–44.

² Mitsuyo Demoto, ‘Fragments of the *Itivṛttaka*’, in *Buddhist Manuscripts. Vol. IV*, ed. Jens Braarvig et al. (Oslo: Hermes Academic Publishing, 2016), 125–26. Whilst all monastic traditions refer to shorter (*kṣudraka*) texts, the nature of the collection dedicated to them is uncertain and descriptions of it vary within Buddhist literature, see Étienne Lamotte, ‘*Khuddakanikāya* and *Kṣudrakapiṭaka*’, *East and West* 7, no. 4 (1957): 341–48.

³ Richard Salomon, ed., *Two Gāndhārī Manuscripts of the Songs of Lake Anavatapta (Anavatapta-gāthā): British Library Kharoṣṭhī Fragment 1 and Senior Scroll 14* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), 18.

within a variety of genres. Bhikkhunī Dhammadinna observes in this regard:

In fact, the fluidity of the transmission of narrative materials and the use of both Vinaya and avadāna stories at the service of monastic and lay education makes it not altogether impossible that this avadāna illustrating the canonical dictum on the foremost gift was transmitted across multiple textual boundaries.¹

If Asaṅga's classification, stated above, can be taken with any credence or as an accurate reflection of textual classification in the early Common Era of the North and Northwest, his view correlates well with what is known regarding the textual history of certain *Avadāna* collections attributed to the Sarvāstivādins and Mūlasarvāstivādins. For instance, the Sarvāstivādin compiler of the *Avadānas* from Merv, Turkmenistan, is entitled a *vinayadhara* and uses abbreviation formulas that directly reference the *Vinaya*.² And unlike other *Vinayas*, which present their rules of discipline 'as an introductory story, the establishment of a rule, and a commentary on that rule', the *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya* has much lengthier introductory narratives and inserts past-life stories, including

¹ Bhikkhunī Dhammadinna, 'From a Liberated One to a Liberated One: An Avadāna Quotation in the Abhidharmakośopāyikā-Ṭīkā', *Dharma Drum Journal of Buddhist Studies* 19 (2016): 81.

² Seishi Karashima and M. I. Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya, eds., 'The Avadāna Anthology from Merv, Turkmenistan', in *The St. Petersburg Sanskrit Fragments, Buddhist Manuscripts from Central Asia 1* (Tokyo: The Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences and The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology, 2015), 145–524. Cf. Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya, M. I., 'A Sanskrit Manuscript on Birch-Bark from Bairam-Ali: I. The Vinaya of the Sarvāstivādins', *Manuscripta Orientalia* 5, no. 2 (1999): 27–36; Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya, M. I., 'A Sanskrit Manuscript on Birch-Bark from Bairam-Ali: II Avadānas and Jātakas Part 1', *Manuscripta Orientalia* 6, no. 1 (2000): 10–23.

jātakas and *avadāna*-type narratives illustrating the causal ‘thread of action’ (*karmaploti*) of the Buddha or monastics, into discussions on a rule.¹ Traces of these stories, including verbatim formulas, idioms, and themes, are found in nineteen of the thirty-six narratives that comprise the *Divyāvadāna*,² a tenet shared also with the formulas of the *Avadānaśataka*. It is for this reason that Jean Przyluski described the *Mūlasarvāstivādin* as a ‘reservoir’ of *avadānas*.³

On these bases, it seems that the knowledge and textual specialisms of the hypothetical ‘avadānist’ and *vinayadhara* were demonstrably akin, at least for the *Mūlasarvāstivādins*. Whether or not this can be extrapolated to the Sarvāstivādin and Dharmaguptaka monastics of the North and Northwest is not clear. Nevertheless, the very existence of *avadānas* in the Kharoṣṭhī manuscripts that are distinct from the *Vinaya*, and indeed the very classification of the genre within the twelve-fold scheme, does indicate that at some stage the *avadānas* were a separate group and were grouped as a product of the voluminosity of accumulated compositions.

CONTEXTUALISING AVADĀNAS IN THE NORTH AND NORTHWEST

The Pāli *Apadāna* of the *Khuddakanikāya* comprises a collection of hagiographies, written in verse, which are divided thematically into four sections: the *Buddhāpadāna* (‘*Apadāna* of the *Buddhas*’), *Pratyekabuddhāpadāna* (‘*Apadāna* of the *Pratyekabuddhas*’), *Therāpadāna* (‘*Apadāna* of Male Elders’) and the *Therikāpadāna* (‘*Apadāna* of

¹ Frauwallner, *The Earliest Vinaya and the Beginnings of Buddhist Literature*, 27.

² See Satoshi Hiraoka, ‘The Relation Between the *Divyāvadāna* and the *Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya*’, *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 26 (1998): 420.

³ Przyluski, ‘Fables in the *Vinaya-Pitaka* of the Sarvāstivādin School’, 4–5.

Female Elders’), and order by the number of verses within each section.¹ Collectively, the *Apadānas* explicate the actions (*kamma*) of these figures in their past lives and the characteristically meritorious results of those deeds.² For instance, one *Buddhāpadāna* is termed ‘the *avadāna* concerning previous threads of action’ (*pubbakammapilotikāpadāna*).

Thus the Fortunate One illuminated the previous deeds of the self,

The Dhamma-instruction called a previous causal connection.

The *apadāna* of the Buddha called ‘a previous thread of action’ is ended.³

Sally Cutler has argued that the *Therāpadāna* and *Therikāpadāna* are thematically distinct from the aforementioned *Mahāpadāna* to the extent that the latter ‘celebrate[s] success in the search for enlightenment’ and thereupon ‘could certainly be called “stories of glorious deeds [*apadāna*]”’, whereas the former deal with the causal links between actions (*kamma*) in the past and present lives of the elders.⁴ Yet, this causally directed quality is also descriptive of some segments of the *Mahāpadāna*. For instance, it states that Prince Vipassin had the heavenly eye as product of the results of action (*kammavipākajaṃ*

¹ For a more detailed discussion of the *Apadāna*’s contents and structure, see Cutler, ‘The Pāli *Apadāna* Collection’, 8ff. For a discussion of its canonical status and history, see Oskar von Hinüber, *A Handbook of Pāli Literature* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co, 1996), 60–61.

² In this sense, they are similar to the *Jātakas*, although this genre deals only with the previous lives of Buddhas.

³ *itthaṃ sudaṃ bhagavā attano pubbacaritaṃ, pubbakammapilotikaṃ nāma dhammapariyāyaṃ abhāsi. pubbakammapilotikaṃ nāma buddhāpadānaṃ samataṃ.* Ap 301.

⁴ Cutler, ‘The Pāli *Apadāna* Collection’, 4. (parentheses added.) Other scholars also maintain that there are no causal elements in the *Mahāpadānasūta*, see Fukita, ‘The Original Meaning and Role of *Avadāna*’, 140.

dibbaṃ cakkhu),¹ although this is not explained with a specific past life story.

This anthology is widely regarded a late addition to the *Tipiṭaka* and has previously been dated to c. 2nd–1st century BCE on several grounds: sometimes rather dubiously for it having a ‘mythological nature’; but also for historical reasons: for it containing references to the worship of stupas and relics,² for having purportedly Mahāyāna influences,³ due to questions of canonicity which indicate it was not regarded as authoritative by all transmission lineages,⁴ for it possibly referring to the *Kathāvattu*, which would place it after the Third Council at the time of Aśoka in the 3rd century BCE,⁵ and more concretely for its

¹ DN 2. 20.

² Norman, *Pāli Literature. Including the Canonical Literature in Prakrit and Sanskrit of All the Hīnayāna Schools of Buddhism*, 90.

³ Specifically on the basis of the term *buddhakkhetta* (‘buddha-field’) in the *buddhāpadāna*. Heinz Bechert, ‘Über das Apadānabuch’, *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens und Archiv für indische Philosophie* 2 (1958): 1.

⁴ It has been argued that the *Apadāna* was not included in the *Khuddakanikāya* by the *dīghabhāṇakas* (‘reciters of the long discourses’) and thus is a later addition. Norman, *Pāli Literature. Including the Canonical Literature in Prakrit and Sanskrit of All the Hīnayāna Schools of Buddhism*, 9. This finding has been questioned more recently by Chris Clark and several scholars have demonstrated that the conclusions were based exclusively on a single Sinhalese witness of the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, whereas other witnesses of this text and other collections of the *Tipiṭaka* in Burmese and Thai scripts state precisely the opposite and therefore this evidence cannot be used to date the *Apadāna*. Clark, *A Study of the Apadāna Including an Edition and Annotated Translation of the Second, Third and Fourth Chapters. Phd Thesis*, 9–10.

⁵ Norman, *Pāli Literature. Including the Canonical Literature in Prakrit and Sanskrit of All the Hīnayāna Schools of Buddhism*, 90. More recently the two terms, *kathāvattu* and *abhidhamma*, as acting as references to the respective textual collections has been questioned, see Clark, *A Study of the Apadāna Including an Edition and Annotated Translation of the Second, Third and Fourth Chapters. Phd Thesis*, 10–11.

referencing the donation of certain objects found in inscriptions at Sāñcī of the 2nd–1st century BCE.¹

Geographically, this collection evinces knowledge of several regions across the Indian Sub-Continent and beyond. Hence, it is difficult to localise the emergence or utility of individual texts within the compendium.² However, Chris Clark has analysed the names of all cities, villages, and rivers in the *Apadāna* and found that the majority are located in the Ganges Basin, the Himalayas, and most prominently in the Indic Northwest.³

This conclusion has been more recently substantiated philologically. Richard Salomon has drawn attention to direct borrowings in the *Apadāna* from the G. *Anavataptaḡāthā*—an *avadāna*-type text that is ‘dedicated to the explanation of events and personalities in terms of the past karmic events that shaped them’.⁴ The text is represented by two Kharoṣṭhī manuscripts, one in the British Library Collection (Anav^L), dated to c. 2nd century CE, and another to the Senior Collection⁵ (Anav^S), dated to c. 4th century CE. Both are said to derive

¹ Jonathan S. Walters, ‘Stūpas, Story, and Empire’, in *Sacred Geography in the Buddhist Traditions of South and Southwest Asia*, ed. Juliane Schober (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), 171.

² For a long list of regions and toponyms, see the *Jatukaṇṇikāpadāna*, Ap 358–359.

³ Clark, *A Study of the Apadāna Including an Edition and Annotated Translation of the Second, Third and Fourth Chapters*. *Phd Thesis*, 13–14.

⁴ Salomon, *Songs of Lake Anavatapta*, 5.

⁵ The Senior Collection consists of twenty-four birch-bark manuscripts written in the Kharoṣṭhī script. As with the above, these too were also found in an inscribed earthenware pot, in this case dated to 12 [Kaniṣka I] (138/139 CE), and have been associated with Haḍḍa. CKI CKI 254. For further discussion, see Richard Salomon, ‘The Senior Manuscripts: Another Collection of Gandhāran Buddhist Scrolls’, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 9 (2003): 39–69.

from Haḍḍa, Afghanistan, and are circumstantially related to the Dharmaguptakas.

The *Anavataptaḡāthā* begins in hagiographical form, akin to the *Apadāna* and *Mahāpadānasūtra*, with an allusory reference to the previous lives (G. **provenivasa*, P. *pubbenivāsa*) of monks, which are not elucidated, and the past six Buddhas, which are explained by Śākyamuni. Its most complete version in the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* of the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya* also enumerates the threads of action (*karmaploti*) of the monks and describes the traces of their (good and bad) action (*karmāvaśeṣa*), which affect their existential state in the present.

Salomon observed that both the *Anavataptaḡāthā* and the *Apadāna* share in several features: they both state that they were recited at lake Anavatapta (located in the Himalayas), the past life stories are elaborated in the first person, there are almost verbatim narratives in each and specifically in the *Soṇakoṭivīsāpadāna*,¹ the *Pubbakammaḡiloti* of the *Buddhāpadāna*² and the *Prabhakārāpadāna*,³ which, in addition to quotes found in other Pali and Sanskrit texts, led Salomon to conclude that the *Anavataptaḡāthā* is a source for the *Apadāna* and other Sanskrit *avadānas* such as the *Kaṭhināvadāna* of the Mūlasarvāstivādins⁴—all likely have their origins in the Northwest.

The great Sanskrit *Avadāna* anthologies, namely the *Avadānaśataka*⁵ and *Divyāvadāna*¹, are attributed to the (Mūla)-Sarvāstivādins

¹ Ap 386.

² Ap 387.

³ Ap 333.

⁴ Salomon, *Songs of Lake Anavatapta*, 12ff; 28ff.

⁵ For details, see Demoto, 'Fragments of the Avadānaśataka', 210. These manuscripts have received two major editions, Speyer, *Avadānaśataka: A Century of Edifying Tales Belonging to the Hīnayāna*; Vaidya, *Avadāna-Śataka*. The text has only received one complete translation in French, Léon Feer,

and considered as the most complete form of the genre, in outlining the causal connections between the past, present, and future lives in the life stream of an individual. Narratives in these collections are not only hagiographical but concern a variety of actors, including, beggars, merchants, monks, rulers, and wealthy men and women.

Scholars have provided several pieces of evidence that contextualise these narratives in the North and Northwest in the early Common Era. However, they are contained today in late collections of Sanskrit manuscripts that derive primarily from Nepal around a millennium after our present context. For obvious reasons, one encounters a number of issues when using these works to discuss the

trans., *Avadāna-Çataka: Cent légendes (Bouddhiques)* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1891). No complete English translation presently exists, however, a number of individual chapters have been translated. Two *avadānas* were first translated into French by Burnouf, of which an English translation from the French is now available. Eugène Burnouf, *Introduction to the History of Indian Buddhism*, trans. Katia Buffetrille and Donald S. jr. Lopez, *Buddhism and Modernity* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), 217–21. Other examples include a translation into English of the second and fourth chapters. Naomi Appleton, trans., ‘The Second Decade of the Avadānaśataka’, *Asian Literature and Translation* 1, no. 7 (2013): 1–36; Naomi Appleton, trans., ‘The Fourth Decade of the Avadānaśataka’, *Asian Literature and Translation* 2, no. 5 (2014): 1–35. The twenty-seventh and twenty-eight chapters have also been translated, see Phillip Scott Ellis Green, *Female Imagery in the Avadāna-Śataka. MA Thesis.* (University of Florida, 2007). And for the second chapter, see Bhikkhunī Dhammadinna, ‘Predictions of Women to Buddhahood in Middle Period Literature’, *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 22 (2015): 481–531. Andy Rotman, Naomi Appleton, and David Fiordalis also informed me in person that they and others are in the process of producing a collective translation of the entire work.

¹ For an edition, see Cowell and Neil, *The Divyāvadāna: A Collection of Buddhist Legends. Now First Edited from the Nepalese Mss in Cambridge and Paris.* For a translation and discussion, see Rotman, *Divine Stories. Divyāvadāna Part I*; Andy Rotman, trans., *Divine Stories. Divyāvadāna Part 2* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2017).

texts' origins in the proposed context. There are also several earlier 4th–8th century CE fragmentary manuscripts from Afghanistan and Central Asia¹ as well as Chinese translations attributed to Zhiqian 支謙, so named after the Yuezhi 月支², which would date the work to the early 3rd century CE.³ However, Demoto Mitsuyo has questioned the attested date of this latter work, since the text does not appear in the oldest Chinese catalogue, the *Chu san zang ji ji* 出三藏記集 (510–518 CE) but in the next oldest, the *Fa jing lu* 法經錄 (594 CE). On the additional basis of the terminological and stylistic qualities of the text, she is, therefore, more inclined to date the Chinese translation to the 5th–6th centuries CE and Sanskrit witness in its present form to the 4th–5th century CE, admitting also for potential prior antecedents.⁴

Nonetheless, there are several pieces of internal evidence that enable the work to be dated to still earlier periods. First, the *Avadānaśataka*, and *Divyāvadāna*, are intimately related to the *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya*, whose own genesis has been shown quite convincingly by Gregory Schopen, in his studies of the Sanskrit and Tibetan witnesses, to be situated in the early centuries of the Common Era in the Northwest.⁵

¹ Discussed in Demoto, 'Fragments of the Avadānaśataka', 209; 214–18.

² See Chapter Eight: The Kuṣāṇas.

³ T 200.

⁴ Demoto, Mitsuyo, III, p. 212. See also Seishi Karashima 《撰集百緣經》の譯出年代考證—出本充代博士の研究簡介 'Concerning the Date of the Zhuanji Baiyuan Jing (Avadānaśataka): A Brief Introduction to Dr. Mitsuyo Demoto's Study', 漢語史學報 第六輯 *Journal of Chinese History*, 6 (2006), 48–52 (p. 52).

⁵ For some more recently articulated thoughts on this matter, see Schopen, 'Art, Beauty and the Business of Running a Monastery in Early Northwest India'. On the basis of supposed luni-solar astronomy, Claus Vogel dates certain portions of the *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya* to the c. 5th century. Vogel, 'On the Date of the Poṣadha Ceremony as Taught by the Mūlasarvāstivādins'. This

This is substantiated by several internal pieces of evidence. In particular, three narratives reference the *dīnāra* (L. *denarius*), a coin first issued during the Kuṣāṇa Period within the reign of Vima Kadphises in the early 2nd century CE.¹ This currency occurs thrice in the *Vītaśokāvadāna* and once in the *Aśokāvadāna* of the *Dīvyāvadāna*,² as well as once in the *Hiraṇyapāṇyavadāna* of the *Avadānaśataka*.³ The latter is of particular import, as it depicts the donation of a coin at a stupa, a phenomenon only witnessed archaeologically in the Northwest from the early Common Era. Thus this text presupposes this very context and in some form or fashion began its life there.

matter is not clear; however, and is questioned below, see Chapter Eleven: Buddhism and Time.

¹ David MacDowall, ‘Numismatic Evidence for the Date of Kanīṣka’, in *Papers on the Date of Kanīṣka: Submitted to the Conference on the Date of Kanīṣka, London, 20-22 April, 1960*, ed. A. L. Basham (Leiden: Brill, 1966), 135. See Chapter Eight: Early Kuṣāṇa Period.

² Aś-av 68, 134; Dīvy 427, 343.

³ Avś 2. 83. Also discussed by Appleton, ‘The Second Decade of the Avadānaśataka’; Burnouf, *Introduction to the History of Indian Buddhism*, 398fn297; Speyer, *Avadānaśataka: A Century of Edifying Tales Belonging to the Hīnayāna*, xv; Vaidya, *Avadāna-Śataka*, 10. The values of a *dīnāra* and its double weight a double *dīnāra* (*dīnāradvaya*) or *satera* are also commented upon in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyavyākhyā*:

dīnārasateravac ca. yathā pūrvako dīnāro dvitīyena saha satero bhavati. tathā hi loke ekadīnāramūlyena dvitīyaṃ dīnāraṃ dīnāramūlyam vā tena pūrvakeṇa dīnāramūlyena sahadhikam apekṣya kaścīd vaktā bhavet. dīnārasatero mayā labdha iti. dīnāradvayaṃ mayā labdham ity arthaḥ. Abhidh-k-vy 4. 14d

A *dīnāra* is like a *satera*, insofar as one *dīnāra* along with a second is a *satera*. There, in this society, the value of one *dīnāra* in addition to a second *dīnāra*, or the value of a *dīnāra* in addition to the former value of a *dīnāra* should be called as such. In this manner, I calculate a *dīnāra* and *satera*. In this manner, I calculate a double *dīnāra*. That is the meaning.

More convincingly still, is the presence of rare donative formulas—*anena kuśalamūlena* (‘by means of this good-root’) and *anena deyadharmaparityāgena* (‘by means of this total relinquishing of a gift-worthy object’)—that occur but 11 times each in Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions of the North and Northwest.¹

Reliquary Donation of Saṃghamitra (No. 59)

[2.] *edena k[*u]śalamule[*na] eteṣa dharmana labhi bhavima
y[*e]ṣa dharmāṇaṃ eta vo syet[*i] śarira sarvasatvana
nirvanasaṃbharāe bhavatu*

By means of this good-root may I attain the good qualities of the relics. May it be for all beings’ preparation for *nirvāṇa*.

Buddha Statue of Budddhavarma (No. 65)

[2.] *anena d[e]yadharmaparityāgen[a] upadhy[ā]yasya
saghadāsasya [n]irvā[n]ā[vā]ptaye=[s]t[u]*

By means of the total relinquishing of this gift-worthy object, may the preceptor Saghadāsa attain *nirvāṇa*.

Each of the epigraphic aspirations are unique in terms of their grammatical construction, construing the instrumental with a subjunctive verbal form in the optative or imperative, which, as I shall argue later, appears to be a remnant of a textual aspiration. Their overall content is also in accord with textual parallels, where the terms regularly comprise a part of an aspiration (*praṇidhāna*) or prediction (*vyākaraṇa*) formula. The former *anena kuśalamūlena* arises in a wide range of sources; including, Gāndhārī *Avadānas*, *Mahāyānasūtras* of the *Pure*

¹ On these formulae, see Chapter Fourteen: By Means of Good-Roots and Gifts.

Land and *Prajñāpāramitā* traditions, but predominantly in *Avadāna* and *Vinaya* compilations of the Mūlasarvāstivādins. Notably, it occurs most often in combination with the latter *anena deyadharmaparityāgena* in exclusively (Mūla)-Sarvāstivāda literature and predominantly the *Avadānaśataka*. In the case of the latter formula it is likely that it belonged exclusively to a form of Sarvāstivādin parlance current at the time. These formulae shall be treated in the next chapter more thoroughly.

Gāndhārī *Avadānas* retained in Kharoṣṭhī manuscripts constitute the earliest evidence for the genre, dating to the early Common Era. They now belong to British Library Collection and were found in a pot dedicated into the possession of Dharmaguptakas that is likely from a monastic complex at Haḍḍa, Afghanistan.¹ It contains 29 fragmentary birch-bark manuscripts, comprising around 23 individual texts.² These include the *Khaḍgaviṣāsanasūtra*,³ several scholastic commentaries,⁴ sutras that likely derive from the *Ekottarikāgama*,⁵ the *Dharmapada*,⁶ and several ‘*avadāna*-type’ narratives.⁷ Of these, the latter are of specific import to the present study as they detail certain historical

¹ *saghami caūḍīsami Dhamaūiteaṇa [p]arig[r]ahami*. CKI 372.

² Salomon, *Ancient Buddhist Scrolls from Gandhāra: The British Library Kharoṣṭhī Fragments*, 214–17.

³ Richard Salomon, ed., *A Gāndhārī Version of the Rhinoceros Sūtra: British Library Kharoṣṭhī Fragment 5B*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000).

⁴ Stefan Baums, ‘A Gāndhārī Commentary on Early Buddhist Verses: British Library Kharoṣṭhī Fragments 7, 9, 13 and 18’ (Seattle, University of Washington, 2009).

⁵ Mark Allon, *Three Gāndhārī Ekottarikāgama-Type Sūtras. British Library Kharoṣṭhī Fragments 12 and 14* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001).

⁶ Lenz, *A New Version of the Gāndhārī Dharmapada*.

⁷ Lenz, *Gandhāran Avadānas*.

figures, namely, the great satrap (*mahākṣatrap*) Jihonika¹ and the Apraca general (*stratego*, Gk. στρατηγός) Aśpavarma.² The Apracarājas and associated figures were demonstrably patrons of the Dharmaguptakas, who, it seems, saw fit to record them in Buddhist discourse.

These documents are unique in several respects, exhibiting several formal and linguistic features, which Salomon argues are indicative of the fact they were written at the cusp of a written and oral tradition.³ Formally, they are unlike other works of the aforementioned collections in Pali and Sanskrit: the narratives have obvious arrangement, whether by the number of verses, as in the case of the *Apadānas* or *Jātakas*, or by theme, as in the case of the *Avadānaśataka* and *Divyāvadāna*.⁴ Moreover, they do not overtly establish a causal connection between the past, present, and future lives of an individual. Rather they contain two sub-genres: [1] *Pūrvayoga*⁵ (past connection) narratives, which focus specifically on the actions an individual performed in a past life and are often hagiographical, detailing previous lives of the Bodhisattva,⁶ and two notable disciples, Ājñātakaunḍinya⁷

¹ See Chapter Four: Satraps in the North and Northwest.

² See Chapter Six: The Apracarājas.

³ Salomon, *Ancient Buddhist Scrolls from Gandhāra: The British Library Kharoṣṭhī Fragments*, 36.

⁴ Lenz, *A New Version of the Gāndhārī Dharmapada*, 92.

⁵ G. *provayoga*, P. *pubbayoga*. This narrative form is not commonly encountered in literature. For instance see, Mil 2, Mv 3. 234, 239. The *Milindapañha* defines it as denoting individuals' previous actions: *pubbayogo ti tesam pubbakammaṃ*. Mil 2. In the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* it is used specifically in connection with *pratyekabuddhas*, see Oskar von Hinüber, 'Review of Ancient Buddhist Scrolls from Gandhāra: The British Library Kharoṣṭhī Fragments by Richard Salomon', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 121, no. 3 (2001): 520.

⁶ Av^{L6} 18–23, 23–26. On the latter, see Lenz, *A New Version of the Gāndhārī Dharmapada*, 84.

⁷ Av^{L6} 27–42.

and Ānanda;¹ and [2] *Avadāna*² narratives contrastingly detail actions conducted in the present and often concern historical figures and local rulers. In naming rulers, these works are thus quite unique in seeming to contextualise themselves in the specific environs of the Northwest, enabling the localisation of Buddhist ideology that was hitherto unpracticable.

These narratives are also formally quite distinct. They are tersely written in skeletal form, stipulating without description or elaboration the setting, characters, actions and results, and often a closing maxim exhibit. They also exhibit unique punctuation patterns, introductory formulae, such as *evo śuyadi* ('thus it is heard'),³ and closing abbreviation formulae, such as *vistare ya sayupamano siyadi vatava* ('expansion should be according to the model. It should be told'),⁴ a colloquial register, and interlinear notations that were 'haphazardly'

¹ Av^{L6} 42–45.

² G. *avadāna*, *avaśāna*.

³ =Skt. *evam śruyate*. Von Hinüber attributes this expression specifically to the Dharmaguptakas on the basis that Buddhist narratives to concern past lives, i.e., Theravādin and Mūlasarvāstivādin *Avadānas* and *Jātakas*, typically begin with the expression 'in a previous existence (Skt. *bhūtapūrvaṃ*, P. *bhūtapubbam*). Other examples include *ātite* ('in the past') in the *Jātakatṭhavaṇṇanā*, *evam akkhāyati* and *eva anusūyati* in the *Kuṇāljātaka*, and *taṃyathānusuyate* in the *Milindapañha*, phrases which he attributes to a Northwestern influence, Hinüber, 'Review of Ancient Buddhist Scrolls from Gandhāra: The British Library Kharoṣṭhī Fragments by Richard Salomon', 520.

⁴ Av^{L6} 22–23. Other 'abbreviation formulae' include: *[u]dahara(*ne)[no] karyam=ido* ('this should be done by way of example'), Av^{L6} 23; *vistare sarvo karya* ('expansion, all should be done'), Av^{L6} 26; *yaśayupamano sarvo* ('all according to the model'), Av^{L6} 42; *gatha vi(*stare)* ('verse expansion'), Av^{L6} 45. On these linguistic aspects, see Lenz, *A New Version of the Gāndhārī Dharmapada*, 80; Lenz, *Gandhāran Avadānas*, 85–92; Salomon, *Ancient Buddhist Scrolls from Gandhāra: The British Library Kharoṣṭhī Fragments*, 165.

written (running across lines of the text, upside down, etc.) stating that a narrative has been written (*likhidago*)¹. These features are regarded as either mnemonic or pedagogic devices, evidencing that these texts were written at the cusp of an oral and a written tradition.²

Parenthetically, it should be noted that these structures and scribal notes are shared with other 2nd–5th century Sarvāstivādin *Avadānas* from Central Asia, which are written in ‘conspectual’ form and have other phrases of abbreviation, such as *iti vistareṇa vacyam* (‘it should be said in detail’), and inter-textual citations of other *Avadānas* that should be related on a given topic.³ Several of these features are also shared with early Chinese translations of *Avadāna* collections. Two collections in particular are of interest, entitled *Zapiyu jing* 雜譬喻經: the colophon of the first records it was translated in the Later Han Period (25–220 CE) by the famous Yuezhi 月支 translator Lokakṣema 支婁迦讖, which would date to work to the middle of the 2nd century CE;⁴ the colophon of the second states that the translator is unknown, but again that it was translated during the Later Han Period.⁵ Our present state of research means we cannot explicate the nature of these

¹ Lenz, *A New Version of the Gāndhārī Dharmapada*, 98–110.

² Salomon, *Ancient Buddhist Scrolls from Gandhāra: The British Library Kharoṣṭhī Fragments*, 36; Lenz, *A New Version of the Gāndhārī Dharmapada*, 98–110. Such feature are also observed in certain Sarvāstivādin *Avadānas* from Central Asia, which are written in ‘conspectual form’.

³ See M. I. Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya, ‘A Sanskrit Manuscript on Birch-Bark from Bairam-Ali: II. *Avadānas* and *Jātakas* (Part 1)’, *Manuscripta Orientalia* 6, no. 3 (2000): 23.

⁴ T 204. Karashima and Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya understand this date to be false and contrarily place the texts in the 3rd century CE, although no justification is given. Karashima and Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya, ‘The *Avadāna* Anthology from Merv, Turkmenistan’, 343.

⁵ T 205.

collections in full and they have been neglected in scholarship thus far; some narratives, however, shall be examined below in more detail.¹

THE FUNCTION OF AVADĀNAS

Avadāna anthologies were first identified in the 19th century following the discovery of 10th–12th century Sanskrit manuscripts in Nepal.² Due to their having a marked presence within that corpus, they subsequently received numerous editions and translations, followed by others on the basis of Chinese and Tibetan.³ Scholars were quick to consider the genre under rubric of ‘propaganda’, noting that they were ‘edifying tales’ designed to inculcate Buddhist morality. But at this time the designation connoted far more than the fundamental sense of an organised effort to spread ideology and effect behavioural change within a specific society. Rather it had a broad and decidedly denigratory purport, implying that the genre is artistically worthless, a distortion of philosophical exposition, mere liturgy, and solely for converting the laity.⁴

¹ See Chapter Fifteen: Relics and Stupas.

² B. H. Hodgson, ‘Notices of the Languages, Literature, and Religion of the Bauddhas of Nepal and Bhot’, *Asiatic Researches; or Transactions of the Society, Instituted in Bengal for Enquiring into the History and Antiquities, the Arts, and Sciences, and Literature of Asia* 16 (1828): 409–50.

³ For a good summary and comprehensive bibliography of research on *Avadānas*, see David Fiordalis, ‘Avadāna’, in *Oxford Bibliographies*, 2017.

⁴ See Édouard Chavannes, *Cinq cents contes et apologues extraits du Tripiṭaka chinois.*, vol. 1, Collection U.N.E.S.C.O d’Oeuvres Représentatives Série Chinoise (Paris: Librairie d’Amérique et d’Orient, 1962), 12; Berriedale A. Keith, *A History of Sanskrit Literature* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1928), 165; Przulski, ‘Fables in the Vinaya-Pitaka of the Sarvāstivādin School’, 1; Speyer, *Avadānaśataka: A Century of Edifying Tales Belonging to the Hīnayāna*, iv–vi.

The blueprint for these valuations could well be sought in the 17th century Roman Catholic *Sacra Congregatio de propaganda fide*.¹ More likely is that they derive from 19th and 20th sociological discourse, which envisioned propaganda as a visceral form of persuasion and subterfuge ensuring blind submission of the masses² and contemporaneous literary criticism, where the category was used to devalorise communicative and referential prose and bifurcate it from other aesthetic writings in which didacticism was considered secondary, such as poetry and philosophy.³

An enduring effect of these entangled discourses ensured that *Avadānas* were little considered in ensuing decades. Barring the odd exception, this trend did not alter much until the 1980's, when John Strong pioneered several studies into Sanskrit witnesses, which revitalised the study of the genre and began to treat it in sociological and philosophical terms.⁴ Yet his and others works diverge little from the aforesaid in their functional descriptions of the genre as being pedagogic tools to edify the laity.

¹ Thymian Bussemer, *Propaganda: Konzepte und Theorien. Mit einem einführenden Vorwort von Peter Glotz* (Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien, 2005), 24.

² Edward Bernays, *Propaganda* (Liveright, 1928); Gustave le Bon, *Psychologie des foules* (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1895); Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1998).

³ This is elaborated in Susan Rubin Suleiman, *Authoritarian Fictions: The Ideological Novel as a Literary Genre* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).

⁴ John Strong, 'The Transforming Gift: An Analysis of Devotional Acts of Offering in "Avadāna" Literature', *History of Religions* 18, no. 3 (1979): 221–27; Strong, *The Legend of King Aśoka. A Study and Translation of the Aśokāvadāna*; Strong, 'The Buddhist Avadānists and the Elder Upagupta'; Strong, *The Legend and Cult of Upagupta*.

More recently, several other scholars have sought to treat the genre from distinct sociological perspectives and to localise the narrative discourses within historical contexts. Treating the Pāli *Apadāna*, John Walters forwards the principle of ‘sociokarma’, arguing that action is practised and experienced by social units and that these narratives, therefore, affirm integrative ideologies of collective identity¹ He also represents one of the few to attempt to situate this ideology in context. Considering material remains at the stupa sites of Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh, India (c. 2nd–1st century BCE), he demonstrates that a network of donors, donative objects and ritual acts to occur in the sites’ donative inscriptions and relief art reflect a pattern of collective patronage, hypothesising that the *Apadāna* stood for the ‘ideological component’ pertaining to the material production of these sites.² Indeed, the archaeological and linguistic similarities between certain Sanskrit *Avadāna* collections and donative inscriptions of the North and Northwest, leads one to derive a very similar conclusion—these narratives represent to some degree the ideological basis of donative practice for individuals and institutions in this historical context.

In his analyses of the Sanskrit *Divyāvadāna*, Andy Rotman argues that the Buddhist ‘moral economy’ was a ‘market economy’,

¹ Jonathan S. Walters, ‘Communal Karma and Karmic Community in Theravāda Buddhist History’, in *Constituting Communities: Theravāda Buddhism and the Religious Cultures of South and Southeast Asia*, ed. John Clifford Holt and Jonathan S. Walters, SUNY Series in Buddhist Studies (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 23. See also Naomi Appleton, *Narrating Karma and Rebirth: Buddhist and Jain Multi-Life Stories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 126.

² Jonathan S. Walters, ‘Stūpas, Story, and Empire’, in *Buddhist Stupas in South Asia: Recent Archaeological, Art-Historical, and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Jason Hawkes and Akira Shimada, SOAS Studies on South Asia (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009), 235–66.

beholden to the ‘notions of commodification and exchange’. By this he means that merit was much like banking:¹ an individual can, through donative activity, plant a good-root (*kuśalamūla*), whereby *mūla* may also have the sense of ‘capital’, and this can gain interest and result in meritorious future states.² According to this model positive or white (*śukla*) actions pay in and increase one’s balance and negative or black (*kṛṣṇa*) actions do not.³ Meritoriousness, he observes, is embodied by an individual’s social position and hence those with socio-economic power

¹ Spiro also observed this type of merit banking, whereby Burmese monks write up personal ‘merit account books’. Spiro, *Buddhism and Society: A Great Tradition and Its Burmese Vicissitudes.*, 111.

² Andy Rotman, ‘Marketing Morality: The Economy of Faith in Early Indian Buddhism’, in *Śrīnidhiḥ: Professor S. S. Bahulkar’s Gratitude Volume*, ed. Shirpad G. Bhat, Shilpa Sumant, and Ambarish Vasant Khare (Pune: Samvidya Institute of Cultural Studies, 2009), 264ff. In his definition, Rotman also means that an effective moral system is the same as an effective economic system, and he gives the example of a king who didn’t fulfil his role properly and decided to exempt merchants from tax, which put the cosmic order out of kilter and led to a subsequent famine. The king donated the final portion of food from the stockpile to a Pratyekabuddha, who caused it to rain and thereby saved the people from starvation. Rotman, ‘Marketing Morality: The Economy of Faith in Early Indian Buddhism’, 257.

³ The moral dimensions of this system are expressed quite regularly in *Avadāna* literature in the following passage:

iti hi bhikṣava ekāntakṛṣṇānāṃ karmaṇām ekāntakṛṣṇo vipākaḥ, ekāntaśuklānām ekāntaśuklaḥ, vyatimiśrāṇāṃ vyatimiśraḥ. tasmāt tarhi bhikṣava ekāntakṛṣṇāni karmāṇy apāsya vyatimiśrāṇi ca, ekāntaśukleṣv eva karmasv ābhogaḥ karaṇīyaḥ. E.g., Avś 1. 226.

Indeed, monks, the ripening of exclusively dark actions is exclusively dark, the (ripening) of exclusively white (actions) exclusively white, and the (ripening) of a mixed (actions) mixed. Therefore, monks, having discarded exclusively dark and mixed actions, enjoyment in exclusively white action can thus be produced.

were viewed as the more spiritually advanced, being the collective sum of their past actions.¹

In the logic of a market morality, one would imagine that this principle of exclusivity—that which equates socio-economic status with spiritual status—implies also that those in already economically fortuitous circumstances were in the best position to increase their merit as they would their capital. However, there are some important distinctions between the moral and market economies. Unlike the latter, in which the material worth of an object is directly related to economic capital and that those with more capital see a better return, in the Buddhist moral and donative system, an individual's social position and the material worth of their donative object are contrarily incongruent with merit-making. Thus, there are narratives in which figures of distinct social groupings donate objects of vastly distinct material worth but nevertheless cultivate the same result.

The reason for the discrepancy between economic capital and existential return is that true value does not reside in a donation's materiality but in the cognitive disposition of faith (*śraddhā*), typically characterised as graciousness (*prasāda*).² Rotman points us to what may be termed faith hierarchies in some narratives of the *Divyāvadāna*, whereby those in definitively unfortunate circumstances, 'beings who suffer' (*duḥkhitajana*), are the best candidates to produce faith and so receive the highest existential rewards.³ By way of example, he refers to the *Nagarāvalambikāvadāna*, in which a king is denigrated as being unable to produce faith on the basis that a ruler is 'established in the results of their own merit' (*svapūṇyaphale vyavasthita*) and, simply

¹ Bailey and Mabbett, *The Sociology of Early Buddhism*, 17–18.

² *śraddhā*. lit. 'in possession' or 'bearing' ($\sqrt{dhā}$) 'trust' or 'faith' (ind. *śrat-*). *prasāda*. (*pra-* \sqrt{sad}) lit. to become mentally tranquil.

³ Rotman, 'Marketing Morality: The Economy of Faith in Early Indian Buddhism', 276.

enjoying the social benefits of that merit, are portrayed as making faithless donations of high economic worth that are enabled solely by virtue of their economic position.¹ On this basis, Rotman argues the Buddhists sought to naturalise a set of social and cultural norms, which comprised part of an agitative ‘subaltern configuration’, whereby individuals of lower social strata are afforded equal, if not greater, access to the symbolic capital of faith irrespective of their limited economic capital. He interprets this discourse as ‘sociological levelling’ and finds that ‘no sociological study...is necessary. Individual tastes and habits are elided, as are, apparently, differences in gender, age, race, and class’.²

However, this conclusion is decidedly premature. Sociological analysis reveals that *Avadānas* were both collectively directed to a broad spectrum of society and individually designed for a specific audience determined by their social grouping (e.g., mercantile, military, political). A given grouping is articulated quintessentially through a social archetype—the constellation of factors (e.g., gender, age, class) that constitute an agent in the narrative. For example, in the first ten narratives of the *Avadānaśataka*, the tales of nine (the fifth is missing) separate individuals and their gift-worthy objects to the Buddha are elucidated; for instance a Brahmin named Pūrṇa offers the leftovers (*parityakta*) of a sacrifice,³ the daughter-in-law (*snusā*) of General Siṃha, Yaśomatī, offers flowers fashioned out of gold, silver and precious substances,⁴ and a gardener (*ārāmika*) offers a simple lotus

¹ Rotman, ‘Marketing Morality: The Economy of Faith in Early Indian Buddhism’, 269ff. Cf. Divy 83. 17-18; 84. 7.

² Andy Rotman, *Thus Have I Seen. Visualizing Faith in Early Buddhism* (Oxford: Routledge, 2009), 134.

³ Avś 1. 3.

⁴ Avś 1. 8.

flower (*padma*).¹ After their donation the Buddha performs a miracle (*prātihārya*) in which the donated objects undergo objectively impossible metamorphoses and seeing these miracles, the donors make an aspiration to become a perfectly awakened Buddha. Whilst each of these figures makes an aspiration for awakening and accordingly receives a prediction (*vyākaraṇa*) of that awakening from the Buddha, both their social status and the material quality of their donative object are radically divergent.

The economic value of a donative object is therefore not congruent with the resulting spiritual wealth, and equally a donor's socio-economic status is not correlated in these examples with their future spiritual attainment of awakening. However, the material qualities of their respective donative objects *are* harmonious with their occupational and economic means, and each offers what is appropriate to their own lifestyle. This latter tenet is a characteristic found throughout *Avadāna* literature and serves to demonstrate that individual narratives were created with specific social groups and their respective socio-economic circumstances in mind. Hence this literary project as a whole is comprised of propagandist literature and designed in such a way that single narratives are to be taught to specific ideal types of individuals of discrete social statuses, at once denigrating and celebrating individual social archetypes, whether impecunious or opulent.

As observed above, early scholarship to deal with these narratives tended to derogatorily treat them as propaganda. Indeed, it is broadly the case that they are characterised as, quoting Sally Culter, 'didactic or homiletic literature in which stories are to illustrate and interpret doctrinal points, particularly for the edification of pious lay

¹ Avś 1. 37.

people.’¹ More recently, scholarship has criticised such descriptions for failing to highlight that the audience was as monastic as it was lay and that the genre was ‘not used exclusively for propaganda’.² Yet the issue in employing the category does not reside in the ascription itself but rather in the inexactness of its application. I thus insist on its value, although under a distinct idiom and methodological framework.

Propaganda is not only ‘direct’ and vertical, as regards intentional manipulation by institutional powers, but can be ‘sociological’ and horizontal, as ‘the group of manifestations by which any society seeks to integrate the maximum number of individuals into itself, to unify its members’ behaviour according to a pattern, to spread its style of life abroad, and thus to impose itself on other groups’.³ In form, it can be overt, covert, or counteractive, employing both factual and emotional elements; and in purpose, both ‘integrative’ (affirming us-ness) and ‘agitative’ (reifying alterity).⁴ Most essential is that propaganda—in terms of its ideology, instruments, and form—cannot be so estranged from the context in which it subsists as to be unintelligible to those to whom it is propagandised.⁵

Treated under these premises, *Avadānas* can be viewed quite distinctly as forms of propaganda. In presenting a wide range of social actors engaging in Buddhist forms of orthocognition and orthopraxy they seek to inculcate a set of norms among these groups in such a way

¹ Cutler, ‘The Pāli Apadāna Collection’, 2.

² Lenz, *A New Version of the Gāndhārī Dharmapada*, 99.

³ Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men’s Attitudes*, trans. Konrad Kellen and Jean Lerner (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 62.

⁴ Jane DeRose Evan, *The Art of Persuasion. Political Propaganda from Aeneas to Brutus* (University of Michigan, 1992), 1ff.

⁵ See, e.g., Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men’s Attitudes*, 38–39; Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, 5th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2012), 360ff.

that is pertinent to their social status. In that sense, a given narrative is engineered to appeal to individuals of specific genders, social and economic class, etc. Individuals are presented according to an archetype or ideal, i.e., a merchant-type, a monastic-type, a ruler-type, a lay-practitioner-type. Indeed, some narratives even take the name of the social group for which they are intended.¹ This form of presentation is achieved by means of what literary studies terms a ‘redundancy’—a surplus of information, achieved through repetition, anaphora, and formulaic expression, which is used, through axiological valorisation or devalorisation, to inculcate an ideology and stereotype of characters by way of amalgamating mutually reinforcing factors that constitute their social archetype.²

Redundancies are arguably embedded into the very structure of the narratives themselves. Alice Collett found that that *Avadānaśataka* is structured around ‘semantic list based formulas’, a feature characteristic of the *Divyāvadāna* also, which are themselves arranged around the characters’ ritual behaviour, socio-economic status, and gender roles. She regards these tenets as mnemonics for oral transmission, which indicate the text derives from an earlier oral tradition.³ However, if we consider what is sociologically stressed⁴, these formulae of Sanskrit *Avadānas* can be seen as continually stressing to redundancy the categorical attributes of a protagonist, such as gender⁵ and occupation, and normative behaviours. These formulae are invertedly represented also in the shorter Central Asian, Chinese and Gāndhārī narratives,

¹ E.g., for ‘caravan leaders’ we find the *Sārthavāhavadāna*, Avś 1. 23–27.

² Suleiman, *Authoritarian Fictions: The Ideological Novel as a Literary Genre*, 190.

³ Collett, ‘List-Based Formulae in the *Avadānaśataka*’.

⁴ On this particular matter, see K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *Gleanings on Social Life from the Avadānas*, B. C Law Research Studies Series 1 (Calcutta: The India Research Institute, 1945).

⁵ See Chapter Fourteen: Soteriological Agency.

which stress only the key elements of a narrative, of which the social status of an individual always arises—they are, namely, redundancies-to-be. Since several of these works are localised directly in the North and Northwest, we thus have a rare opportunity to examine the potential propagandist functions of narrative in a highly contextualised manner.

THE SCHOLASTIC BASIS OF AVADĀNAS: PERFORMATIVE CAUSALITY

A central tenet of *avadāna* literature, as the foregoing discussion has attempted to show, is to narrate how specific types of individuals and groups in society should engage with Buddhist normative practice, such as giving, and to example the causal efficacy of such practices as both produced and producing forces in the existential state of that individual across their past, present, and future rebirths. The social effect entailed in the present perception of a past or future meritorious state may be explained by the principle of what I term performative causality: that an individual in the present was viewed concurrently as the existential sum of their past actions as well as the embodiment of their future states. It is this ontological premise that enables an individual to perform those existential conditions in the present ritual frame.

This notion of performative causality is itself based on the system of causality articulated in the Sarvāstivādin *Abhidharma*, likely developed near to the turn of the Common Era in the North and Northwest, and the particular ontological philosophy of *dharma*s ('factors of existence') it forwards. This ontology, I argue and hope in the following to elucidate, comes to be articulated in a popular form throughout *avadāna* texts, and to some extent donative inscriptions of the North and Northwest. Therefore, this section shall address the extent

to which the principles of the Sarvāstivāda scholasticism informed these other more popular forms of discourse, and thereby examine the social impact and function of this particular philosophy in the present socio-historical context. It shall argue that in the North and Northwest, the *Abhidharma* had become so prevalent and accepted as to be rendered in an intelligible form in *avadāna* texts; namely, as a pervasive tenet of mass market philosophy.

At the heart of all Buddhist ‘teachings regarding the factors of existence’ (*abhidharma*)¹ lies the purpose in detailing by way of taxonomies the factors of existence (*dharma*),² and in explaining the

¹ The term *abhidharma*, although encompassing several specific senses, fundamentally designates a teaching ‘in Hinblick auf’ (*abhi-*) die Daseinkonstituenten’ (*dharma*). In a second sense, associated with the Theravāda interpretation of their *Abhidhamma*, the term has the sense of “höhe, überlegene [*abhi-*] Lehre [*Dhamma*]”. Alexander von Rospatt, ‘Der *Abhidharma*’, in *Buddhismus in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Hamburg: Universität Hamburg, 1998), 150–51.

² *Dharmas* can be envisaged as momentary phenomenal or ‘psycho-physical’ events, arising from specific causal conditions and similarly engendering a specific set of results, that are experienced by any one of the six sense faculties, and arranged cognitively by the mental faculty (*manovijñāna*). Thus, *dharmas* are psycho events to the extent they are the object of the cognizant mind, whilst also being physical events as they comprise the range of objective experiential possibilities in phenomenal reality. The task of the *Abhidharma* was to analyse experience into *dharmas*, and thereby define the possible range and types of phenomenal experience. The Theravāda propose a taxonomy of 82 such *dhammas*, 81 of which are conditioned (*sañhata*), i.e., subject to causal conditions, with an eighty-second unconditioned (*asañhata*) *dhamma*; namely, cessation (*nibbāna*), which does not arise nor fall as it is not conditioned by causal factors. The Sarvāstivāda distinctly enumerate 75 *dharmas*, 72 are conditioned (*saṃskṛta*) and three are unconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*): space (*ākāśa*) and two forms of cessation (*nirodha*). For a comprehensive summary of the origins, development and primary features of the Theravāda *Abhidhamma* and Sarvāstivāda *Abhidharma*, the only two treatises now extant, see Noa Ronkin, ‘*Abhidharma*’, in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N.

perceived continuum in individual experience, wherein truth everything is impermanent (*sarvam anityam*) and there is no permanent individual self (*ātman*). Different solutions to this issue were devised but principally it was the theory of the five aggregates (*skandha*),¹ the individual conditions that in conglomeration comprise a sentient being, which demonstrated the doctrine of non-self (*anātman*) and the theory of dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*),² both of which served to explain how the factors of existence are connected by an ephemeral

Zalta (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2017), <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2017/entries/abhidharma/>>.

¹ The five aggregates are as follows: form (*rūpa*), feeling (*vedanā*), conceptualisation (*saṃjñā*), conditioning (*saṃskāra*) and consciousness (*viññāna*).

² The system of dependent origination is comprised of twelve causal links (*nidāna*). It is enumerated in the *Samyuttanikāya* as follows:

Katamo ca bhikkhave paṭiccasamuppādo. Avijjāpaccayā bhikkhave saṅkhārā. Saṅkhārapaccayā viññānaṃ. Viññānapaccayā nāmarūpaṃ. Nāmarūpapaccayā saḷāyatanaṃ. Saḷāyatanapaccayā phasso. Phassapaccayā vedanā. Vedanāpaccayā taṇhā. Taṇhāpaccayā upādānaṃ. Upādānapaccayā bhavo. Bhavapaccayā jāti. Jātipaccayā jarāmaraṇaṃ, sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā sambhavanti. Evam etassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti. Ayaṃ vuccati bhikkhave paṭiccasamuppādo. SN 2. 1.

And what, bhikkhus, is dependent origination? With ignorance as condition, volitional formations [come to be]; with volitional formations as condition, consciousness; with consciousness as condition, name-and-form; with name-and-form as condition, the six sense bases; with the six sense bases as condition, contact; with contact as condition, feeling; with feeling as condition, craving; with craving as condition, clinging; with clinging as condition, existence; with existence as condition, birth; with birth as condition, ageing-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair come to be. Bhikkhu Bodhi, trans., *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha*. (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 2000), 533.

An akin formula is found on the Reliquary Inscription of Śveḍavarma (No. 55). For a textual version of this specific formula, see Avś 1. 88.

causality. This latter predicate postulates that a single factor (*dharma*) is the product of a condition and that similarly it has a particular effect which gives rise to another factor in a causal series, thus producing something of a perceived continuity. However, the premise that everything is impermanent produced some problems. As Paul Williams observes:

It necessitated either a restriction of the formula [*sarvam anityam*] solely to the category of primary existents—only those entities given in sensual experience are permanent for instance—or a reinterpretation of ‘impermanent’. The spatio-temporal orientation of the notion of impermanence obviously entailed difficulties...in particular soteriological and epistemological considerations combined with reference to the ontological status of past and future entities.¹

At a time likely near the turn of the Common Era, the Sarvāstivādins, being proponents of the ‘theory that everything exists’ (*sarvāstivāda*)² but also seeking to maintain the principle that everything is impermanent, uniquely proposed the ontological notion that the conditioned factors (*saṃskṛtadharmā*) are elementary constituents (*dravya*) of reality, existent in three temporal modes (*trayādhva*): past, future, and present (*atītānagatapratyutpanna*). Later commentaries reveal that both the precise reality of these factors and their temporality became a matter of contention. The Theravāda *Abhidhamma* maintained that the factors, each defined *epistemologically* by their intrinsic nature (*P. sabhāva*), only endure in the present; persisting for the moment

¹ Paul Williams, ‘On the Abhidharma Ontology’, *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 9 (1981): 229.

² This name is discussed in length by Willems, Dessein, and Cox, *Sarvāstivāda Buddhist Scholasticism*, 16–18.

(*khana*) of their arising before ceasing.¹ The Sarvāstivādins contrarily proposed an *ontological* status in respect to the factors of existence but were divided as to the nature of that reality: the Vaibhāṣikas held that the factors of experience have an intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*) and intrinsic characteristic (*svalakṣaṇa*), which exists regardless of temporality; and the Sautrāntikas (Dārṣṭāntikas), whilst affirming the existence of the factors of existence on the same basis, rejected the existence of those factors in all time periods and distinctly proposed that the three time periods exist as entities themselves.²

¹ For a Theravādin critique of the Sarvāstivādins' (P. Sabbatthivādin) views in this regard, see Kath-v 1. 6. According to the *Kathāvatthu*, the point of controversy centres upon the divergent interpretations of the following passage:

Yaṃ kiñci, bhikkhu, rūpaṃ atūtānāgatapaccuppannaṃ ajjhattaṃ vā bahiddhā vā oḷārikaṃ vā sukhumaṃ vā hīnaṃ vā pañītaṃ vā yaṃ dūre santike vā, ayaṃ rūpakkhandaḥ. yā kāci vedanā...yā kāci...saññā...ye keci saṃkhārā...yaṃ kiñci viññānaṃ. MN 3. 16–17. See also T 99. 14c4–9.

Whatever form, monks, whether past, future or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, low or excellent, far or near, that is the aggregate of form. Whatever feeling...concepts...conditionings...consciousnesses.

The *Kathāvatthu* explains that the Sabbatthivādins interpreted this passage as meaning 'Therefore the past exists, the future exists' (*tena hi atītaṃ atthi anāgataṃ atthīti*), for which the text quotes several *Suttas* by way of rebuke. For example:

Yaṃ hi bhikkhave rūpaṃ atītaṃ niruddhaṃ vipariṇataṃ. ahoṣīti tassa saṅkhā. ahoṣīti tassa samaññā. ahoṣīti tassa paññattī. na tassa saṅkhā atthīti na tassa saṅkhā bhavissatīti. Kath-v 1. 6. 140–141. See also SN 3. 71.

Any form, monks, that is past, that has vanished and changed, that is defined, understood and known as 'was', is not defined as 'is' nor as 'will be'.

² For a more detailed exposition of these views, see E. Frauwallner, 'Abhidharma-Studien V. Der Sarvāstivādaḥ. Eine entwicklungsgeschichtliche

In order to meet the central premise that everything is impermanent whilst maintaining the principle that everything exists, later Sarvāstivādin commentators proposed that the quality of impermanence resides not in the reality of the factor itself (*dravyānyathātva*), but rather in either the transient nature of its mode (*bhāvānyathātva*), according, for example, to Dharmatrātha, or, following Saṅghabhadra, its activity (*kāritra*) in the present moment, denoting a conglomeration of the causes (*hetu*) and conditions (*pratyaya*) that produce a factor of experience, which arises (*jāti*), endures (*sthiti*), decays (*jarā*) and passes away (*anityatā*) with each moment (*kṣaṇa*).¹

According to the Vaibhāṣika system, the present activity of factors produces a direct effect in the next moment within a series of events. In the case of past and future temporalities, it was argued that the atemporal nature (*svabhāva*) factors of existence must also exist by virtue of their potential to be objects of consciousness. Thereby past factors were held to have the potential of causal functioning outside of their immediate spatio-temporal series. For instance, by virtue of remembering a past factor of experience in the present, that past factor has a present causal efficacy.² The very subsistence of consciousness (*viññāna*)—constituting, for all Buddhists, intentional thought (*citta*)

Studie', *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens und Archiv für indische Philosophie* 17 (1973): 97–121.

¹ Collett Cox, *Disputed Dharmas: Early Buddhist Theories on Existence. An Annotated Translation of the Section on Factors Dissociated from Thought from Saṅghabhadra's Nyāyānusāra* (Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies of ICABS, 1995), 87; Frauwallner, 'Abhidharma-Studien V. Der Sarvāstivādaḥ. Eine entwicklungsgeschichtliche Studie', 99ff.

² Explanation is offered in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* as 'Conditioned [factors of experience (*dharma*)] are paths (i.e., the past, present and future time periods (*adhvan*) due to their existential mode (*bhāva*) being gone, going and will go: *ta eva saṃskṛtā gatagacchadgamiṣyadbhāvād adhvānaḥ*. *Abhidh-k-bh* 1. 5.

directed towards an object—is predicated on an existent objective support (*ālambana*) and the ability to recollect a past factor, therefore, predicates that factor’s existence. On these bases, the Sarvāstivādins were able to propose a continuous life stream (*saṃtāna*) of an individual through the past, future, and present temporalities. However, the position engendered some controversy and accordingly the Vaibhāṣikas offered a series of defences, as Collett Cox concisely summarises:

Different arguments are offered in different texts, but they can be grouped according to four basic reasons: (1) in the case of causes that precede their effect, such as the operation of *karman*, the past must exist in order to provide an existent cause for the arising of a present effect; (2) accompaniment (*samanvāgama*) and non-accompaniment (*asamanvāgama*), which connect *dharma*s of all time periods to one’s own lifestream, require an existent object upon which to operate; (3) the existence of past causes or future effects can be inferred from the occurrence of their effects or causes in the present; and (4) perceptual consciousness, meditative states, memory, and so forth, require an existent object-support.¹

These specific dialectical systems of the Vaibhāṣikas and their Sautrāntika critics are posterior to the early Common Era in the Indic North and Northwest, and it appears early *Abhidharma* thought was not yet distinguishable along these lines. However, a c. 1st century CE Gāndhārī fragment, found perhaps at Haḍḍa, Afghanistan and now in the British Library Collection (BL 28), demonstrates that the positions of what would become definitive of the opposition between the two were initially regarded as alternative stances of a unitary Sarvāstivāda

¹ Collett Cox, ‘From Category to Ontology: The Changing Role of Dharma in Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma’, *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 32 (2004): 574.

Abhidharma. We may presume, therefore, as Cox does, that they had yet to be formulated into coherent doxographies. The fragment, itself a critique of Sarvāstivāda thought, summarises their definition of ‘everything exists’ under three specifications: ‘Those [factors] which are included in the twelve sense spheres exist’: *ye duadaśa ayadaneha aagrahida se asti*;¹ ‘[those factors] that belong to the three time periods, which are not confused, should be said to be existence’: *(*tra)y(*a)adhva astida asabhina vatava*; ‘or else, the time periods [should be said to be] existence’: *asa adh(*v)a astita di*.² To clarify this position, the text then gives examples of different social categories of beings (*bhava*) existing in the past, future, and present temporal frames (*adida anagada pracupana*): a householder (*grihibhava*), a gardener (*aramiyabhava*), a merchant (*veśiabhava*) and an arhat (*arahadabhava*).³

The *bhava* of the past and future exist as past and future. The *bhava* of the householder exists as past and future. The *bhava* of the monastery attendant exists as past and future. The *bhava* of the mendicant exists as past and future. The *bhava* of the arhat exists as future. Everything exists.⁴

That the text deals with the ‘nature’ or ‘existential mode’ (*bhāva*) of what we can read as archetypal social categories is particularly

¹ Abhidh^G 69.

² Abhidh^G 70.

³ Collett Cox, ‘Yogācāra Prehistory: The Interpretation of Bhāva, Svabhāva, Abhiñṣanna and Parinṣanna in a Gāndhārī Scholastic Text’, in *Sucāruvādadeśika. A Festschrift Honouring Professor Theodore Ricciardi*, ed. Todd Lewis and Bruce McCoy Owens (Kathmandu: Himal Books, 2013), 50ff.

⁴ *adida anagada a(*diḍana)g(*a)d(*a) bh(*a)v(*a) asti. adida anagada grihibhava asti. adida anagada aramiyabhava asti. adida <*a>nagad(*a) k(*a)śiabhavo asti. anagada arahadabhava asti. (*sar)v(*a) m=asti. Abhidh^G 72-75. Cox, ‘Yogācāra Prehistory: The Interpretation of Bhāva, Svabhāva, Abhiñṣanna and Parinṣanna in a Gāndhārī Scholastic Text’, 54.*

interesting. Foremost because it has a direct bearing on *avadāna* narratives, whose primary function, as elucidated above, is to illustrate the life-streams of such figures in terms of their social derivation and economic circumstance. In these narratives, an archetypal individual in the present narrative frame, normally depicted as making a donation to the Buddha, is either explained as having that existential state by virtue of a past good act, which is often elucidated by way of a past narrative frame marked by the temporal formula ‘in a previous existence’ (*bhūtapūrvam*), or that a present good act shall produce the fruits of a wonderful future state when the merit has ripened.¹ The narratives’ primary function, therefore, is to demonstrate the causal connections between an individual’s past, future, and present existences. In social terms, this system of causality is reflected at two levels: first, the donative objects and the socio-economic statuses of the individuals are seen as embodiments of past actions; second, one’s faith, but more importantly the performative externalisation of that cognitive disposition in the form of a verbal aspiration (*praṇidhāna*), was viewed an embodiment of one’s future state.

In the narrative structure, the thread between the past, future, and present individual is presented in a number of ways. Strong notes a correlation between the name (*nāman*) and the form (*rūpa*)² that a donor

¹ John Strong, ‘The Transforming Gift: An Analysis of Devotional Acts of Offering in “Avadāna” Literature’, *History of Religions*, 18.3 (1979), 221–27 (pp. 228–29); See also Willems, Dessein, and Cox, p. 19ff.

² It is of course this basic premise of name-and-form (*nāmarūpa*) that is perhaps first outlined in the *Milindapañha*, which incidentally is one of the few works to contain an *avadāna*-type narrative, and which likely stems from a Sarvāstivādin circle in the Northwest. According to Frauwallner, this text is a candidate for being among the earliest to elucidate more fully the nature of rebirth and temporality. The text states that it is name-and-form, the two fundamental and mutually dependent constituents of an individual, which correspond respectively to the immaterial cognitive and the material somatic

acquires as a product of his or her associated donative action. For instance, a gardener (*ārāmika*) who donated a lotus-flower (*padma*) was predicted to become a Buddha named Padmottama (‘Highest of Lotuses’); and a gambler who donated two *dīnāra* is reborn with gold coins (*hiranya*) in his hands (*pāṇi*) and was named Hiranyapāṇi (‘Golden-Handed One’)—this material relation is what Strong terms the ‘rupalogical dimension’.¹

Another aspect, which he terms the ‘dharmalogical dimension’, refers to the relationship between the donative act and the existential attainment. As previously observed, this nexus does not reside in the material quality of the practice but rather the aspect of faith manifest in the form of an aspiration (*praṇidhāna*), which specifies the desired goal of the ritual act. In this latter dimension, the respective aspirations of the above figures—the *ārāmika* wishes for the highest perfect awakening and the gambler to be reborn in a wealthy family—come to pass by virtue of their totally relinquishing a gift-worthy object, the arising of a particular intention and planting a good root: *anena deyadharmaparityāgena cittotpādena kuśalamūlena*.² Thus the Buddhists proposed that one could determine a future state through the specific intention of a fervent wish.

factors, that are reborn. Through the process of time and due to the constantly ephemeral system of causality, illustrated through dependent origination, in which *nāmarūpa* derives from consciousness (*viññāṇa*) and serves as the causal basis for the six sensory spheres (*āyatana*), the *nāmarūpa* that is reborn has no determinable origin in time, and, although a product of action, it is neither entirely identical to, nor different from the nature of its past and future manifestations in the causal thread. Mil 2. 6-9. E. Frauwallner, *Die Philosophie des Buddhismus* (Frankfurt: Akademie Verlag, 1956), 41ff.

¹ Strong, ‘The Transforming Gift: An Analysis of Devotional Acts of Offering in “Avadāna” Literature’, 230–33.

² See below.

Albeit leaving his position unsubstantiated, Strong opines it was the discrete ontological system of the Sarvāstivādins that informed the composition of *avadāna* narratives:

They [the Sarvāstivādins] were concerned about the possibility of perceiving (remembering) things past and perceiving (predicting) things future...they wanted to be able to assert, in the context of the doctrine of karma, the reality of past causes and the reality of future fruits.¹

Although I am in agreement with his views in this regard, Strong admits himself that the presence of the Sarvāstivādins precise ontological system in *avadāna* literature is ‘a difficult matter to assess’. Consequently, he does not provide any concrete evidence for his position. Doing so is indeed no small feat; regardless of how self-evident it may appear to be that such narratives are wholly preoccupied with narrating causal connections between the three time periods and with illustrating the implications of this model for individuals’ existences.

Presuming for a moment that Strong’s deduction is accurate, it may be argued that these narratives—in dealing with a variety of archetypal social groupings and being designed to appeal to monastic and non-monastic figures alike—that certain philosophical tenets were perhaps rendered in their most fundamental form in order that they were propagated to the community at large. According to this logic, the *avadāna* texts represent a popular version of an *Abhidharma* that had already become so pervasive as to allow the narratives to simply take its premises for granted rather than feel the need to elucidate or defend them—the texts are themselves based on that very scholastic system. Forwarding such an ontology also makes total sense when articulated as

¹ Strong, *The Legend and Cult of Upagupta*, 7.

a premise for donative activity: it provided potential donors with both the moral and existential grounds to engage in ritual action (*karman*) and to perform their past and potential future existences by way of making a theoretically instrumental aspiration towards a future state. So how precisely are the core principles of the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma illustrated in *avadāna* literature?

One such trace may be found in the following and oft repeated formula of the *Vinaya* and *Avadāna* collections attributed to the Mūlasarvāstivādins:

The actions previously performed by [insert individual] in other existences, monks, have accumulated and amassed, the causes have matured, and necessarily exist, as if in a river. These actions have been performed and accumulated by [insert individual]. Who else would experience them? These performed and accumulated actions, monks, do not ripen in an external earth-element, water-element, fire-element, or wind-element; rather, they ripen, whether beautiful or ugly, in the acquired aggregates, elements, and sensory spheres.

Actions do not disappear even after a hundred billion aeons,
And aggregating at a certain time, they result in a like
body.¹

¹ *bhagavān āha: [insert individual] eva bhikṣavaḥ pūrvam anyāsu jātiṣu karmāṇi kṛtāny upacitāni labdhasaṃbhārāṇi pariṇatapratyayāni oghavat pratyupasthitāny avaśyaṃbhāvīni. [insert individual] etāni karmāṇi kṛtāny upacitāni. ko 'nyaḥ pratyānubhaviṣyati. na bhikṣavaḥ karmāṇi kṛtāny upacitāni bāhye pṛthivīdhātau vipacyante, nābdhātau, na tejodhātau, na vāyudhātau, api tūpātteṣv eva skandhadhātvāyataneṣu karmāṇi kṛtāni vipacyante śubhāny aśubhāni ca.*

*na praṇaśyanti karmāṇy api kalpaśatair api,
sāmagrīṃ prāpya kālaṃ ca phalanti khalu dehinām.*

The metaphor of an individual's causal action existing as if in river (*oghavat*) appears as a rather obvious allusion to the notion of an individual's continuous life-stream (*saṃtāna*), although this cannot be explicated further. The reference to the four external (*bāhya*) great elements (*mahābhūta*) which constitute the primary basis of material reality (*rūpadharma*)—the earth-element, water-element, fire-element, or wind-element—in juxtaposition to the constituents of an individual's

See Adhik-v 63; Avś 1. 13, 31; Divy 2. 54; 10. 131; 11. 141; 13. 191; 19. 282; 21. 311; 35. 504; 37. 582; 584; MSV 1. 108; 2. 137. Pravṛ-v 3. 264; Śay-v 31; SBV 1. 145; 161; 2. 2; 43-44; 118; 147; 157-159. Sum-a 264. Part of this formula is attested in several fragments from Turfan and other locations in Central Asia that are thus dateable to c. 5th century CE, see SHT 2802, Klaus Wille and Heinz Bechert, eds., *Sanskrihandschriften aus den Turfanfunden. Teil IX* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2004), 282. SHT 4524, 4526b, 4591. Klaus Wille, ed., *Sanskrihandschriften Aus Den Turfanfunden. Teil XI. Die Katalognummern 4363-5799* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2011), 104. I was only able to identify a single translation of the closing verse in the Chinese translation of the *Avadānaśataka*. In the Sanskrit it occurs twice as follows:

*na praṇaśyanti karmāṇy api kalpaśatair api,
sāmagrīm prāpya kālaṃ ca phalanti khalu dehinām.* E.g., Avś 1. 74, 169.

Actions do not disappear even after a hundred billion aeons,
And aggregating at a certain time, they result in a like body.

In the Chinese witness, one finds:

宿造善惡業 百劫而不朽
罪業因緣故 今獲如是報。 T 200. 227c4; 232b24; Cf. T 200. 246a7.
Previously performed good or bad activities, do not even disappear
after a hundred aeons,
Due to the causes and conditions of bad activity, in the present, they
produce a like result.

Another similarly directed passage reads, 'As the actions that one has performed before, monks, are accumulated and amassed, so indeed they result in a like body': *tenaiva bhikṣavaḥ karmāṇi kṛtāny upacitāni labdhasaṃbhārāṇi pūrvavad yāvat phalanti khalu dehinām.* Divy 464.

factors of existence—the aggregates (*skandha*),¹ elements (*dhātu*)² and sensory spheres (*āyatana*)³—encompasses the view that causal actions performed by an individual result in the constituents of that same individual, a like body or embodiment (*dehin*), in the future. Thus, at its very heart, this passage appears to be founded on an ontological premise that an individual’s past actions cause the discrete manifestation of the factors of existence in a given individual’s life-stream;⁴ a point, it should be added, specifically refuted by the Theravādins.¹

¹ Listed above.

² The eighteen elements comprise six sense faculties—*cakṣurdhātu*, *srotradhātu*, *ghrāṇadhātu*, *jihvadhātu*, *kāyadhātu*, *manodhātu*—their six sensory objects—*rūpadhātu*, *śabdadhātu*, *gandhadhātu*, *rasadhātu*, *spraṣṭavyadhātu*, *dharmadhātu*—and six perceptions—*cakṣurvijñānadhātu*, *srotravijñānadhātu*, *ghrāṇavijñānadhātu*, *jihvavijñānadhātu*, *kāyavijñānadhātu*, *manovijñānadhātu*. *Abhidh-k-bh* 1. 26.

³ Twelve spheres are enumerated according to the dichotomy of internal (*ādhyātmika*) and external (*bahīra*): *cakṣurāyatana* and *rūpāyatana* (eye- and form-sphere), *srotāyatana* and *śabdāyatana* (ear- and sound-sphere), *ghrāṇāyatana* and *gandhāyatana* (nose- and smell-sphere), *jihvāyatana* and *rasāyatana* (tongue- and taste-sphere), *kāyāyatana* and *spraṣṭāyatana* (body- and touch-sphere) and *manāyatana* and *dharmāyatana* (mind- and mental object-sphere).

⁴ It cannot be determined, whether this presupposes a Vaibhāṣika atom theory, such as that of Dharmaśrī found in his *Apitan xin lun* 阿毘曇心論 (**Abhidharmahṛdaya*), composed perhaps c. 2nd century CE, which maintained that the four great elements, as well as the ten sensory elements of the form aggregate were atoms (*jiwei* 極微; Skt. *paramāṇu*) of ontological experience, is not clear. T 1550. 811b7-10. Nor is it patent if it designates the Sautrāntika notion that only the four great elements were ontologically existent, whereas all other elements were only phenomenologically existent. For a discussion of atom theory, see Noa Ronkin, *Early Buddhist Metaphysics: The Making of a Philosophical Tradition* (London: Routledge, 2005), 56ff; E. Frauwallner, *Studies in Abhidharma Literature and the Origins of Buddhist Philosophical Systems*, trans. Sophie Francis Kidd and Ernst Steinkellner (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995), 152; Joseph Walser, ‘Abhidharma’, in

Importantly, the verse that closes the above passage, and the philosophical principle it seeks to demonstrate, had a far reaching impact and is quoted in several commentaries, albeit of a notably late, post c. 7th century period. In the *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*, Yaśomitra employs the verse as an explanation for a passage in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, which itself is formulated as an answer to the question, How much time [does an intermediate existence (*antarābhāva*)] last?: *kiyantaṃ kālam avatiṣṭhate*.

There is no end to beings with short lives, which desire smells and tastes. Having smelt a smell, they die desiring smells and tastes and remember an action conducive to an existence as a worm, and by means of that thirst, they are reborn among the worms. Or rather, the many conditions for that [existence] and the actions conducive to it reach a state only at a time when the ripenings have appeared. Hence wheel-turning rulers are only born when the actions conducive to a wheel-turning rulers are produced, when a person's life is eighty thousand years or greater. Therefore, the Fortunate One said: 'the ripening of beings' actions is inconceivable.'²

The Buddhist World, ed. John Powers, The Routledge Worlds (Oxon: Routledge, 2016), 159–70.

¹ The Theravādins maintained the opposite position: that only the *man'āyatana* can be the product of the ripening of action, whereas the other *āyatanas* cannot. Kv 12. 4. 467-469.

² *gandharasābhigṛddhānām alpāyuṣāṃ jantūnām anto nāsti. te taṃ gandhaṃ ghrātvā gandharasābhigṛddhāḥ kālaṃ kurvantaḥ krimibhāvasaṃvartanīyaṃ karma vibodhya tayā tṛṣṇayā krimiṣūpapadyanta iti. atha vā nūnaṃ tatpratyaipracura eva kāle tatsaṃvartanīyāni karmāṇi vipākābhinirvṛttau vṛttiṃ labhante nānyatra. tathā hi cakravartisaṃvarttanīye karmāṇi aśīti-varśasahasrāyūṣi prajāyāṃ bahutarāyūṣi vā cakravartino jāyante nānyasyām.*

In the commentary to this passage, Yaśomitra states the following:

Lesser beings smell a smell, and recollecting the participation in that [smell] and the experienced taste, they die, desiring the smell and taste, and become conscious of the action that causes the homogeneous character of the group ‘worms’. Through thirst for a smell, the effect is actualised and the streams of intermediate existence arise among the worms.¹

He goes on to say that ‘at a time when there are many conditions for a worm, the actions conducive thereto—conducive to a worm—reach a state in which the ripenings have appeared’: *krimipratyayapracure kāle tatsamvartānīyāni karmāṇi krimisamvartanīyāni vipākābhiniṣṭṭau vṛttiṃ labhante*. He then quotes the above verse from *avadāna* literature, ‘and aggregating at a certain time, they produce a like body’: *sāmagrīṃ prāpya kālaṃ ca phalanti khalu dehinām*; elaborating further that ‘this means ‘only [this time]; not at a time when there are not the many [conditions] for that [existence]; and not at another [time]’’: *iti vacanāt. nānyatra. nātat-pracure kāle. nānyasyām iti*.²

For these later Sarvāstivādin commentators, rebirth was the result of two factors. First, that the desirous memory of a past action produces the circumstances conducive to a particular state of rebirth, or, as Yaśomitra put it, the arising of the homogenous character of a group (*nikāyasabhāga*).³ Second, employing the verse popular to the *avadānas*,

ata eva cokaṃ bhagavatā: acintyaḥ sattvānāṃ karmavipāka iti. Abhidh-k-bh 3. 126.

¹ *te kṣudrajantavas taṃ gandhaṃ ghrātvā tat-sahacaram cānubhūtaṃ rasam anusmṛtya gandharasābhigṛddhāḥ kālaṃ kurvantaḥ kriminikāya-sabhāgot-pādakaṃ karma vibodhya. tayā gamdharasatṛṣṇayā vipākābhimukhaṃ kṛtvāntarābhavasantatyā krimiṣūpajāyanta iti. Abhidh-k-vy 3. 28.*

² *Abhidh-k-vy 3. 28.*

³ Collett Cox has given a lengthy analysis of the notion ‘homogenous character of a group’ and notes that it is only in early Sarvāstivāda treatises that the term

that the actions of a previous state only become conducive to an embodiment once they have ripened at the appropriate time, and thus that time is a causal condition for the aggregation of action.

The ontological and temporal premises implicit in the verse are also dealt with in the *Prasannapadā* of Candrakīrti (c. 7th century CE), who goes to great length to falsify the position in two cases, seeking in both to demonstrate that action and time are non-existent and have no causal effect:

Action is non-substantial to the extent that it does not arise. If indeed action does not arise due to non-substantiality, then why did the Fortunate One say:

Actions do not disappear even after a hundred billion aeons,
And aggregating at a certain time, they result in a like body.

It is [also] said:

Since [action] is not arisen, it does not disappear.

This [latter] is the precise intention of the Fortunate One.¹

designates ‘the causes that determine the specific rebirth state of sentient beings’, whereas in later texts it designates ‘the mutual similarity of sentient beings’ (*sattvānaṃ sādṛśyam*)...an abstract principle of universality or homogeneity by which entities are recognized as members of the same category or class’. Cox, *Disputed Dharmas: Early Buddhist Theories on Existence. An Annotated Translation of the Section on Factors Dissociated from Thought from Saṅghabhadra’s Nyāyānusāra*, 107ff. This latter instance in the *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā* would, therefore, appear to be an exception, in so far as the term is employed specifically as a cause for rebirth.

¹ *yasmān niḥsvabhāvaṃ karma tasmān notpadyate. yadi khalv evaṃ niḥsvabhāvatvāt karma notpadyate, tat katham evaṃ uktaṃ bhagavatā.*

*na praṇaśyanti karmāṇi kalpakoṭīśatair api,
sāmagrīṃ prāpya kālaṃ ca phalanti khalu dehinām iti.*

ucyate.

yasmāc ca tad anutpannaṃ na tasmād vipraṇaśyati.

Candrakīrti thus rejects the philosophical basis of the Sarvāstivādin verse, stating instead that action is non-substantial (*niḥsvabhāva*) and, undoing the very premise of causality, he forwards the view that actions never arise and so can never disappear.

In the second example, Candrakīrti deals specifically with the Sarvāstivāda position that time exists as a causal factor. He first summarises that position as follows.

It is said (by the Sarvāstivādins) that time is known [to exist] due to it being an auxiliary cause in the development of a fruit (result): what does not exist does not arise by means of an auxiliary cause, and therefore time exists due to it being an auxiliary cause. In this world, an arising sprout is dependent on the aggregation of certain causes and conditions—a seed, the earth, water, fire, wind, the atmosphere etc.—and even when the aggregations of these conditions—a seed etc.—are present, it [i.e., the sprout] certainly does not arise without the presence of the various seasons [i.e., time]. This is the case for what is external and what is internal. Just as it was said by the Fortunate One:

Actions do not disappear even after a hundred billion aeons,
And aggregating at a certain time, they result in a like body.
Since there is a dependence on time, therefore that which is
called time exists as an auxiliary cause in the production of a
sprout etc. This is what is said [by the Sarvāstivādins].¹

ity evaṃ bhagavato 'bhīprāya iti. Pras-p 17. 139, P. L. Vaidya, ed., Madhyamakaśāstra of Nāgārjuna with the Commentary: Prasannapadā by Candrakīrti (Darbhanga: The Mithila Institute, 1960).

¹ *atrāha vidyate kālaḥ phalapravṛttau saḥkārikāraṇabhāvāt. yo nāsti nāsau saḥkārikāraṇabhāvena pratipadyate, tasmād asti kālaḥ saḥkārikāraṇabhāvāt. iha bījāvanīsalilajvalanapavanaganābhīdhānahetupratyayasāmagrīṃ pra-*

According to Candrakīrti, the Sarvāstivādins postulate the existence of time as an auxiliary cause (*sahakārikāraṇa*). This is because, just as a seed, water etc., are necessary for a sprout to grow, time (the seasons) is also required and hence must also be a causal factor to some, albeit an ancillary degree. Candrakīrti understands the premise contained in the verse from *avadāna* literature (or rather the verse's specific interpretation that he criticises) as stating that the aggregation of action at a particular time and as an existent cause, results in a like body. He continues, now with his epistemologically inspired critique:

Time would indeed have the nature of an auxiliary cause if there were the production of a fruit from a sprout etc. But this is not the case. How so? In this world, when it is thought the arising of a fruit from a sprout, etc., is due to the aggregation of the causal condition of a seed, etc., the arising of an existent fruit could be thought as an existent or a non-existent aggregation. And what is the reason? How would it be if that which is supposed of an existent were to not exist? Proving [this], it was said:

If an aggregation is born from a cause and condition,
And there is a fruit, how is the aggregation produced in an
aggregation?

If you think there is a fruit in the aggregation of causal
conditions, then how indeed could it be produced by that

*tītyāyam aṅkura upajāyamānaḥ satyām api bījādipratyayasāmagryām ṛtu-
viśeṣasamnidhānān nopajāyate. yathā ca bāhyeṣv evam ādhātmikeṣv api.
yathoktaṃ bhagavatā.*

*na praṇaśyanti karmāṇi kalpakoṭīśatair api,
sāmagrīm prāpya kālaṃ ca phalanti khalu dehinām iti.
yasmāc caivam asti kālāpekṣā tasmād asty asau kālo nāma yo aṅkurādi-
pravṛttau sahakārikāraṇaṃ bhavatīti ucyate. Pras-p 20. 168.*

[aggregation] when the aggregation [already] exists? It is not the case that milk in a pot is produced by the pot.¹

Thus, for Candrakīrti, time cannot be an existent auxiliary cause because it is already an aggregated condition. It is like a pot, which may be a condition for the state of the milk in this instance, but certainly did not cause it.

This specific verse, therefore, at least for the later Abhidharma commentators, was held to be particularly indicative of the Sarvāstivāda position that the time periods exist and that time itself is a causal condition. Although the verse itself may well be later than the early Common Era in the Northwest, following this cursory analysis we may suggest that these *avadāna* texts likely do have the specific Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma as their primary informant. On the basis of the Gāndhārī fragments, which describe this Abhidharma as justifying the ontological existence of the factors and the existence of time through the example of archetypal classes of beings, we may further state that this was a matter current and pertinent to the Northwest at the turn of the Common Era.

A second trait of numerous *avadāna* narratives that is particular to the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma is the notion that the causal efficacy of an action and its results may be collectivised. We may recall, for

¹ *syāt saḥakārikāraṇatā kālasya yady añkurādīphalasya pravṛttir eva syāt. na tv asti. katham kṛtvā. iha bījādīhetupratyayasāmagrīto añkurādīphalodaye. parikalpyamāne vyavasthitasya vā phalasya sāmāgryāṃ satyāṃ tata utpāda[ḥ] parikalpyetāvyavasthitasya vā. kiṃ cātaḥ. yadi tāvad vyavasthitasya parikalpyate tan na yujyate iti pratipādayann āha.*

hetoś ca pratyayānāṃ ca sāmāgryā jāyate yadi,

phalam asti ca [sāmāgryāṃ] sāmāgryā jāyate katham.

yadi hetupratyayasāmāgryāṃ tvaṇmatena phalam asti, nanv evaṃ sati yasmāt sāmāgryāṃ asti katham tayā taj janyate. na hi kuṇḍe dadhi vidyamānaṃ kuṇḍena janyate. Pras-p 20. 168.

instance, the two bovine themed narratives mentioned above¹ in which buffaloes and herdsmen are reborn together in successive lives. But another, perhaps even more explicit example, arises in the *Putrāvadāna* of the *Avadānaśataka*, which is something of a (presumable) recasting of the story of the Gandhāran princess Gāndhārī's pregnancy in the *Mahābhārata*.²

The story details that the wife of a wealthy Śākya at Kapilavastu miscarried and gave birth to an underdeveloped foetus (*māṃsapeśī*, lit. 'mass of flesh').³ The husband goes to the Buddha for advice, who recommends the foetus be wrapped in cotton, hand-wiped for three days, and sprinkled with milk for seven. Thereafter, he says, it should divide and become a hundred princes and that all shall become powerful men.⁴ This does indeed come to pass and once the princes have grown they one day see the Buddha at the Nyagrodhārāma in Kapilavastu and sit before him to hear the Dharma. The Buddha gives a teaching that illustrates the four noble truths; they attain stream entry, and having received permission from their mother and father, go forth in the Buddha's teaching and attain arhatship. The monks are doubtful of the

¹ See Chapter Ten: Pundits, Pedagogues and Specialists.

² The principle narrative tenets of the *Putrāvadāna* are found in the *Adiparvan* of the *Mahābhārata*, in which Gāndhārī, the daughter of Subala, King of Gandhāra, and wife of Dhṛtarāṣṭra the Kaurava, aborts the mass of flesh in her womb, destined to be a hundred princes, which she then sprinkles with water at the behest of Vyāsa. From the mass of flesh, one hundred fetuses are born, each of which is placed in a pot filled with ghee and from which one hundred princes were born, beginning with Duryodhana. Mbh 1. 107–108.

³ This is a difficult term to understand. It literally designates a muscle or foetus (*peśī*) made of flesh (*māṃsa*). It is explained it as a foetus between the eighth and fourteenth days. Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary: Etymologically and Philologically Arranged with Special Reference to Cognate Indo-European Languages*, 805. Therefore the sense appears to be that the mother here had a miscarriage at an early stage in the pregnancy.

⁴ Avś 1. 375.

account and ask the Buddha, ‘What actions, sir, were performed by the hundred princes, by which they became powerful men, and all together as brothers?’¹ The Buddha then outlines the principle of causality he wishes to explain and illustrates it through a past life story.

In a previous existence, monks, in a previous time in the Ekanavatakalpa, a perfectly awakened Buddha named Vipāśyin arose in the world, endowed with knowledge and conduct, well-gone, a knower of the world, the highest, a guide for men to be tamed, a teacher of gods and men, a Buddha, a Fortunate One. Having entered the capital Bandhumatī, he resided there. After Vipāśyin the perfectly awakened Buddha had performed the duty of a Buddha, he, like fire without kindling, completely ceased in the sphere of *nirvāṇa* without remainder. King Bandhumat performed the funeral proceedings on his body and established a stupa made of the four precious substances, a *yojana* in circumference, and a *krośa* in height. There, many hundred thousand beings performed worship and became fit for liberation in heaven.

Later a hundred members of a society approached. Seeing the stupa, they recollected the qualities of the Tathāgata and there at the stupa, having one personage, body, self, mind, and existence, they all became a single mass, with a tranquil mind, and joyful. And having a single self they offered meritorious incense, fragrances, garlands, and oils, eatables, the best of foods of various tastes, and all manner of offerings. They erected banners and umbrellas and having erected them and having become a single mass they performed praise with a single sound and made a hundred

¹ Avś 1. 376.

thousand circumambulations. Then, having a single personal existence and a single mind they made an aspiration: ‘By means of this good-root, may we have a single self and a single mind and may our bodies be the same, our conduct the same, our factors of existence the same, our merit the same and our *nirvāṇa* the same.’ There at the stupa they ceased by means of the support of devotion.¹

The Buddha then explains:

For this reason, they were born as single foetus, having the same form, the same body and being, the same self and mind, exerting with the same power, energy, and conduct, and having their support in the same factors of existence, they

¹ *bhūtapūrvam bhikṣavo ‘tīte ‘dhvani ekanavate kalpe vipaśyī nāma samyaksambuddho loka udapādi vidyācaraṇasampannaḥ sugato lokavid anuttarah puruṣadamyasārathīḥ śāstā devamanuṣyāṇām buddho bhagavān. sa bandhumatīm rājadhānīm upaniśritya viharati. yāvad vipaśyī samyak-sambuddhaḥ sakalam buddhakāryam kṛtvā indhanakṣayād ivāgnir nir-upadhiśeṣe nirvāṇadhātau parinirvṛtaḥ, tasya rājñā bandhumatā śarīre śarīrapūjām kṛtvā samantayojanaś catūratnamayah stūpaḥ pratiṣṭhāpitaḥ krośam uccatvena, yatrānekāni prāṇīśatasahasrāni kārān kṛtvā svarga-mokṣa-parāyaṇāni bhavanti. yāvad goṣṭhikānām śataṃ nirgatam. taṃ stūpaṃ drṣṭvā tathāgataguṇān anusmṛtya tais tatra stūpe ekapuruṣeṇevaika-dehinevaikātmanevaikacittenevaikātmabhāveneva sarvair ekasamūhībhūtaiḥ prasannacittakaiḥ prītijātaiḥ ekātmanībhūtais tatra stūpe puṇyadhūpagandha-mālyavilepanāni naivedyarasarasāgrabhojyāni sarvopahārāni copadhaukitāni. Dhvajavitāna-cchatrāni cāropitāni. āropya ekasamūhī-bhūtvā ekasvareṇa stūtiṃ kṛtvā pradakṣiṇaśatasahasraṃ kṛtaṃ. tatas taiḥ sarvair ekātmabhāvenaika-cittakena pranīdhānam kṛtvā: anena kuśala-mūlenāsmākaṃ tathaivaikātmajātā ekacittakāḥ samānadehāḥ samānācārāḥ samānadharmāḥ samānapuṇyāḥ samanirvāṇā bhavantu iti. tatraiva stūpe evaṃ bhaktiparāyaṇā nirvṛtāḥ. Avś 1. 377–378.*

attained the same fruit of stream entry and they attained the same state of an arhat.¹

This quite unusual story recalls Victor Turner's notion of *communitas*, designating the moment in which a collective of individuals engaged in a common activity simultaneously reach a point of ecstatic fervour.² In this case, the fervour of the one hundred beings manifests in a collective aspiration, which has the causal effect of their factors of existence aggregating (*samāgrī*) in the *māṃsapeśī* and then separating (*sphuṭitā*) once more into a hundred distinct beings. This quality of collectivising the factors of existence around several individuals appears to be unique to the Sarvāstivāda scholastic thought.³

It must be noted that whilst this notion of causality described across time periods is common to Mūlasarvāstivāda sources, it is not self-evident in all the Gāndhārī narratives, the texts that are demonstrably closest to our context. For the most part, these narratives comprise either a single story set in the past, entitled *Pūrvayoga*, or a story set in the present, entitled *Avadāna*, but with no causal link to another temporal existence. Lenz points out that these narratives are so skeletal in form that they were designed for the narrator to expand on, and subsequently we may surmise that the process of their oral narration may well have involved making a connection with the past or future embodiment of the protagonist. He observed however that less than half of the Gāndhārī narratives would fall into this hypothetical category and there are more cases where the narrative was not intended to be

¹ *tenaiva hetunā idānīm ekapeśījātāḥ samarūpāḥ samadehabhāvāḥ samātma-cittāḥ samabalavīryaparākramāḥ samācārāḥ samadharmeṣu parāyaṇāḥ samaṃ srotāpattiphalaṃ prāptāḥ, samaṃ cārhatvaṃ prāptāḥ.* Avś 1. 378.

² Victor Turner, 'Liminality and Communitas', in *The Ritual Process: Structure and Antistructure* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1969), 94–113.

³ This point is refuted in the Kathāvattu, albeit not specifically as a Sabbatthivādin position. Kv 7. 347.

expanded into another time but were rather ‘pious legends’, designed to detail historical events and figures.¹

However, the lack of a causal premise threading these temporalities may not be so pronounced and it shall later be observed that there are certain terminologies of aspirations in these narratives, which indicate the same principle of causality found in other *avadāna* narratives. Moreover, the likelihood that the aforementioned Gāndhārī scholastic fragments share the exact same temporal and geographical context as the Gāndhārī *avadāna*-type texts—both were likely composed in the c. 1st century CE and unearthed at Haḍḍa—and that they were both intent on illustrating the causal connections of social archetypes, demands at the very least we entertain the almost undeniable possibility that a concrete, physical, and institutional connection existed between the respective composers. Indeed, we must contend with the fact that the two strands of thought informed one another. It seems therefore that the potential existence of an individual across temporal boundaries, and the implications thereof for ritual action, was indeed an issue at stake in our context of the North and Northwest.

The apparent localisation and popularisation of this Sarvāstivādin philosophical position concerning embodiment is also reflected, albeit implicitly, in epigraphic terms. First, we may refer to Inscribed Gold Scroll of Śīra, which records an dedication of a relic in her mother’s and father’s goose (the inscription was donated along with a crystal goose) and wishes that at the rebirth of her body it may be her world: *śīrae bhagavato dhāt[u] preṭhav[e]tiye matu hasisa pitu hasase loo tasa siati yo ha dehajati.*² The inscription appears to indicate the notion that this

¹ See Lenz, *Gandhāran Avadānas*, 6–14.

² CKI 64. This inscription was found at Gangu (stupa no. 32) in Taxila. It is inscribed in the Kharoṣṭhī of the Indo-Scythian Period and shares palaeographic similarities with the Copper Plate of Patika (No. 12), dated 78

relic-establishment shall have a causal effect on her somatic nature in future rebirth when it is her world (*loka*), which may also indicate some soteriological sentiment; however, the meaning remains unclear. Another more explicit example occurs in the Reliquary Inscription of Saṃghamitra (No. 59), which includes the following epigraphic aspiration:

*k(*u)śalamule(*na) eteṣa dharmāna labhi bhavima y(*e)ṣa
dharmaṇaṃ eta vo syet(*i) śarira sarvasatvana
nirvanasaṃbharae bhavatu Ramasa agripracaya*

By means of this good root, may we come to attain the good qualities¹ of the relics, and may [it] be for the preparation of all beings' cessation.

Leaving aside certain syntactical issues in the passage (determining the precise sense of the gen. plural Skt. *dharmāṇāṃ* is also not without its difficulties),² it is thus confirmed in this inscription that there was the notion current in the Northwest that present donative activity and the formulation of an aspiration had the efficacy to cause the desired acquisition of *dharma*s in the future, in this latter case the factors which constitute the relics he donated. This inscription only makes sense within the afore elucidated system of causality and therefore it seems

Maues (3/4 CE), see Konow, *Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions: With the Exception of Those of Aśoka*, 84.

¹ On this translation, see Chapter Fourteen: Soteriology.

² As Cox points out, the precise connotation of the term *dharma* evades any strict classification due to the plethora of historical influences and usages it underwent, but, in the context of the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma, she argues that *dharma*s are 'distinct, irreducible entities' and argues for a 'dynamic conception of *dharma* as the efficacy of experienced events functioning in complex patterns of conditioned, regular interaction'. Cox, 'From Category to Ontology: The Changing Role of Dharma in Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma', 544–47.

that the central principles of that ontology were indeed a component of popular philosophy in the North and Northwest and had a direct impact on ritual practice and performative social behaviours

CHAPTER FOURTEEN: EPIGRAPHIC ASPIRATIONS

Nāgasena, sir, what is the ‘general shop’ of the Buddha, the Fortunate One? The general shop, great king, of the Fortunate One comprises the nine-limbed word of the Buddha, the corporeal relics, items of usage, and objects of worship,¹ as well as the jewel of the Saṃgha. In the general shop, great king, birth, wealth, health, beauty, knowledge, humanity, divinity, or *nirvāṇa* are sold. Whichever good they desire, having given the value of the transaction, they purchase the respectively coveted good; from a little amount, according to the value of the business, they respectively acquire the good.²

¹ Horner alternatively takes corporeal relics (*sārīraka*) and items of usage (*pāribhogika*) as qualifiers of ‘objects of worship’ (*cetiya*). Horner, *Milinda’s Questions. Vol. II*, 188. This latter, however, likely denotes so-called secondary relics, e.g., the Buddha’s bowl.

² *bhante Nāgasena, katamaṃ Buddhassa Bhagavato sabbāpaṇan ti. Sabbāpaṇaṃ kho mahārāja Bhagavato navangaṃ Buddhavacanaṃ, sārīrakāni pāribhogakāni cetiyāni, sangharatañ ca. Sabbāpaṇe mahārāja Bhagavatā jātisampatti pasāritā, bhogasampatti pasāritā, ārogyasampatti pasāritā, vaṇṇasampatti pasāritā, paññāsampatti pasāritā, mānusikasampatti, dibbasampatti pasāritā, nibbānasampatti pasāritā. Tattha ye taṃ taṃ sampattiṃ icchanti te kammamūlaṃ datvā patthitapatthitaṃ sampattiṃ kiṇanti;*

Buddhist donative practice is teleological. At its basis lies the assumption that the practice of generosity (*dāna*) results in certain benefits, such as these ‘goods’ enumerated in the *Milindapañha*—birth, wealth, health, beauty, knowledge, humanity, divinity, and *nirvāṇa*. But the acquisition thereof is not simply a matter of exchange, as this commercially coloured passage suggests, but is dependent also on the patron’s intention, his or her desire towards a specific end. Whilst this principle which emphasises the necessary relation between giving and intention in the dynamics of Buddhist practice is naturally found across the range of Buddhist literature, it is specifically in donative inscriptions and textual sources from around the turn of the Common Era that it finds concrete expression in the practice of an aspiration (*prañidhāna*). An aspiration may be defined as the externalisation of an intention (a wish or desire) that a certain beneficiary, whether oneself or another, acquires a particular existential state; it serves the central purpose of directing the causal force of a donative act towards an intended result in the future. Yet, beyond this aspect of internal intentionality, they are also performative acts, representing the means for an actual individual, enacting a ritual donation in the present, to signify and perform the potentiality of their future state.¹ As a performance, aspirations not only constitute a part of practice concerned with the meritoriousness of one’s existence but have implications for the social existence of an individual, conceived within that system of causality.

Following these premises, the present chapter shall on the one hand consider the range of epigraphic aspirations encountered in inscriptions and relate them, as far as possible, to normative instantiations of aspirations (*prañidhāna*) in literature, and on the other,

appamattakena pi kammamūlena upādāy’ upādāya sampattiyo paṭilabhanti.
Mil 341.

¹ See Chapter Thirteen: The Scholastic Basis of Avadānas: Performative Causality.

shall further examine the social function of aspirations and their relation to the formation of agency in Buddhist ritual contexts in the Indic North and Northwest.

ASPIRATIONS IN BUDDHIST THOUGHT

The phenomenon of an aspiration is entirely absent from Brāhmī donative epigraphy from Central India of the c. 2nd–1st century BCE.¹ These inscriptions, rather, simply name an object as being the donation (*dāna*) of such and such, leaving their purpose open to question. Consequently, views differ among scholars as to the function these inscriptions were thought to have served, some arguing they were simply intended to record a donation in the strict bureaucratic sense, although presumably they were also envisaged, in view of the system of causal action (*karma*), as garnering some positive ends.² Aspirations in inscriptions of the North and Northwest are therefore a defining feature and potentially an innovation of Buddhists in the c. 1st century BCE, for it is in this context that that the phenomenon first arises. Corresponding to the aforementioned list from the *Milindapañha*, aspirations are expressed through a limited set of formulae, whose purposes range from general goals, such as worship (*pūjā*) and dedicating the highest share [of merit] (*agrapratyamśa*, *agrabhāga*), to concrete matters of health (*ārogya*),

¹ Schopen, *Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monks*, 7.

² Matthew Milligan has analysed the formulae Brāhmī epigraphy, and argued, in distinction to others, that early donative epigraphy was not designed to produce merit but was simply a record. Milligan, 'The Development and Representation of Ritual in Early Indian Buddhist Donative Epigraphy', 175–77; Cf. Konow, *Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions: With the Exception of Those of Aśoka*, 93; Schopen, *Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monks*, 6–7; Schopen, *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters*, 24ff.

longevity (*āyus*), welfare and happiness (*hitasukha*), as well as eschatological goals, such as being reborn in heaven, and soteriological ends, including *nirvāṇa* and awakening (*bodhi*).¹ For example:

Reliquary Inscription of Theuduta (No. 2)

*The[u]dutena meridarkhena pratīhavidā ime śarira
śakamunisa bhagavato bahujāna[hi](ta)ye*

Relics of Śākyamuni, the Fortunate One, were established by the district officer Theuduta, for the benefit of many people.

Reliquary Inscription of Śatrea (No. 32)

[Outside of Lid] [1.] *[bhagavato dhatue] Śatraeṇa
sagharthaṇeṇa pra<*di>ṭhavidī sarvasapaṇa puyae*
[Inside of Lid] [2.] *im<*e>ṇa [ku]śa[lamuleṇa agadakṣiṇa]
Śatreasa bharyae Yarae* [3.] *Yara*

Relics of the Fortunate One were established by Śatrea at the request of the community, for the worship of all beings. By

¹ Lamotte attaches to these aspirations a degraded value, regarding a person's aspiration for health, the highest share (*agrabhāga*, *agrapratyamśa*), and so forth, as examples of 'self-interested piety', for which he sees no place in Buddhist thought and thus attributes it to the influence of 'foreign origin'. In contrast, he elevates the Brāhmī inscriptions of the central, western, and south regions of India as true examples of Buddhist practice and as the 'inheritors of the early donors of Bhārhut and Sāñcī and, persuaded by the mechanisms of Pratīyasamutpāda, did not formulate any requests, and were content to "note" their pious work.' He assimilates this with the notion of a *puṇyapustaka*, 'a notebook of meritorious deeds', which is evidenced as a practice in the *Mahāvamsa*, see Mv. 32. 24–75, as well as in the modern context of Burma, which he pictures as having a therapeutic function for the process of dying. Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, 422–33.

means of this good root, [may it be] for the highest reward of Yara, wife of Śatrea. Yara.

Reliquary Inscription of Saṃghamitra (No. 59)

[1.] *saṃbatsarae aṭhaviṃśatihi 20 4 4 mase Apelaē sastehi daśahi 10 iśa kṣunaṃmi pratisthapita śarira Ramaraṃṇāmi thubami Saṃghamitreṇa navakarmi⟨*e⟩na* [2.] *edena k⟨*u⟩śalamule⟨*na⟩ eteṣa dharmana labhi bhavima y⟨*e⟩ṣa dharmaṇaṃ eta vo syet⟨*i⟩ śarira sarvasatvana nirvanasaṃbharae bhavatu Ramasa agripracaya*

In the twenty-eighth 28 year, day ten 10 of the month Appelaios. At this moment, a relic was established in a stupa at the Ramāraṇya by Saṃghamitra, the overseer of new constructions. By means of this good root, may we attain those good qualities, the good qualities that the relic may have; may it be for the preparation of all beings' *nirvāṇa*. For the highest share of Rama.

A potential source for these epigraphic aspirations may be sought in several of Aśoka's edicts from the Northwest, such as at Shāhbāzgarhi, near Peshawar, and at Mansehra, located to the north of Taxila. Thus, in his sixth rock edict, Aśoka makes the following personal aspiration:

yaṃ ca kichi parak[r]amami kiti bhutanaṃ anaṇiyaṃ v[r]acheyaṃ ia caṣa sukhayami paratra ca spargaṃ aradhetu¹

¹ CKI 6.

And whatever was performed out of courage, may I make it for the non-debt of living beings. May I make them happy in this world and may they attain heaven in the next.

This format is indeed remarkably akin to donative inscriptions of the North and Northwest, and, supposing the populace indeed read them, may have provided a blueprint to donors for centuries thereafter. Richard Salomon does not agree with this premise; he argues:

The epigraphic tradition in India after Aśoka...derives very little inspiration from Aśoka's model beyond the basic notion of recording proclamations in permanent written form in public places. In terms of format, contents, and tone, there is practically nothing in the later inscriptional corpus of the Indian world that even resembles Aśoka's inscriptions.¹

Yet, this observation does not appear to be correct. There are in fact many minor elements of North and Northwestern donative inscriptions to be found in those of Aśoka. In particular, it is this feature of an epigraphic aspiration, of writing a wish to accrue some benefit, which makes this corpus of inscriptions related to those of Aśoka and quite distinct from earlier and contemporaneous Brāhmī exemplars in Madhya Pradesh.

That aspirations were an innovation to Buddhist thought during a period closer to the Common Era in the North and Northwest is substantiated also by literary evidence. Wolfgang Binz found that aspirations (*praṇidhāna*, *praṇidhi*) are a phenomenon peculiar to texts of the so-called 'northern traditions', represented principally by *Avadāna* literature of the Mūlasarvāstivādins, and that they do not occur in early

¹ Richard Salomon, 'Aśoka and the 'Epigraphic Habit' in India', in *Aśoka in History and Historical Memory*, ed. Patrick Olivelle (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2009), 45.

Buddhist sources, nor in later Pali sources.¹ In these texts, aspirations invariably occupy a stereotypical position in the ritual frame, following the donation a gift-worthy object (*deyadharmā*) and preceding a prediction (*vyākaraṇa*) from the Buddha, who confirms that the purpose of the wish shall be obtained. He observed there to be three main types of aspirations in Buddhist literature, those with a [1] negative, [2] a worldly, or [3] a religious intention, with the latter being most represented.² Thus, aspirations for rebirth in a wealthy family are common, as are those for any one of the three soteriological goals of Buddhist thought: arhatship (*arhatva*), solitary awakening (*pratyekabodhi*) and the highest perfect awakening (*anuttara samyaksambodhi*). What Binz did not observe is that aspirations in these textual sources correspond at several discursive, linguistic and sociological levels with those found in inscriptions, suggesting that the practice, in both form and format, originated in this sphere.

¹ Wolfgang Binz, 'Prañidhāna und Vyākaraṇa: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Entwicklung des Bodhisattva-Ideals' (PhD, München, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, 1980), 210–13. This deduction appears broadly accurate, however, reducing the practice of an aspiration to its cognitive kernel, we do find a view common to all strata of Buddhist literature that the result of a donation is determined less by its physicality, the physical act and material quality of the object, and more by the intention (*citta*) and psychological state of the donor. For an examination of aspirations in later Theravāda literature, cf. Ines Konczak, 'Prañidhi-Darstellungen an der Nördlichen Seidenstraße—Das Bildmotiv der Prophezeiung der Buddhaschaft Śākyamunis in den Malereien Xinjiangs' (PhD, München, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, 2014), 44ff.

² Binz, 'Prañidhāna und Vyākaraṇa', 1. An example of an aspiration with a negative content or purpose is, for example, that of Devadatta, as found in the *Saṅghabhedavastu* of the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*, SBV 2. 211. Binz has translated the aspiration as follows: 'Weil von diesem bösen Ṛṣi mein Gefolge gespalten worden ist, möchte ich dessen Gefolge spalten, nachdem er die Kontrolle über alles zu Wissende (d.h. die Buddhaschaft) erlangt hat (*sarvajneyavaśiprāpta*).' Binz, 'Prañidhāna und Vyākaraṇa', 12.

DEDICATING MERIT

The basic assumption of the practice of epigraphic aspirations, regardless of purpose, is that one can effect changes to the existential states of oneself and other beings through a donative act. The notion that one can impact the existence of another has been widely referred to as ‘doctrine of the transference of merit’.¹ Much debate has occurred regarding the origins of this notion, with some attributing it to Brahmanical, Jain or Mahāyāna thought; but now it has been demonstrated on the basis of literary and epigraphic sources that the ability to dedicate merit is an idea found throughout all strata of Buddhist sources.² However, deeming this practice as a ‘transference’ is to slightly misconstrue the nature of the dynamic, for merit is not *transferred* from one being to another, but rather is ritually *dedicated* in the name of another.

In Buddhist literature, this ritual arises in several forms. Most commonly, it is encountered as the practice of dedicating one’s merit to ancestors (*preta*) who are in the *pretaloka* (‘realm of the hungry ghosts’, as is the common rendering), which comprises a specific ritual action termed the ‘assignment of a reward’ (*dakṣiṇādeśanā*), in which the Buddha assigns the reward (*dakṣiṇāṃ ādiśati*) from the family members’ donation to their ancestors, by means of which the ancestors are liberated from a disadvantageous existence and can arise, most commonly, in the Trāyatṛiṃśa heaven.³ The dedication is commonly

¹ Schopen, *Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monks*, 38–39.

² Cf. Brekke, ‘Contradiction and the Merit of Giving in Indian Religions’, 296ff; Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, 456; Schopen, *Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monks*, 6.

³ For example:

*iti bhadanta Mahāmaudgalyāyana ye ‘smākaṃ jñātayo rājagṛhe
prativasanti, teṣāṃ asmākīnāṃ karmaṇaṃ nivedya chandaka-*

enacted on behalf of the donor by a monastic figure; for example, in the *Śayanāsanavastu* of the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya* it is stated, ‘Noble One, if I have a monastery built would you assign the merit in my name also?’¹ The manner in which the merit is assigned is often given in the form of a prayer. In the *Uttarāvādāna* of the *Avadānaśataka*, for example, the monk Uttara, wishing to save his mother Pretī from her rebirth as a hungry ghost, requests that the Buddha assign the merit of his donative act in her name. The Buddha states in verse:

From this donation, may the merit henceforth go to Pretī,
And may she quickly arise from the dreadful realm of the
hungry ghosts.²

Another example in the *Abhisamācārikādharma* of the Mahāsāṃghika-lokottaravādins, reads as follows:

The reward should be directed [as follows]:
All beings die, indeed life ends in death,
They will proceed according to action, proceeding from the
results, good or bad.

*bhikṣaṇaṃ kṛtvā buddhapramukhaṃ bhikṣusaṃghaṃ bhojayitvā
asmākaṃ nāmnā dakṣiṇādeśanāṃ kārayitvā cāsmākaṃ pretayoner
mokṣaḥ syād iti. Avś 1. 257.*

Thus, Venerable Mahāmaudgalyāyana, our relatives residing in Rājagṛha, explained their past threads to us, made a collection of alms, fed the community with monks headed by the Buddha, and had a dedication of merit made in our name, so we could be liberated from the state of a ghost.

¹ *ārya yady ahaṃ vihāraṃ kāryāmi mamāpi nāmnā dakṣiṇāṃ uddiśasi. Śay-v 37; see Schopen, Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monks, 6–7; Schopen, ‘Art, Beauty and the Business of Running a Monastery in Early Northwest India’, 302.*

² *ito dānād dhi yat puṇyaṃ tat pretīm anugacchatu,
uttiṣṭhatāṃ kṣipram iyaṃ pretalokāt sudāruṇāt. Avś 1. 264.*

Hell is for those whose actions are bad, and rebirth in heaven for those who have done good. Later cultivating the path, they completely cease, having no influxes.¹

Dedications of merit are not phrased in such terms within inscriptions²—indeed the term merit (*puṇya*) never arises in Buddhist inscriptions—but are rather implied in several other expressions, such as wishing that the highest share (*agrapratyamaṣa*, *agrabhāga*)³ or highest reward (*agradakṣiṇā*)⁴ be accrued to a beneficiary. Nonetheless, these passages imply that the ritual act behind the donative inscription may

¹ *atha khalu dakṣiṇā ādiśitavyā:*

sarvvasatvā marīṣyanti maraṇāntaṃ hi jīvitam.

yathākarmma gamiṣyanti puṇyapāpaphalopagāh.

nirayaṃ pāpakarmmaṇo kṛtapuṇyā ca svarggatiṃ .

apare mārggam bhāvayitvā parinirvānti anāśravā iti. Abhis 1. 54.

For further discussion, see Schopen, *Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monks*, 79ff.

² Milligan argues that the notion of transferring merit can hardly be stated of the early donative epigraphy at Sāñcī and Bharhut, where it is only the donor's name that is given and where an intention is almost never expressed. Thereupon he argues that the notion of merit dedication in early donative epigraphic contexts is perhaps an anachronistic attribution and that these early inscriptions are more administrative in purpose: a prosaic record of an administrative act. One exception to this pattern occurs at Bharhut: *Sagharakhitasa m[ā]tāpituna aṭhāyā dānam.* And another at the contemporaneous site of Pauni: *...ya + visamitāya dāna sukhāya hotu savasātānam.* Milligan, 'The Development and Representation of Ritual in Early Indian Buddhist Donative Epigraphy', 175.

³ *Bhratarasvarabudhisa agrapa[ḍi]śasae*, CKI 149. *Ramasa agripracaya*, CKI 155. *agrabhagapadiyaṃśae bhavatu mithyagaṣa ca agrabhaga bhavatu* CKI 149.

⁴ See, e.g., *im[*e]ṇa [ku]śa[lamuleṇa agadakṣiṇa] Śatreasa bharyae*, CKI 132. *agrodakṣiṇea*, CKI 249. An alternative rendering appears in: *aghadakṣoṇayae* ('state of the highest reward'), CKI 33. *Vagamariagaṣa agrabhagadae bhavadu*, CKI 509. *mātapitrāṇaṃ agrapratyaśatāyeṇa*, Sk 148.

well have involved a monk, serving as a ritual specialist, who would verbally dedicate the merit to the named individuals.

The inclusion of an individual other than the donor in the merit of the donation is often denoted by the expression ‘along with’ (*saha*). However, the term appears to be used in two senses, referring both to participants who were conceivably present at the ritual as well as to beneficiaries of the donation. Consider the following example:

Bodhisattva of Buddharaṣita (No. 53)

[1.]...*bhikhasa Sihakasa sajhivi[hā]*[2.]*renā [B]udha-*
rakhutāna bhagavato Śakamunisya āsāne bo[3.]*dhisāto*
patithapito saha matāpitehi [4.] *saha upajhavana saha*
sarvasatehi saha sabamacarehi...

...a Bodhisattva was established on the seat of the Fortunate One, Śākyamuni, by Buddharaṣita, co-resident pupil of the monk Sihaka, along with [his] mother and father, along with [his] preceptor, along with all beings, along with all brahmacārins’...

Clearly some groups, such as ‘all beings’ and brahmacārins, stipulated here as accompanying the donor, were not physical participants. However, others were conceivably present, such as his mother, father, and preceptor. In the case of another inscription, Schopen has argued that *saha* can never be used ‘literally’ to refer to ritual participants:

It is used here—perhaps everywhere in Buddhist donative inscriptions—as a means by which the donor can share the merit of his act by explicitly associating others with it. He

shares or ‘transfers’ the act rather than, as is frequent elsewhere, the merit resulting from it.¹

The ‘here’ to which he refers is another inscribed Bodhisattva statue, donated by the monk Bala (No. 49). However, in regards to this inscription, his conclusion is a matter of interpretation and the precise opposite could also be argued on the basis of the same record:

[2.] *etāye purvaye bhikṣusya puṣyavuddhisya saddhyevi*[3.]-
hārisya bhikṣusya balasya treṣṭakasya [4.] *bodhisatvo*
chatrayaṣṭi [ca] *pratiṣṭhāpito* [5.] *bārāṇasiye bhagavato*
ca[m]kame sahā māt[ā][6.]*pitihi sahā upaddhyāyācaryehi*
saddhye-vihāri[7.]*hi antevāsikehi ca sahā buddhamitrāye*
treṣṭika[8.]*ye sahā kṣatrapena vanasparena kharapallā*[9.]-
nena ca sahā ca ca[tu]hi pariṣāhi

At this previous time, the Bodhisattva of the Puṣyavuddhi’s co-resident, the monk Bala, Bearer of the Three Baskets, in addition to an umbrella and shaft was established on the walkway of the Fortunate One in Varanasi, along with [his] mother and father, along with preceptors and teacher, [their] co-residents, and pupils, along with Buddhamitrā, Bearer of the Three Baskets, along with the Satrap Vanaspara and Kharallāpana, along with the four assemblies.

Again, we find several groups of individuals that were likely present at the ritual donation and others potentially not. Schopen argues, in particular, that the ‘four assemblies’—monks, nuns, and male and female lay-practitioners—denotes a ‘universal category’ and that they

¹ Schopen, ‘On Monks, Nuns and “Vulgar” Practices: The Introduction of the Image Cult into Indian Buddhism’, 16.

were hence not present at the ritual.¹ At such an important donation as this², however, it is entirely conceivable that the entire Sarvāstivādin assembly would be present. Indeed, several literary passages to deal with donative practice even explicitly state that a large congregation would ideally be present at such events. For instance, in the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*:

In the case that a Bodhisattva desires to perform worship towards the Tathāgata or at a place of worship of the Tathāgata and performs it by himself with his own hand, not with female and male slaves, workmen, labourers, friends and companions or relatives and blood relatives, or when he is lazy and slothful or intoxicated. This is how the Bodhisattva's [worship] performed by himself should be known.

In the case that a Bodhisattva desires to perform worship to the Tathāgata or at a place of worship of the Tathāgata and doesn't perform it when he is entirely alone and by himself, but rather along with [his] mother and father, and also with [his] son and wife, female and male slaves, workmen, servants, friends and companions or relative and blood relatives, with other kings, politicians, Brahmins, householders, towns and country folk, the wealthy, corporate leaders, caravan leaders and finally women, men, boys and girls, the poor, the suffering and the *ācaṇḍālas*, and in the same manner with teachers, instructors, co-residents, residents, brahmacārins, renunciators, as well as followers of

¹ Schopen, 'On Monks, Nuns and "Vulgar" Practices: The Introduction of the Image Cult into Indian Buddhism', 16.

² See Chapter Eight: Kaniṣka I.

other traditions, he performs worship towards the Tathāgata or at a place of worship of the Tathāgata.¹

We can therefore not assume in all cases that figures named as accompanying the donor were present or not. That the expression was used with a degree of ambivalence is found in respect to other terms and, as we shall presently observe, also arises in another case concerning the very nature of worship (*pūjā*), which occurs as a central purpose of the majority of inscriptions.

WORSHIP AND WELFARE

Most common to inscriptions is for a donor to express that the dedication is for the worship (*pūjāyai*) of another being or, in Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions, that another being is worshipped (*pūjita*). The precise meaning of the term has caused some debate in scholarship, for the objects of worship range from Buddhas, to deities and other individuals personally known to the donor, whose meritoriousness naturally differs.

The first group encompasses beings who themselves are regarded as fields of merit (*puṇyakṣetra*) and from whom the donor may cultivate

¹ *tatra yad bodhisattvas tathāgate vā tathāgatacaitye vā pūjāṃ kartukāmaḥ svayam eva svahastaṃ karoti. na dāsīdāsa-karmakara-pauruṣeya-mitrāmātya-jñāti-sālohitaiḥ kārayaty ālasya-kausīdyaṃ pramāda-sthānaṃ vā niśritya. iyaṃ bodhisattvasya svayaṃkṛtā veditavyā. tatra yad bodhisattvas tathāgate vā tathāgatacaitye vā pūjāṃ kartukāmaḥ na kevalaṃ svayaṃ eva karoti api tu mātā-pitr̥bhyāṃ kārayati putradāreṇa dāsīdāsa-karmakara-pauruṣeyair mitrāmātya-jñāti-sālohitaiḥ paraiśca rājabhiḥ rāja-mahāmātrair brāhmaṇair gr̥hapatibhir naigama-jānapadair dhanibhiḥ śreṣṭhibhiḥ sārthavāhair antataḥ strī-puruṣa-dāraka-dārikābhiḥ kṛpaṇair duḥkhitair ācaṇḍalair api kārayati. tathā ācāryopādhyāyaiḥ sārthaṃ-vihāry-aṃtevāsibhiḥ sabrahmacāribhiḥ ca pravrajitair apy anyatūrthyaḥ tathāgate vā tathāgata-caitye vā pūjāṃ kārayati. iyaṃ bodhisattvasya sādharmaṇā pūjā sva-para-kṛtā veditavyā. Bbh 232. 19–23.*

their own crop. Thus, formulae typically state that a donation is for the worship of all Buddhas, Pratyekabuddhas, and Arhats or disciples of the Fortunate One. Specifically among inscriptions related to the Apracarājas and Oḍirājas or their domain in the 1st century CE, the worship is directed to Buddhas and Pratyekabuddhas in the past, future and present (*atītānāgatapratyutpanna*)¹, as well as to other beings at distinct soteriological stages, including non-returners (*anāgāmin*), once-returners (*sakṛdāgāmin*) and stream-enterers (*strotaāpanna*), as well as monastic figures such as students (*śaikṣa*):

Reliquary Inscription of Ariaśrava (No. 31)

*...sarva budha puyāita sarva praceasabudha putāita sarva rahata puyāita sarva aṇagami puyāita sa⟨*yi⟩dagami puyāi⟨*ta⟩ sodavaṇa puyāita śega puyāita sarva śilavata puyāita sarva puyaraha puyāita sarvasapa puyāida...*

...all Buddhas are worshipped, all Pratyekabuddhas are worshipped, all Arhats are worshipped, all non-returners are worshipped, all once-returners are worshipped, all stream-enterers are worshipped, all students are worshipped, all observing the precepts are worshipped, all worthy of worship are worshipped, all beings are worshipped...

Also peculiar to inscriptions related to the domain of the Apracarājas and Oḍirājas is to specify that a second group of deities, including Brahma, Indra, the Four Mahārājas, Twenty-Eight Yakṣa generals, as well as Hāritī and her retinue, are worshipped:

¹ *sarva budha puyāita atitānāgatapracupaṇa*, CKI 247. See also, CKI 265. *budha puyāita adidānāgatapracupaṇa save pracegasabudha puyāita adidānāgatapracupaṇa*, CKI 334.

Gold Scroll of Seṇavarma (No. 36)

[11.] *Bramo Sahāṃpati Śakro devaṇidro catvari maharaya
athaviśati yakṣasenaṃpati Hariti saparivara puyita*¹

Brahma Sahāṃpati, Śakra, Indra of the Gods, the Four Mahārājas, Twenty-Eight Yakṣa Generals, and Hārītī, along with her retinue, are worshipped.

Worship of this specific listing of deities is a practice, it seems, limited to the Northwest in the early Common Era and has little to no precedent in Buddhist literature.²

Finally, individuals typically related to the donor are also named as the objects of worship. Such individuals are given in formulaic

¹ See also CKI 247, 564, 1113.

² One passage from the *Suvarṇaprabhāvadāna* retains a formula akin to that observed here, as well as mentioning several other figures related to the Indic Northwest:

*evam ukte catvāro mahārājā bhagavantam etad avocan...brahmaṇaḥ
sahāṃpateḥ śakrasya ca devānāmindrasya sarasvatyāśca mahādevyā
dṛḍhāyāśca mahādevyāḥ śriyāśca mahādevyāḥ saṃjayasya ca
mahāyakṣasenāpater aṣṭāvīṃśatīnāṃ ca mahāyakṣasenāpatīnāṃ
maheśvarasya ca devaputrasya vajrapāṇeśca mahāyakṣasenāpater
mañibhadrasya ca mahāyakṣasenāpater hārītīyāś ca
pañcaputraśataparivārānāṃ anavataptasya ca nāgarājasya caiteṣāṃ
bhadanta bhagavansvakasvakabhavanagatānāṃ. Sup-av 44, S. Bagchi,
ed., *Suvarṇaprabhāvadāna* (Darbhanga: The Mithila Institute, 1967).*

The four Mahārājas said to the Fortunate One, ‘...of Brahmā Sahāṃpati, Śakra lord of the gods, Sarasvatī the great goddess, Dṛḍhā the great goddess, Śriyā the great goddess, Saṃjaya the great Yakṣa general, the Twenty-Eight great Yakṣa generals, Maheśvara the devaputra, Vajrapāṇi the great Yakṣa general, Mañibhadra the great Yakṣa general, Hārītī [and her] retinue of five hundred sons, Anavatapta King of the Nāgas, and those sirs in each of the respective Fortunate Ones’ abodes.

fashion also, including, for example, the donor's mother and father (*mātāpitr*), brothers (*bhrātr*), sisters (*svasr*), etc., as well as kin, relatives, friends, associates,¹ and, in a single case, slaves, workers and servants.² Variations of these formulae are found with high frequency in Buddhist literature.

On the basis of these three categories it would appear that the term *pūjā* was used in two senses: [1] in respect to worthy recipients (Buddhas, etc.) and [2] in relation to other beings including deities and family members. If *pūjā* were connected to the practice of dedicating merit, as many assume, then not all beings, such as Buddhas, would fall neatly into this category, due to their having already assembled vast amounts of merit, their being fields of merit themselves, and thereby standing as the instruments of others' merit cultivation. In this case, family members are the beneficiaries of *pūjā*. Equally, if it designates a means of generating merit, then the precise reverse of this situation occurs, implying that merit can be cultivated from beings who are not thought to be fields of merit. Attempting to account for this seemingly abstruse usage of *pūjā*, others have therefore opted for conceptually more open renderings such as 'honour',³ whilst others simply leave it untranslated.⁴ Harry Falk attempted to refine the meaning in one inscription, wherein *pūjā* is used in specific connection to deceased family members, implying ancestor worship, whereas the recipients of a reward of health (*ārogyadakṣiṇā*) are living.⁵ But this cannot be

¹ [*ñatigabaṃdha*]vasa ca puyayaṃto, CKI 46. *ṇatigamitrasambhatigaṇa puyae bhavatu*, CKI 159. *mitramacañāṭisalohi^{*}taṇa [pu]yae*, CKI 60.

² This expression occurs in a wish for the welfare and happiness of friends, relatives, kin, slaves, workers and servants: [5–1.]*samitrañādisalohida*[5–2.]*sadasakramakaraporuṣasa hedaśuhadaye*, CKI 564.

³ For example, Baums, 'Catalog'.

⁴ Schopen, *Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monks*, 37.

⁵ Falk, 'Copper-Plates of Helagupta', 8–9.

generalised, as there are cases where it is used in respect to individuals who are explicitly stated as living (*tiṣṭhant*).¹

Yet, perhaps the apparent dual usage of *pūjā* in donative contexts is not so pronounced an issue as others have previously assumed. We can assume that such individuals as family members were regarded as worthy of worship (*pūjāraha*), as certain Apracarāja and Oḍirāja inscriptions specifically state,² and this is confirmed by several textual passages advocating filial piety. In the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, for instance, the worship of one's family occurs in the context of this very polemic:

Even though they are not Aryans, offerings made to one's father and mother, to a sick person, to a preacher, to the Bodhisattva in his last birth are without measure.³

The *Bodhisattvabhūmi* also details a similar form of worship at a place of worship (*caitya*):

What is the gift of the Bodhisattva that is the highest in all regards? The Bodhisattva who incites oneself and another and offers a gift-worthy object to his own dependents: mother and father, wife, female and male slaves, workers and servants, friends, associates, relatives, as well as blood relatives or to any others who are desirous. This is the gift that is the highest in all regards.⁴

¹ See the Gold Scroll of Senavarma (No. 36).

² See CKI 243, 257, 334, 358, 564.

³ Translation from Louis de La Vallée Poussin, *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*, trans. Leo M. Pruden, vol. 1–4 (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1988), 700.

⁴ *tatra katamad bodhisattvasya sarvato-mukhaṃ dānam. yad bodhisattvaḥ svakaṃ vā paraṃ vā samādāpya deya-vastu svabhṛtyeṣu mātā-pitr-putra-dāra-*

Equally high in number are wishes for the general welfare of a beneficiary, expressed through such terms as welfare and happiness (*hitasukha*) or benefit (*anugraha*), typically of a group of people or all sentient beings, but also in respect to specific individuals. Such wishes are already found in Aśokan inscriptions¹ and are repeated in Buddhist donative inscriptions through the Indo-Greek,² Indo-Scythian,³ and Kuṣāṇa periods.⁴ Whilst common to Buddhist textual sources, this expression is also found in Brahmanical and Jain literature, as well as in inscriptions of Jains⁵ and other cults⁶ from the 2nd century CE and was thus not limited to Buddhist parlance.

HEALTH AND LONGEVITY

Common to inscriptions is the wish that the donor or a beneficiary may be healthy and lead a long life. The former is typically expressed in the phrase ‘for the reward of health’ (*ārogyadakṣiṇā*). Likely the earliest occurrence arises in the Silver Scroll of Urasaka (No. 40), dated 136 Azes I (88/89 CE), wherein it is wished the relic dedication be for the reward of the Great King, Supreme King among Kings, the Son of Gods

dāsī-dāsa-karmakara-pauruṣeya-mitrāmātya-jñāti-sālohiteṣv anuprayacchati. pareṣu vā arthiṣu. etat sarvato-mukhaṃ dānam ity ucyate. Bbh 132.

¹ *hitasukhaye*, CKI 5, 19.

² *bahujana[hita]ye*, CKI 32.

³ [*sava*]*sapahidas*(*u)[*kha*](**ya*), CKI 464. *Mitravaḍhana-p[u]tra-[hita](**e*)*, CKI 42. *savasatvānā[ṃ] hitasukhāye*, § 1. *savasatānaṃ hitasukhārthaṃ*, § 2. *sarvasatvaṇa hidasuhae*, CKI 56.

⁴ Such expressions occur a total of 52 times, e.g., *savasatvanaṃ h[i]tasukhaya*, CKI 182. *Hiperecaamadapitarāna anugra[he]*, CKI 148. *sarvasarvānaṃ hitasukhāya bhavatu*, Sk 51. *sarvasatvan[ā]ṃ hitasūkharthaṃ*, Sk 279.

⁵ 6 occurrences in Brāhmī inscriptions, e.g., *sarvvasatvānaṃ hitasukhāyāstu*, Sk 81. *sarvvasatvānāṃ hitasukha*, Sk 83. See also Sk 145, 156, 177, Sh 34.

⁶ *sa(rv)[va]satahida[s](u)(khaye)*, Sk 28.

and Kuṣāṇa's health: *maharajasa rajatirajasa devaputrasa Khuṣaṇasa arogadakṣiṇae*.¹ This wish, however, simply does not occur outside of the epigraphic corpus and is not found in Buddhist literature. Naturally a concern for health is found quite regularly in such sources and on the basis of several passages in the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*, Schopen has attempted to unite a student's general concern and responsibility for the health of his instructor (*upadhyāya*) with this intention, on the basis that several Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions express this wish in a student-teacher context.² However, there are no obvious examples, which appear to inform the epigraphic aspiration and it must therefore be treated as an unremarkable concern with health. The same logic is also to be applied to the few instance of wish for a beneficiary's longevity (*dīrghāyus*).³

CURSES

Unlike in literature, curses rarely arise in inscriptions. Indeed, the only one of which I am aware occurs in the Gold Scroll of Seṇavarma (No. 36):

[13.] *ye [va]ṇa imo Ekaūḍo thuvo ṇiṭhidao viṇiṭhitao daheati
ite udhu deve va maṇuṣe va yakṣe va ṇage va suvaṇi va
gadharve va kuvhaḍe va se Aviyamahāṇiraa padeati*

Whoever, moreover, burns the completed and perfected
Ekaūḍa stupa, whether god, man, *yakṣa*, *nāga*, *suparṇin*,

¹ This expression occurs a total of 15 times in Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions. For Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions, see CKI 60, 130–1, 159, 161, 223, 367, 566, 373, 509. For Brāhmī inscriptions, see Sk 58–59, 66, 108.

² Schopen, 'Art, Beauty and the Business of Running a Monastery in Early Northwest India', 291.

³ See Sk 58, 59.

gandharva or kumbhāṇḍa, may they fall into the great hell of Avīci.

This specific curse is based on the doctrinal notion of stupa destruction being an action whose consequences are immediate (*ānantaryakarma*) and result in the perpetrator being reborn in hell in the next life.¹

ESCHATOLOGY AND BRAHMA-MERIT

Whilst rebirth in a heavenly realm (more often than not Trāyatṛiṃśa) is the default result of donative practice in literature, such a goal almost never occurs in donative inscriptions. One exception includes a bronze door from a Sarvāstivādin monastic site in Mingora, Swat, wherein the aspiration states, ‘May he be (endowed) with the state of (receiving) the highest share of Śakra, the Indra of the gods’: *bhutuṃ Śakrasa devaṇav idraṃsa agraprataṃśataya bhavadu*.² This implies the donor wished to be reborn in Trāyatṛiṃśa, home to Indra.

More common, though still rare, is the wish to attain Brahma-merit (*brāhmapuṇya*), equal to rebirth in the realm of Brahma (*brahmaloka*), which is indicated in inscriptions and Buddhist literature, through a formula stating that relics, a stupa, or a monastic complex were established at a previously unestablished location (*apraṭiṣṭhāpita-pūrve pṛthivīpradeśe*). There are 11 inscriptions to express this notion, dating to between the early 1st century and early 2nd century CE, nearly all of which are to be related to rulers in the North and Northwest. Three are associated with Indo-Scythian rulers, Patika, son of Satrap Liaka,

¹ This doctrine is discussed in detail in Chapter Fifteen: Stupa Destruction and Relic Theft.

² CKI 1113. For further discussion, see Falk, “‘Buddhist’ Metalware from Gandhāra”, 41–44.

their close relation Queen Yasi, wife to the Great Satrap Rajuvula,¹ and the merchant Helaüta, who names Satrap Tira as a beneficiary. A majority of six are associated with individuals related to the Apracarāja dynasty or their domain and one with the Oḍirājas. One other has no obvious political context (Fig. 14.1). The practice was not sectarian and occurs in relation to three monastic institutions, the Dharmaguptakas, Sarvāstivādins, and Kāśyapīyas. However, textual references to the practice derive, today for the most part, from Sarvāstivādin literature.

Richard Salomon and Gregory Schopen first observed that the passage in the Reliquary Inscription of Indravarma I is a rather unusual epigraphic formulation that was likely lifted from a textual passage (see below):

Given the fact that we rarely know which of the doctrinal assertions and injunctions found in the canonical literature had any impact on actual practice, this may prove to be of particular significance.²

¹ See Chapter Four: Satraps in the North and Northwest.

² Richard Salomon and Gregory Schopen, 'The Indravarman Avaca Casket Inscription Reconsidered: Further Evidence for Canonical Passages in Buddhist Inscriptions', *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 7, no. 1 (1984): 121.

Fig. 14.1 Brahma-Merit in Inscriptions

No.	Title	Provenance	Date	Donation	Aspiration and Formula	Individuals		Ref.
						Name	Title	
1	Copper Plate Inscription of Patika (No. 12)	Taxila, Pakistan	78 Maues (3/4 CE)	<i>śarīra</i> <i>saṃghārāma</i>	<i>apraṭiṣṭhāpita</i>	Patika Liako	<i>Putra</i> <i>kṣatrapa</i>	CKI 46
2	Reliquary Inscription of Indravarma I (No. 14)	—	63 Azes (15/16 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	<i>brāhmaṇya</i> , <i>apraṭiṣṭhāpitapūrve</i> <i>pradeśe</i> ,	Indravarma I Vijayamitra et al	<i>kumāra</i> <i>rājaputra</i> <i>apracarāja</i>	CKI 242
3	Reliquary Inscription of Utara (No. 15)	—	—	<i>śarīra</i>	<i>apraṭiṣṭhāpitapūrve</i> <i>pṛthivīpradeśe</i> ,	Utara Indravarma I Et al	<i>strateg-</i> <i>bhāryā</i> —	CKI 255
4	Reliquary Inscription of Indragivarma (No. 19)	—	—	<i>śarīra</i>	<i>apraṭiṣṭhāpitapūrve</i> <i>pṛthivīpradeśe</i> ,	Indragivarma Vijayamitra	<i>kumara</i> <i>apracarāja</i>	CKI 402
5	Reliquary Inscription of Ramaka (No. 20)	—	74 Azes (26/27 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	<i>apraṭiṣṭhāpitapūrve</i> <i>pṛthivīpradeśe</i> , <i>samudayaprahāṇa</i> <i>margabhāvana</i> <i>nirodhsākṣya</i> , <i>duḥkhādāya</i>	Ramaka Mahaśrava et al	<i>putra</i> —	CKI 251
6	Reliquary Inscription of Śatruleka (No. 23)	—	77 Azes (29/30 CE)	<i>dhātu</i>	<i>apraṭiṣṭhāpitapūrve</i> <i>pṛthivīpradeśe</i> ,	Śatruleka Vijayamitra Indravarma I et al	<i>kṣatrapa</i> <i>apracarāja</i> <i>stratega</i> , <i>gandhāra-</i> <i>svāmin</i>	CKI 257

7	Mathura Lion Capital (No. 25)	Mathura, India	—	<i>śarīra samghārāma</i>	<i>pṛthivīpradeśe</i>	Yasi Kamui Rajula et al	<i>agramahiṣī mahā-kṣatrapa</i>	CKI 48
8	Reliquary Inscription of Dhramila et al (No. 28)	—	83 Azes (35/36 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	<i>apraṭiṣṭhāpitapūrve pṛthivīpradeśe</i>	Dhramila et al	—	CKI 266
9	Copper Plates of Helaüta (No. 33)	—	121 Azes (73/74 CE)	<i>dhātu</i>	<i>brāhmaṇya, apraṭiṣṭhāpitapūrve pṛthivīpradeśe, nirvāṇa-saṃbhāratā parinirvāṇa maitreya-samavadhāna</i>	Helaüta Tira et al	<i>arivagi kṣatrapa</i>	CKI 564
10	Gold Scroll of Ajidasena (No. 34)	Mata, Swat, Pakistan	4 Oḍi	<i>dhātu mahāstūpa</i>	<i>apraṭiṣṭhāpitapūrve pṛthivīpradeśe, sarvaduḥkho-paccheda, nirvāṇa</i>	Ajidasena et al	<i>oḍirāja</i>	CKI 334
11	Reliquary Inscription of Sataṣaka (No. 41)	—	156 [Azes] (108/109)	stupa	<i>apraṭiṣṭhāpitapūrve pṛthivīpradeśe, buddhānām bodhi</i>	Sataṣaka et al	—	CKI 328

I cannot agree more with this statement. But the authors merely highlight the textual connection and do not take up fully the question of the social significance. They did venture some general remarks, claiming the practice ‘had wide currency in the Kharoṣṭhī area around the beginning of the Christian Era’. But this analysis is too broad. More precisely, we can say the practice is found in a highly limited context, peculiar to donative epigraphs from individuals belonging to the Apracarājas, Oḍirājas, and Indo-Scythian satraps governing in the 1st century CE. Their textual analysis also is not particularly exhaustive and the entire group of 11 inscriptions was also unavailable to them. These and several further textual passages may therefore now be brought into the discussion, which together shed greater light on the practice.

Reliquary Inscription of Indravarma I (No. 14)

[1.] *Idravarme kumare Apracarajaputre* [2.] *ime bhagavato Śākyamunisa śarira pradīhaveti thīae gabhirae apradīhavitaprave pateśe brammaṣuṅ[o] prasavati*

Prince Indravarma [I], son of the Apracarāja, establishes a relic of the Fortunate One, Śākyamuni at a lasting, deep, previously unestablished location and produces Brahma-merit.

Copper Plates of Helāuta (No. 33)

[4-3]...*vutaṃ* [4-4.] *ca bhagavadarahasamasabudheṇa ye apratīhavidapr<*u>vaṃmi padhaviṣṭeśami bhaga*[4-5.]*vado dhaduthuvo pratīhaveti Bramo puṅo pratīhavidoti*

It is said by the Fortunate One, the Arhat, Perfectly Awakened One, ‘One who establishes a relic stupa of the

Fortunate One at a previously unestablished location has established Brahma-merit’.

It is only these two inscriptions that contain versions of the full formula, stipulating that a relic or stupa was established at a previously unestablished location, specifically for the purpose of producing Brahma-merit. The remaining nine inscriptions retain only the latter component, stating that a relic, stupa, or monastic complex (or a combination of the three) was established at a previously unestablished location:

Reliquary Inscription of Utara (No. 15):

*Utara stretegabharya imu thubu pratiṭhaveti
apratīṭha(*vi)daprovami pradeśami Tramaṇospami¹*

Utara, wife of the General, establishes a stupa at a previously unestablished location in the area of Tramaṇa.

Reliquary Inscription of Ramaka (No. 20)

[4.] *Ramake Mahaś[ra]vaputre Kuti[5.]gramavastave
apratistavitapruve paḍhavipradeśe [6.] pratiṭhavate
bhagavato śariraṃ²*

¹ Others to name a stupa include: [1] Reliquary Inscription of Saṭṣaka (No. 41): [2.]...[S]aṭṣake Hirmaaputra Muṇji [S]aṭṣakaputra thuvam [3.] *pratiṭhaveti apratiṭhavitapruve*. Another to include a stupa and relic: [1] Gold Scroll of Ajidasena (No. 34): [3.] *tasa[4.]gadasa bhagavado rahado samasabudhasa Śakamuṇisa Śakavirajasa vijacaraṇasa[5.]paṇasa dhadue pratiṭhaveti apratiṭhavitaprubami paḍhavipradeśami Tirae mahathuba[mi] dhakṣiṇami bhagami*.

² Others to name relics include: [1] Reliquary Inscription of Śatruleka (No. 23): [1.] *Śatrulekeṇa kṣatraveṇa Subhutikaputreṇa Apracarajabhagineyeṇa* [2.] *bhagavato Śakamune dhatuve pratiṭhavita apratiṭhavitapurvaṃmi pradeśaṃmi*

Ramaka, son of Mahśrava, and resident of the village Kuti, establishes a relic of the Fortunate One at a previously unestablished location.

Copper Plate of Patika (No. 12)

[2.] *kṣatrapasa Liako Kusuluko nama tasa [pu]tro Pati[ko]
Takhaśilaye nagare utareṇa pracu deśo Kṣema nama atra [3.]
(*de)śe Patiko apratiṭhāvita bhagavata Śakamuṇisa śariraṃ
(*pra)tithaveti [saṃgha]ramaṃ*

Patika, son of Satrap Liako Kusuluka establishes a relic and monastic complex of the Fortunate One Śākyamuni here at the unestablished location named Kṣema, in the northern region of the city Taxila.

Mathura Lion Capital (No. 25):

[A10.] *śa pradhavipra[te]*[A11.]*śe nisime śarira pratēhāvito*
[A12.] *bhākavato Śakamuṇisa budhasa* [A13.] *Śaki[μ]-*
rayasa śpa[e] Bhusavi[ha][A14.]*[ra] thuva ca sagharama ca*
cat[^{}u]*[A15.]*diśasa saghasa Sarva*[A16.]*stivatana pari-*
*grahe*¹

Aṭhayigramammi. [2] Reliquary Inscription of Indragivarma (No. 19): [1.] *Iṃdragivarṃe kumare Vijayamitrassa Avacarajasa putre śarīra pratiṭhavedi Śpadiami apratiṭhavidaprovami pradeśami.* [3] Reliquary Inscription of Dhramila's Son et al (No. 28): [4.]...*Dhramilapu*[5.]*tra Sabhakaḥ Kumukaputre Dasadija*[6.]*p[^{*}u][tre] Saareṇa ṇama śarira pradi*[7.]*ṭhavedi Aṭhayigramami apradiṭha*[8.]*vidapruvami paṭhavi*[9.]*pradeśami.*

¹ It should be noted that this inscription only includes a partial formula but is included here for it contains sufficient terminological affinities with the full formula (i.e., *prthivīpradeśe, śarīro prathīṣṭhāpitaḥ*) and a direct relation between this dedication's donor, Queen Yasui, and Patika, which together indicate that Brahma-merit may well have been intended. On the political

At this location outside of the boundary, a relic of the Fortunate One, Śākyamuni Buddha, King of the Śākyas, was established in her own Bhusavihāra, in addition to a stupa and monastic complex, into the possession of the Sarvāstivādins belonging to the community of the four directions.

It seems safe to presume that the formula Skt. *apraṭiṣṭhitapūrve pṛthivīpradeśe* is sufficient indication that all donors had the same goal of Brahma-merit in mind. Indeed, that they all belong to a shared geographical and social circle substantiates this conjecture. Moreover, they all, it seems, had access to similar Buddhist texts that were current at this time. That this formula derives from textual sources is indeed confirmed by the Copper Plates of Helaiūta, which specifically quotes a version of the formula as having been spoken (*vuta*) by the Buddha. The question remains as to the source(s) of these formulae and precisely why producing Brahma-merit was regarded as important to these rulers of the North and Northwest.

Seeking to find the textual exemplar, Salomon and Schopen pointed us to a number of textual passages and specifically to one found in the *Ekottarikāgama* 增一阿含經, which they argue to represent the earliest example of this nexus. More recently, this conclusion has come under some criticism from Antonello Palumbo, who, in light of further passages, has shown the correspondence is perhaps not quite as exact as Salomon and Schopen led us to suppose.¹ All, however, have appeared to have missed potentially the earliest occurrence in the Pali *Suttas* and *Vinaya*, where it arises in a passage regarding the union in the community (*saṅghasāmaggi*):

connection between these individuals, see Chapter Four: Satraps in the North and Northwest.

¹ Palumbo, *Early Chinese Commentary*, 290–91.

‘If a divided community is made whole, what does this produce?’ ‘It produces Brahma-merit, Ānanda.’ ‘What, sir, is Brahma-merit?’ ‘Being happy in heaven for an aeon, Ānanda.’¹

Presumably at the time this passage was composed, the issue of schism had arisen among Buddhist communities and they consequently sought to delineate grounds for monks to maintain or reaffirm institutional integrity.² For the monk who was able to unify a divided monastic community, they would be rewarded with Brahma-merit, which, in terms of Buddhist cosmology, is equal to a heavenly existence for the life of span of Brahma, the lengthiest life of the gods.³ It is common in Buddhist literature that institutionally advantageous acts result in a heavenly rebirth and specifically within heavens in the realm of sensory desire (*kāmadhātu*). However, the Brahma heavens are distinct in this regard, as they lie outside this latter realm, in the realm of form (*rūpadhātu*).⁴

Subsequently, the means to attain Brahma-merit were expanded to accommodate novel acts, such as dedicating relics, stupas, and

¹ *bhinnaṃ pana bhante saṅghaṃ samaggaṃ katvā kiṃ so pasavatī ti? Brahmaṃ ānanda puññaṃ pasavatīti. kiṃ pana bhante brahmaṃ puññanti? Kappaṃ ānanda saggamhi modatīti.* AN 5. 76–77. The same passage occurs at Vin 2. 199, 205.

² One must here recall the issues of schism recounted in the Aśokan edicts and the ruler’s oft repeated statement therein he has opened the way for all to attain a heavenly rebirth, should they follow his Dharma. Hultzsch, *Inscriptions of Aśoka*, 159–171.

³ Gethin has shown that this cosmology is equated with the attainment of the first meditation (*jhāna*). According to Buddhaghosa, one produced Brahma-merit by means of cultivating the four meditations termed ‘abodes of Brahma (*brahmavihāra*)’, Rupert Gethin, ‘Cosmology and Meditation: From the Aḡaṅṅa Sutta to the Mahāyāna’, *History of Religions* 36, no. 3 (1997): 194ff.

⁴ For an enumeration of heavenly rebirths in relation to donative practice, see AN 4. 239–241.

monastic complexes, considered as advantageous to the Buddhist institution. Apparently in the process of adding to this list there was little oversight, for the notion arises in several distinct contexts and formulations and there is little consensus to be found between the descriptions. This is reflected in the Sarvāstivādin scholastic tradition, which went to great lengths to collate and define these differing positions.

The first such enumeration to mention arises in the *Ekottarikāgama* 增壹阿含經¹, the text first proposed by Salomon and Schopen as being the earliest to mention Brahma-merit in this context. Here, four means are given to acquire Brahma-merit 梵福:²

At that time the world honoured one spoke to all the monks,
‘Today I shall explain the four merits of Brahma. What are
the four? In the case that a faithful son or daughter of a good
family is able to establish a stupa at a place where a stupa has
never previously been established, this is called the first
Brahma-merit.³ Next, a faithful son or daughter of a good
family repairs⁴ an old monastic complex¹—this is called the

¹ T 125. The colophon of this work states it was translated in 397 CE. It has been recently associated with the Sarvāstivādin Vaibhāṣikas of Kaśmīr in the 4th century CE, Palumbo, *Early Chinese Commentary*, 292ff. See also Legittimo, ‘Relics, Relic Worship and Stūpas in the Chinese Translation of the Ekottarika-Āgama’, 1200.

² Other Chinese renderings of Brahma-merit include 梵福, 梵福業, 梵福德, 梵之福, 梵功德.

³ Unusually in the case of the first explanation of Brahma-merit, we find the translator uses the phrase: 是謂初梵之福也. In the second, third and fourth, however, the character 梵 (‘receiving’) is added, e.g., 是謂第二受梵之福也. Evidently the translator envisaged a different meaning, although the distinction eludes me.

⁴ On this term, see below in the discussion of the *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*.

second reception of Brahma-merit. Next, a faithful son or daughter of a good family unites a community—this is called the third reception of Brahma-merit. Next is the time at which the Tathāgata first turned the wheel of Dharma; all gods and men in the Brahma-world persuaded him to turn the wheel of Dharma—this is called the fourth reception of Brahma-merit. These are called the four receptions of Brahma-merit.’²

Thereafter, the monks enquire as to what quantifies Brahma-merit. The Buddha replies that even if one were to add the merit of all beings of the four continents, as well as the merit of the four heavenly kings, the

¹ 寺 is often translated as ‘temple’. Palumbo, *Early Chinese Commentary*, 291. However, this sense is rather misleading and does not correspond to any expected Indic term. The Chinese term is pre-Buddhist and initially was used to refer to a reception hall for foreign representatives. In the Buddhist context, it came to later be used as the translation for a monastic dwelling (*vihāra*) or monastic complex (*saṃghārāma*), which were previously transliterated. Thus, for the term ‘owner of a monastery’ (*vihārasvamin*), we find 造寺之人, T 2066. 5c24. During the Song Period (960–1279), Luobi 羅璧 recorded in his *Shiyi* 識遺 that during the Eastern Han Period (25–220 CE), in which there was an influx of Buddhist monks coming from the ‘western regions’ (i.e., South and Central Asia), immigrating monks were initially housed in official government buildings called 寺, whereafter they became monasteries. For this reason, it seems, the term became the translation for Skt. terms denoting a monastery, see Dingfubao 丁福保, *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism [DFBDD] - 佛學大辭典. Digital version* (Digital Archives Section, Library and Information Center of Dharma Drum Buddhist College 法鼓佛教學院圖書資訊館數位典藏組, 2017).

² 爾時世尊告諸比丘。今當說四梵之福。云何爲四。若有信善男子善女人。未曾起偷婆處。於中能起偷婆者，是謂初梵之福也。復次信善男子善女人補治故寺者，是謂第二受梵之福也。復次信善男子善女人和合聖衆者，是謂第三受梵之福。復次若多薩阿竭初轉法輪時，諸天世人勸請轉法輪，是謂第四受梵之福。是謂四受梵之福。T 125. 656b1–9.

Trāyatṛiṃśa gods, Indra, Maheśvara, and the merit of the various heavens, such as Tuṣita and Paranirmitavaśavarta, it would still not amount to Brahma-merit. In order to acquire this, it states, one must search for skill in means.¹

The above passage corresponds broadly to another enumeration found in the *Saṅghabhedavastu* of the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*, albeit with some minor differences.

There are four [individuals], Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana, who produce Brahma-merit; what are the four? An individual establishes a relic stupa of the Tathāgata on a previously unestablished piece of earth—this first individual produces Brahma-merit and enjoys heaven for an aeon. Next, an individual establishes a monastic dwelling (*vihāra*) for the monastic community of the four directions on a previously unestablished piece on the earth—this second individual produces Brahma-merit and enjoys heaven for an aeon. Next an individual unites a divided community of the Tathāgata's disciples—this third individual produces Brahma-merit and enjoys heaven for an aeon. Next an individual who has a mind furnished with loving-kindness, that is without enmity, jealousy and rivalry, that is extensive, immeasurable (*apramāṇa*) and well-cultivated, focuses on a single place and having expanded it and taken it upon himself, abides. As it was with the second so it is with the third and fourth [immeasurable]; having extended it above, below,

¹ 欲求梵天福者。當求方便成其功德。T 125. 656c5–6.

horizontally, and everywhere in the world, he abides—this fourth individual produces Brahma-merit.¹

In both the *Ekottarikāgama* and *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*, the first and third methods to produce Brahma-merit—establishing relics in a previously unestablished location and unifying a monastic community—are identical. But the other two differ. The second means in each respectively is to repair or establish a monastic dwelling and the fourth means in the former is the request of gods and men that the Tathāgata teach the Dharma,² whereas in the latter it is to practice the four

¹ *catvāra ime śāriputramaudgalyāyanau brāhmaṇ puṇyaṃ prasavanti; katame catvāraḥ? yaḥ pudgalaḥ apratiṣṭhitapūrve pṛthivīpradeśe tathāgatasya śārīraṃ stūpaṃ pratiṣṭhāpayati; ayaṃ prathamāḥ pudgalaḥ brāhmaṇ puṇyaṃ prasavati; kalpaṃ svargeṣu modate; punar aparaṃ yaḥ pudgalaḥ apratiṣṭhitapūrve pṛthivīpradeśe caturdiśasya bhikṣusaṃghasya vihāraṃ pratiṣṭhāpayati; ayaṃ dvitīyaḥ pudgalaḥ brāhmaṇ puṇyaṃ prasavati; kalpaṃ svargeṣu modate; punar aparaṃ yaḥ pudgalaḥ tathāgataśrāvakaṃghaṃ bhinnāṃ sandhatte; ayaṃ tritīyaḥ pudgalaḥ brāhmaṇ puṇyaṃ prasavati; kalpaṃ svargeṣu modate; punar aparaṃ yaḥ pudgalaḥ maitrīśahagatena cittena avaireṇa asapatnena avyābādhenā vipulena mahadgatena apramāṇena subhāvitena ekāṃ diśam adhimucya spharitvā upasaṃpadya viharati. tathā dvitīyāṃ. tathā tritīyāṃ. tathā caturthīm. ity ūrdhvam adhas tiryak sarvataḥ sarvam imaṃ lokaṃ spharitvopasaṃpadya viharati. ayaṃ caturthaḥ pudgalo brāhmaṇ puṇyaṃ prasavatīti. SBV 2. 207.*

² Palumbo, *Early Chinese Commentary*, 301. That here it is gods and men who persuade the Tathāgata to teach is out of kilter with the wider biographical traditions of Śākyamuni, which more often than not have it that Brahma (sometimes along with Indra) serves this role. This of course makes far more sense in light of Brahma-merit's literal sense and it is therefore not unexpected that such an explanation arises in literature; for example, in the *Fo benxing jing* 佛本行經:

梵天請佛乞轉法輪，衆生得度，于今不息。是之福報皆歸梵天，是故稱號梵福第一。T 193. 79c3–6.

[Since] Brahma asked the Buddha, and begged him to turn the wheel of Dharma, living beings were able to cross over and this continues until

immeasurable (*apramāṇa*) meditations, otherwise named the Brahma-abodes (*brahmavihāra*).¹In yet another enumeration in the *Abhidharma-*

today. Therefore this meritorious result is attributed to Brahma. And because of this it takes the name Highest Brahma-merit.

Another gloss of why Brahma-merit has its name, is to be found in the *Upāsikaśīlasūtra* 優婆塞戒經, which details the types of practices and precepts for lay-practitioners and Bodhisattva lay-practitioners. It states:

能行施戒忍辱精進禪定智慧，如法修行。若人修定，當知是人修梵福德，得梵身。故名梵福德。T 1488.1074c20–24

[A Bodhisattva] who is able to practice generosity, the moral precepts, patience, energy, meditation (*dhyāna*) and discriminative understanding, thus cultivates according to the Buddha's Dharma. If he cultivates meditation, it should be known that this person cultivates Brahma-merit and reaches the Brahma-heaven. For this reason it is called Brahma-merit.

Presumably *brahmakāya* 梵身 here refers to the *brahmakāyika* heaven, the lowest of the Brahma worlds that corresponds to the first *dhyāna*.

¹ In this connection, the practice of the Brahma-abode meditations is given as a means to attain Brahma-merit in the Khotanese *Book of Zambasta* and its Chinese parallel, the *Da fanguang fo huayan jing xiuci fen* 大方廣佛華嚴經修慈分, T 306:

Even if false imaginations (*vikalpa*), appropriations, appear as objects, even so there is loving kindness [meditation, and thereby], the six-fold Brahmā-merits (*brahmāpuṇa*). [142] False imaginations have vanished, appropriations have been completely removed; perception has been suppressed. This has been called 'great loving kindness' (*mahāmaitrā*), [143] whereby one quickly realises full awakening [and] one's evil deeds completely disappear. [144] Through loving-kindness many evil deeds disappear, [as do] serious illnesses. Those who practice thus [lit. 'they'] will be dear to everybody. [145] Severe woes seen at death do not occur for one who practices thus [lit. 'for him']. One quickly obtains a prophecy for awakening. [146] One realises acceptance [of the non-arising of dharmas, Skt. [*anutpattikadharmā*]-*kṣānti*], [as well as] many meditations. Never again will one be reborn in the lower destinies (Skt. *apāya*). Translation from Guiliana Martini, 'Mahāmaitrī in a Mahāyāna Sūtra in Khotanese — Continuity and Innovation in Buddhist Meditation', *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 24 (2011): 157.

kośabhāṣyavyākhyā of Yaśomitra, a further minor difference is to be observed:

The sutra states: ‘Four individuals create Brahma-merit. One establishes a relic stupa of the Tathāgata at an unestablished location—this first individual produces Brahma-merit. One hands over a garden complex (*ārāma*) for the monastic community of the four directions and in that garden complex establishes a monastery (*vihāra*)—this second individual produces Brahma-merit. One who reunifies a schismed community of the Tathāgata’s disciples—this third individual produces Brahma-merit. One who has a mind furnished with loving-kindness, that is without enmity, jealousy and rivalry, that is that is extensive, immeasurable (*apramāṇa*) and well-cultivated, focuses on a single place and having expanded it and taken it upon himself, abides. As it was with the second so it is with the third and fourth [immeasurable]; having extended it above, below, horizontally, and everywhere in the world, he abides—this fourth individual produces Brahma-merit’.¹

For the Chinese parallel, see T 306, 961a9–10.

¹ *sūtra uktaṃ. catvāraḥ pudgalāḥ brāhmaṇ puṇyaṃ prasavaṃti. apratiṣṭhite pṛthivīpradeśe tathāgatasya śārīraṃ stūpaṃ pratiṣṭhāpayati. ayaṃ prathamah pudgalo brāhmaṇ puṇyaṃ prasavati. cāturdiśe bhikṣusaṃghe ārāmaṃ niryātayati tatraiva cārāme vihāraṃ pratiṣṭhāpayati. ayaṃ dvitīyaḥ pudgalo brāhmaṇ puṇyaṃ prasavati. bhinnaṃ tathāgataśrāvakaṃghaṃ pratisaṃdadhāti. ayaṃ tṛtīyaḥ pudgalo brāhmaṇ puṇyaṃ prasavati. maitrīśahagatena cittenāvaireṇāsaṃspardhenāvvyābādhenā vipulena mahadgatenāpramāṇena subhāvitenaikāṃ diśaṃ adhimucya spharitvopasaṃpadya viharati. tathā dvitīyaṃ. tathā tṛtīyaṃ. tathā caturthīm. ity ūrdhvaṃ adhas tīryak sarvataḥ sarvaṃ imaṃ lokaṃ spharitvopasaṃpadya viharati. ayaṃ caturthaḥ pudgalo brāhmaṇ puṇyaṃ prasavatīti. Abhidh-k-vy 4. 128.*

This passage is quite close to the *Saṅghabhedavastu* and presumably they derive from a shared textual tradition. However, Yaśomitra had a different text before him, a sutra in fact, and there are some linguistic features that indicate his quoted passage derives from a context closer to that of our 11 donative inscriptions.

In the second means to produce Brahma-merit, the text states that one hands over (*niryātayati*) a garden complex (*ārāma*) for the community of the four directions (*cāturdiśe bhikṣusaṅghe*) and establishes a monastery (*viḥāra*) in that garden. This stands in close relation to the Copper Plate Inscription of Patika (No. 12), which states that Patika establishes a relic of the Fortunate One Śākyamuni at an unestablished location,¹ the first means to produce Brahma-merit, in addition to a monastic complex, the fourth means to produce Brahma-merit found *only* in the *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*.

This same correspondence is also found in the Mathura Lion Capital (No. 25), which states that a relic of the Buddha was established by Yasi at a location in her own Bhusaviḥāra, in addition to a stupa and monastic complex, into the possession of the Sarvāstivādins belonging to the community of the four directions.² Whilst this inscription does not fully contain the formula indicative of Brahma-merit, that the relic was established at a location (*pr̥thivīpradeśa*) outside an already established boundary (*niḥsīman*), i.e., on a new unestablished piece of ground, is highly suggestive of the same context. This is further substantiated by the second section of the Mathura Lion Capital (No. 26):

¹ *atra* [3.] (**de*)śe Patiko apratiḥavita bhagavata Śakamuṇisa śariraṃ (**pra*)tithaveti [saṅgha]ramaṃ ca.

² [A10.] śa pradhavipra[te][A11.]śe nisime śarira pratēḥavito [A12.] bhakavato Śakamuṇisa budhasa [A13.] Śaki[μ]rayasa śpa[e] Bhusavi[ha][A14.][ra] thuva ca saḥarama ca ca[**u*][A15.]diśasa saḥasa Sarva[A16.]stivaṭana parigrahe.

[M1.] *kṣatrave Śoḍise* [M2.] *imo padhavi*[M3.]*praṭeṣo* [I1a.]
Veyaadirṇa [I2.] *namo kadha*[I3.]*varo* [I4.] *Viyaa*[I1b.]-
kadhavaro Busapa[J1.]*rva(*take){?}na palichina* [J2.] *niṣimo*
karita niyatito [KL1.] *Ayariasa* [KL2.] *Budhatevasa* [KL3.]
utaena ayimita [F1.] *Budhilasa naḥaraasa* [F2.] *bhikhusa*
Sarvastivāta

The Satrap Śoḍāsa made and handed over this location on the earth, the designated boundary of the encampment named Veyaadirṇa, the Viya encampment at Buddha-mountain. It was accepted with water by the teacher Budhateva and the citizen and Sarvāstivādin monk Budhila.

The specific phrasing, which states the location was ‘handed over’ (G. *niyatito*, Skt. *niryātita*)¹ to the monastic institution, is a quasi-legal and technical term. That we have here a Sarvāstivādin pedagogue Budhateva and monk Budhila strengthens the view that Queen Yasi and Satrap Śoḍāsa had direct access to a monastic specialist, who provided the legally sound formulation for these donations.

The term also corresponds to the precise language of handing over (*niryātayati*) employed in the second means to produce Brahma-merit in the, no doubt, Sarvāstivādin sutra quoted in the *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*. It is on the basis of this legal term also that the unique expression to repair (補治)² a monastery (寺), the second means

¹ See also CKI 50.

² Palumbo, *Early Chinese Commentary*, 288. The same meaning is also suggested by Karashima on the basis of a passage in Lokakṣema’s translation of the *Aṣṭasahasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra* 道行般若經, where the term is used in respect to repairing a boat. T 224. 451c28. See Seishi Karashima, *A Glossary of Lokakṣema’s Translation of the Aṣṭasahasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* 道行般若經詞典, Bibliotheca Philologica et Philosophica Buddhica XI (Tokyo:

to produce Brahma-merit in the *Ekottarikāgama*, can potentially be clarified. The latter character 治 ('to manage', 'to treat') is widely used to translate derivatives of Skt. *nir-√yat* and it is perhaps for this reason that the Chinese translations read 'repair', taking the Sanskrit root in this sense rather than in its other common meaning of 'hand over'.¹

In view of these connections it would appear that the hypothetical textual sources from which this group of epigraphs derives might well not have been the precise sutra of the *Ekottarikāgama*, as Salomon and Schopen suggest, and was more likely a text akin to the sutra quoted by Yaśomitra.

Antonello Palumbo has pointed out that this unnamed sutra also bears a structural similarity with a fragment from Bamiyan, now in the Schøyen Collection.

c /// .. *payati sa brāhmaṇ puṇyaṃ pra[s]*. .. ///
 d /// + .. *yaṃ nirgacchati sa tasya bhikṣoḥ* .. ///
 e /// + .ā .i .. .e .. [thiv]ī pradeśe //²

Klaus Wille first identified this and a further 47 fragments as the *Aśokāvadāna*. He suggested it belonged to a specific narrative in that cycle concerning one of Upagupta's disciples but was unable to conclusively confirm this.³ Building on this observation, Palumbo has been able to more closely associate the fragment with a narrative⁴ of a

The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology, Soka University, 2010), s.v. 補治.

¹ See Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary: Etymologically and Philologically Arranged with Special Reference to Cognate Indo-European Languages*, 556.

² Klaus Wille, 'Fragments from the Aśoka Legend', in *Buddhist Manuscripts Vol. I*, ed. Jens Braarvig et al. (Oslo: Hermes Academic Publishing, 2000), 218–32.

³ Wille, 'Fragments from the Aśoka Legend', 228–29.

⁴ T 2043. 164c19–20.

an artisan, who builds monasteries and halls and ordained under Aśoka's teacher Upagupta, found in the *Aśokarājavadāna* 阿育王經.¹ Palumbo partially quotes the passage; however, the wider context is also of interest, since it concerns an establishment of monastic complex at Mathura—the institutional home of the Sarvāstivādin Upagupta—and subsequently stands at least in thematic and geographical correspondence with the Mathura Lion Capital and the activities of the Sarvāstivādins in that region.²

On balance, it seems most likely that producing Brahma-merit was initially related to reunifying a monastic community, as presented in the *Aṅguttaranikāya*. This tenet is common to all formulations and in this respect it is important to observe that the passage of the *Saṅghabhedavastu* quoted above belongs to a section dealing specifically with schism. Hence, the other three means to produce Brahma-merit may well have interpolated into the *Mūlasarvāstivādivinaya* and other enumerations at a later date.³ The positions articulated in these latter texts, in distinction to those of the *Aṅguttaranikāya*, did not only involve the maintenance of union within an institution but rather its proliferation, this being achieved through the establishment of relics, stupas, and monastic complexes at previously unestablished sites.

We therefore have a very different picture of Buddhism presented in these sources, one concerned with schism and the other with expansion. Indeed it is for this very reason that the means for creating Brahma-merit were extended and this must be attributed to our period of the North and Northwest, as confirmed by our inscriptions, where the monastic institution was actively engaged politically in achieving this end. (In the next chapter, it shall be further observed that

¹ Palumbo, *Early Chinese Commentary*, 290–91.

² See Chapter Four: Satraps in the North and Northwest.

³ Salomon and Schopen, 'Indravarman Avaca Casket Inscription Reconsidered', 121–22.

this doctrine and the issue of institutional expansion was connected to relic theft also.) This, to recall a central premise of this study, was enacted in the face of political and social strife and a disappearing Dharma¹—it is to this precise cosmology and world-view that Brahma-merit belongs.

In the process of expanding the notion of Brahma-merit, a number of partially formalised and uncertain explanations arose within the Sarvāstivādin scholastic tradition. Doctrinal uncertainty surrounding the concept found within three Sarvāstivādin compendia, the *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣāsāstra* 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論,² the *Abhidharmavibhāṣāsāstra* 阿毘曇毘婆沙論³ and the **Vibhāṣāsāstra* 鞞婆沙論⁴ (where we find the exact same passage as that encountered in the *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*).⁵ These works were designed to smooth out doctrinal uncertainties and go to great lengths to clarify precisely what Brahma-merit means. Thus, in addition to variances in the methods of producing Brahma-merit, there is little agreement on what it meant. All sources concur on but one matter: attaining Brahma-merit leads to rebirth in heaven for an aeon. In the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* of Vasubandhu several views are summarised:

The sutra says that four individuals produce Brahma-merit; what is this merit? According to the Vaibhāṣikas, this merit has been defined in order that we might know the value of the action, which results in the marks of the Bodhisattva.⁶

¹ See Chapter Two: Narratives of Decline.

² T 1545. 425c13–21.

³ T 1546.319b17–22

⁴ T 1547.499b4–13.

⁵ For further discussion, see Palumbo, *Early Chinese Commentary*, 300–301.

⁶ Louis de La Vallée Poussin points us to another preceding passage in explanation of the ‘Bodhisattva’s characteristics’, which is absent from the Sanskrit in the present passage:

The ancient masters said:

Four possess Brahmin-merit, because they are happy in heaven for an aeon.

Such a measure of merit that entails one is happy in heaven for an aeon is Brahma-merit, for the lifespan of the Brahmāpurohitas is an aeon. And in another canon, one reads, ‘He engenders Brahma merit, he is happy in heaven for an aeon’.¹

In Buddhist cosmological schema, the Brahma-heavens include the Brahmāpurohita and Brahmāpāriśadja, the first births to reside outside of the realm of desire (*kāmadhātu*), now in the realm of form (*rūpadhātu*). This is equivalent cognitively to the attainment of the first meditation (*dhyāna*). According to one explanation, the special result of this rebirth is that one lives for an aeon in heaven, which would

teṣāṃ ca lakṣaṇānām ekaikaṃ puṇyaśatajam kiṃ puṇyasya parimāṇam. saṃnikṛṣṭabodhisattvaṃ sthāpayitvā yāvat sarvasattvānām bhoga-phalam ity eke. yāvat sarvasattvānām karmādhipatyena trisāhasra-mahāsāhasrako loko ‘bhinivartata ity apare. buddhā eva ca tatparimāṇajñā ity apare. Abhidh-k 110a.

Each of the characteristics arises from hundreds of merits. How much is this merit? Some say that excluding a being close to awakening, it is the amount required for all beings’ usage. Others say that it is the amount required for the triple-thousand-great-thousand-world to be created by the power of all beings’ actions. Others say that only Buddhas know the amount of merit.’

¹ *sūtra uktaṃ: catvāraḥ pudgalā brāhmaṇyaṃ puṇyaṃ prasavanti. katamat tad brāhmaṇyaṃ. yat tallakṣaṇavipākasya karmaṇaḥ parimāṇajñāp-anāyoktam iti vaibhāṣikāḥ. pūrvācāryās tu vyācakṣate. caturṇāṃ brāhma-puṇyatvaṃ kalpaṃ svargeṣu modanāt. yāvatā puṇyena kalpaṃ svargeṣu modate idaṃ brāhmaṇyaṃ puṇyam. brahmāpurohitānām kalpāyuskatvāt. nikāyāntare gāthāṃ paṭhanti brāhmaṇyaṃ puṇyaṃ prasavati, kalpaṃ svargeṣu modata iti. Abhidh-k 124a-c. See La Vallée Poussin, *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyaṃ*, 1–4:706. See also Abhidh-k-vy 4. 128.*

correspond specifically to the Mahābrahmā heaven.¹ Another explanation says this is the same as the duration of a life of a Brahmāpurohita deity and Vasubandhu also holds that Brahma lives in this realm.² In principle, however, the notion of Brahma-merit could include all seventeen Brahma heavens up to the top of the realm of form, which is the equivalent of the fourth meditation.³ But why indeed was there a concern with being reborn in the Brahma heavens? To elucidate this matter, we must now turn our attention to Buddhist cosmology and the world-view of Buddhists occupying the North and Northwest at this time.

To recall,⁴ the *Mahābhārata* states that during the time of the barbarian (*mleccha*) Indo-Greek, Indo-Scythian, Indo-Parthian and Kuṣāṇa invasions, the Kāli age comes to an end:

When the Kali age has been spent and the Kṛta comes around again. This total period of twelve thousand years is called an Eon. The unit of a thousand such eons is cited as a Day of Brahmā. When the entire universe reverts to its home in Brahmā, O tiger among men, the wise know this as the reabsorption of the worlds.⁵

¹ Gethin, 'Cosmology and Meditation', 194.

² Abhidh-k-bh 3. 4, 18.

³ Kloetzli, *Buddhist Cosmology: Science and Theology in the Images of Motion and Light*, 23–33.

⁴ See Chapter Two: Narratives of Decline.

⁵ *kṣīṇe kaliyuge caiva pravartati kṛtaṃ yugam,
eṣā dvādaśasāhasrī yugākhyā parikīrtitā,
etat sahasraparyantam aho brāhman udāhṛtam,
viśvaṃ hi brahmabhavane sarvaśaḥ parivartate,
lokānāṃ manujavyāghra pralayaṃ taṃ vidur budhāḥ.* Mbh 3. 186. 22–23.

This cosmology corresponds to a number of Buddhist texts and perhaps most famously the Pali *Agāṇṇasutta* ('discourse on origins'),¹ a common formulation extant in Sanskrit texts, including the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*,² *Mahāvastu*,³ as well as in several Chinese translations of *Āgama* and *Vinaya* sources.⁴ These texts outline a myth of origins that explains the infolding and unfolding of the world and what happens to beings during this process. Particularly during the process of unfolding it is explained that the world and all beings from all worldly states in the realm of desire up to Brahma world in the realm of form shall be successively destroyed by fire, water and wind. When this occurs, all beings are reborn in the Ābhassara Brahm-realm.

Rupert Gettin points out that the notion caused a problem for commentators. Buddhaghosa understood that rebirth in the Brahma world was enabled through the attainment of the four meditations (*jhānas*), and in particular the second (a state that is experientially equated with this realm), as well as through the cultivation of the four Brahma-abodes of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity, which correspond to the fourth means to attain Brahma-merit in the enumerations given above. In order to account for the fact that not all beings realised such hard-come-by attainments, Buddhaghosa subsequently explains that some beings are reborn there 'by virtue of their *karma* "that is to be experienced at an unspecified time"', basing his view on the premise that at some point in some rebirth, every being has produced the conditions, the merit, to effect rebirth in the Brahma world. However, this account was not always accepted. Dhammapāla concluded that beings who have not spent their merit in a hell system are not reborn in a heaven but in the hells of another world-

¹ DN 3. 80–98.

² SBV 1. 11–15.

³ Mv 1. 338–348.

⁴ See T 1. 37b, T 10. 216b; T 26. 673b.

system. And Vasubandhu in fact reflects both positions in different places.¹

Could it be that the Brahmanical millenarianism was also current among Buddhists of this period? We saw above that many texts of this sphere express the fear of a decline in the Dharma and perhaps this goal could be attached to this malaise and the need to attain Brahma-merit as a remedy. No such language is used in the 11 inscriptions involved in the practice, nor indeed is rebirth in a Brahma-heaven expressed (Fig. 14.1). Indeed, the majority specify no goal whatsoever. However, several do situate the attainment of Brahma-merit within a soteriological context: the inscription of Ramaka (No. 20), Kopśakasa (No. 29), and Ajidasena (No. 34) aspire to remove suffering and *nirvāṇa*, the inscription of Helaūta (No. 33) wishes to attain a meeting with Maitreya (*maitreyasamavadhāna*) and *nirvāṇa*, and the inscription of Sataṣaka (No. 41) wishes to attain the awakening of the Buddhas (*buddhānaṃ bodhi*). Therefore, in five of the 11 dedications, the means to acquire Brahma-merit is situated within a broader soteriological goal.²

This connection is not stated in the commentarial works considered thus far;³ for this one must turn to certain Mahāyāna works. In the *Pratītyasamutpādamahāyānasūtra* for example, we read:

In respect to the factors which arise from a cause,
the Tathāgata has indeed spoken,
As well as in respect to their cessation,

¹ For references and discussion, see Gethin, 'Cosmology and Meditation', 196ff.

² On soteriology in inscriptions, see the following section.

³ Gethin does point out that being reborn in the Ābhassara Brahma world is essentially a return to a primordial state, a cognitive condition acquired in the fourth meditation, where the body is mind-made and it being 'close' to an awakened state of mind, wherefrom one can attain *nirvāṇa*. Gethin, 'Cosmology and Meditation', 204.

This is what the Great Ascetic has declared.

This, Avalokiteśvara, is dependent origination, the dharma-body of the Tathāgatas. When one discerns dependent origination, one discerns the Tathāgata. This means, Avalokiteśvara, that a son or daughter of a good family, who is completely filled by faith and who, having made a place of worship (*caitya*) the size of an Āmalaka tree, a Bodhi tree the size of a railing, or a flag the size of the Bakula flower at a previously unestablished location, reads the verse concerning the element of existence, dependent origination, they produce Brahma-merit. Thereafter, when they fall and die, they should be reborn in the Brahma-world. Having fallen from that place and died they arise among Śuddhāvāsakāyika gods.¹

The only element this formulation shares with the above donative inscriptions and literature is the establishment of a place of worship (*caitya*) at a previously unestablished location. However, this text was likely composed after the c. 3rd century CE, from which time the dependent origination formula or ‘Buddhist Creed’, as Daniel Boucher terms it, is found inscribed upon seals as a surrogate for physical relics.²

¹ *ye dharmā hetuprabhavā hetuṃ teṣāṃ tathāgato hyavadat,
teṣāṃ ca yo nirodha evaṃ vādī mahāśramaṇaḥ.*

yad idam avalokiteśvara ayaṃ pratīyasamutpādas tathāgatānāṃ dharmakāyaḥ. yaḥ pratīyasamutpādaṃ paśyati, sa tathāgataṃ paśyati. yaś ca avalokiteśvara kulaputraḥ kuladuhitā vā śraddhāsamanvitaḥ apratiṣṭhite pṛthivīpradeśe āmalakamātraṃ caityaṃ sūcīmātraṃ bodhivṛkṣaṃ bakulapuṣpamātraṃ chatraṃ kṛtvā pratīyasamutpādadharmadhātugāthāṃ paṭhati, sa brāhmaṇaṃ puṇyaṃ prasavati. itaḥ pracyāvya maraṇakālaṃ kṛtvā brahmaloke utpadyate. tataḥ pracyāvya kālaṃ kṛtvā śuddhāvāsakāyikānāṃ devānāṃ sabhāgatāyāṃ utpadyate. P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Mahāyānasūtrasaṃgrahaḥ: Part One* (Darbhanga: The Mithila Institute, 1961), 119.

² Several seals inscribed with this formula that date from likely a post 7th century CE period were found in Swat. Ingo Strauch, ‘Zwei Stempel aus

Here Brahma-merit also leads to rebirth among the Suddhāvāsakāyika deities, an abode occupied by non-returners (*anāgāmin*) about to become Arhats or tenth-stage Bodhisattvas before they attain awakening.¹

Significantly, a similar soteriological passage is found in the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*:

And when the Tathāgata has completely ceased, the Bodhisattva, in the name of the Tathāgata, makes one, two, several or as many as one hundred thousand *koṭis* of stupas, *gahas* or *kūtas* [for] the relics of the Tathāgata, in accordance with [their] ability and power. This not-face-to-face and extensive worship towards the Tathāgata cultivates immeasurable merit and fruit, possessed of much Brahma-merit. Accordingly, the Bodhisattva won't be reborn in a poor rebirth for many aeons and great aeons, and is certain to fully accomplish the requisite for the highest perfect complete awakening. This is how extensive [face-to-face worship] should be known. Further, it should be known that the not-face-to-face [worship] that is as if one were alone has more extensive merit and fruit, and it should be known the

Swāt', *Berliner Indologische Studien* 13/14 (2000): 215–30. For a discussion of this formula in the context of relics and Buddha images in China, see Daniel Boucher, 'The Pratīyasamutpādagāthā and Its Role in the Medieval Cult of Relics', *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 14, no. 1 (1991): 1–27. Further thoughts on this discussion in the context of Gandhara are offered by Rhi, who argues for the presence of relics in several Buddha statues from the Indic Northwest, which have a detachable *uṣṇīṇa* and an indentation underneath, wherein the relics may have been placed. Juhyung Rhi, 'Images, Relics, and Jewels: The Assimilation of Images in the Buddhist Relic Cult of Gandhāra: Or Vice Versa', *Artibus Asiae* 65, no. 2 (2005): 169–211. See also Anna Maria Quagliotti, *Ancient Buddhist Art from Gandhāra* (Zurich: Pansia Gallery, 2004).

¹ Gethin, 'Cosmology and Meditation', 205–6.

worship that is jointly face-to-face and not-face-to-face¹ has the most extensive merit and results.²

As with our inscriptions, it is not unlikely that this accumulation of Brahma-merit was viewed as but a step on the way to an individual's later liberation. This cosmic view is not unique to the *Bodhisatvabhūmi* and occurs across a number of textual sources. In the *Jātakas*, for example, the common structure is that every human rebirth of a Bodhisattva is interspersed with lengthy periods in a heavenly realm.³ Also in the *Supriyāvadāna*, to give but one example, the Bodhisattva Supriya, when a caravan leader, finds himself consecrated as a king and having established his own son in rulership and himself as a renunciant,

¹ On the grading of the types of worship see Bbh. 231. 3–7; 234. 7–14.

² *yad api bodhisattvaḥ parinirvṛte tathāgate tathāgatam uddiśya tathāgatasya śarīraṃ stūpaṃ vā kārayati gahaṃ vā kūṭaṃ vā ekaṃ vā dvau vā sambahulāni vā yāvat koṭīśatasahasrāṇi yathā-śakti-yathā-balam, iyam api bodhisattvasya tathāgateṣu vimukhā vipulā pūjā apramāṇapuṇyaphalā 'nekabrāhma-puṇyaparigṛhītā. yathā bodhisattvaḥ anekair eva kalpair mahākalpair avinipātagāmī bhavati. na cānuttarāyāḥ samyaksambodheḥ sambhāraṃ na paripūrayati. iyam eva tāvad vipulā draṣṭavyā. tato vipulatara-puṇya-phalā kevalaiva vimukhā draṣṭavyā. tato vipulatama-puṇya-phalā sādharmaṇa-saṃmukha-vimukhā pūjā draṣṭavyā.* Bbh 232. 5–18.

³ Basham, 'Concept of the Bodhisattva'. In the *Lalitavistara* it states:

bodhicārī anantatulyā abhūd vīryasthāmodgatā prajñābala upāya maitrābalaṃ brāhmaṇyaṃ balaṃ, eti balaṃ anantatulyā bhavaṃ bodhi saṃprasthite daśabalabaladhārī adyā punar bodhimaṇḍe bhuto. Lalit 23. 48.

One who practices towards awakening should have an equally immeasurable amount of energy and strength, the power of discriminative understanding, means, the power of benevolence and the power that is Brahma-merit.

Attaining an equally immeasurable power, cultivating, and in setting out towards awakening, one is a powerful bearer of the ten powers and here arises on the platform of enlightenment.

For the Chinese translation, see T 187. 598c13–15.

he cultivates the four Brahma-abodes and is reborn in the Brahma-world, becoming Brahma himself.¹

SOTERIOLOGY

Aspirations towards a soteriological end are quite rare in inscriptions. And at first sight this may appear quite peculiar, because it was presumably Buddhism's distinct solution to the human condition, in comparison to Brahmins and Jains, which would have made it appealing to society. Yet this, it seems, was simply not the case and for the most part donors were content with worshipping or effecting good health or welfare and happiness upon themselves and family members. Whilst these purposes could be construed within an overarching soteriological paradigm, this is rarely made explicit and in light of certain doctrinal positions regarding causal action (*karma*), it is conceivable that liberation was widely regarded as unattainable directly through such donative praxes,² or perhaps as being too far off, and subsequently

¹ Divy 122.

² It is indeed commonplace to doctrinal schemas that liberation is unattainable simply through intention (*citta*) and meritorious activity (*puññakiriya*)—these being efficacious towards a heavenly rebirth up to and including the Brahmā heavens—and that meditative cultivation (*bhāvanā*) is a necessary requirement, see, e.g., AN 4. 239–243. That ritual actions (*karma*) were disadvantageous even is made explicit in one narrative from the *Divyāvadāna*, in which a monk worships the hair-and-nail stupa of the Buddha and is predicted to become a wheel-turning ruler a thousand times over in future rebirths. His fellow monks therefore stop worshipping the stupa for fear of never being liberated and this suggests that faith and the acquisition of merit are a hindrance—they 'bend' one to rebirth. Rotman, 'Marketing Morality: The Economy of Faith in Early Indian Buddhism', 284–86. Naturally there are exceptions; Maria Heim quotes a passage in the *Sārasaṅgaha* of Sidhattha that states: 'But if one is able to give with the desire for liberation [thinking]: "let my dāna lead to the extinction of

donors desired benefits that were a little closer to home. It is therefore rather intriguing when such aspirations do arise in the epigraphic record and these beg the question as to what qualities made the donations efficacious towards the ultimate end.

There are 23 inscriptions to include soteriological aspirations. Most frequently encountered are *nirvāṇa* and *parinirvāṇa*, which may be related to wishes to remove suffering (e.g., *duḥkhādāya*, *duḥkhakṣaya*) or be liberated from suffering (*duḥkhato mokṣa*) and for immortality (*amṛta*). More seldom are wishes for the highest knowledge (**anuttarajñāna*) or the awakening of Buddhas (*buddhānām bodhi*). These aspirations are either directed towards oneself (*ātman*), a named beneficiary, a non-specific other, or all beings (*sarvasattva*). Notably, soteriological aspirations are found for the most part in connection with either the dedication of the Buddha's relics or, later, Bodhisattva and Buddha statues (Fig. 14.2). In the case of the former, it is clear that certain somatic qualities of relics made them efficacious in this regard.¹

In discussing such epigraphic aspirations, scholars have naturally sought to determine that specific type of soteriological path to which a given wish pertains, namely, whether it is to be an Arhat, Pratyekabuddha or Buddha. The deciding factor in this regard is whether the soteriological aspiration is directed either towards oneself, which would be indicative of the former two paths, or towards another or all living beings, which is regarded as a characteristic of the latter. For scholarship, what is commonly regarded as being at stake of course is whether an aspiration can be regarded as evidence for Mahāyāna thought. Thus, in the case of aspirations for all living beings, David

the cankers," then [this is] established correctly with respect to liberation, even Arhatship, the knowledge of Solitary Buddhas and Omniscience.' Maria Heim, *Theories of Gift Giving in South Asia. Hindu, Buddhist and Jain Reflections of Dāna* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 38.

¹ See Chapter Fifteen: The Somatic Nature of Relics.

Seyfort Ruegg deems them to be ‘proto-Mahāyāna’ and ‘a hearth of Mahāyāna type thinking’,¹ and Harry Falk regards the aspiration to attain *nirvāṇa* and a meeting with the future Buddha Maitreya (*maitreyasamavadhāna*) as ‘Mahayanistic’.² Some examples, such as the aspiration to attain the awakening of Buddhas or the highest knowledge, are what we would today classify as Mahāyāna. Yet, the term itself does not arise and defining this group of inscriptions in such terms is therefore problematic.

In six inscriptions, it is not evident to whom the soteriological wish is directed, whereby a general statement is made without specifying a beneficiary. For example, the Reliquary Inscription of Ramaka (No. 20) states in a doctrinal formulation of the Four Noble Truths:

[13.] [śa]rirapratīḥavaṇa kimatrae bhodu [14.] samudaya-
pra(*ha)ṇae magabhavaṇae ṇir[o]sa(*sa)kṣ[i](*a)e [15.]
dukha-dāīae³

What purpose may there be in establishing relic? For the abandonment of arising, for the cultivation of the path, for the realisation of cessation, and the removal of suffering.

¹ D. S. Ruegg, ‘The Kalawān Copper Plate Inscription: Early Evidence for Mahāyāna Type Thinking?’, *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 28, no. 1 (2005): 8.

² Falk, ‘Copper-Plates of Helagupta’, 3.

³ Similar formulae are found foremost in *Prajñāpāramitā* literature, AdSP^{Gil} 1. 98; PSP 4. 139; 5. 128. Rare cases are located in Pali commentarial sources, Nidd 1. 323–324

Fig. 14.2 Soteriological Aspirations in Inscriptions

No.	Title	Provenance	Date	Donation	Aspiration	Beneficiary	Individuals		Ref.
							Name	Title	
1	Reliquary Inscription of Ramaka (No. 20)	—	74 Azes (26/27 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	<i>samudayaprahāṇa</i> <i>margabhāvanā</i> <i>nirodhsākṣya,</i> <i>duḥkhādāya</i>	—	Ramaka Mahaśrava	<i>putra</i> —	CKI 251
2	Reliquary Inscription of Kopśakasa (No. 29)	—	—	<i>dhātu</i>	<i>aparimānato</i> <i>duḥkhato mocitaḥ,</i> <i>parimocitaḥ</i>	<i>loka</i>	Kopśakasa	<i>mahārāja</i>	CKI 266
3	Reliquary Inscription of Indravarma II (No. 30)	—	—	<i>śarīra</i> stupa	<i>parinirvāṇa</i>	<i>sarva-</i> <i>sattva</i>	Indravarma II Viśpavarma et al	<i>kumāra</i> <i>putra</i> <i>stratega</i>	CKI 241
4	Reliquary Inscription of Ariśrava et al (No. 31)	Dir, Pakistan	98 Azes (50/51 CE)	<i>dhātu</i>	<i>nirvāṇaprāpti</i>	—	Ariaśrava Siasena Avakaśa Gondophares Aśpavarma Indravarma I et al	<i>bhāryā</i> — <i>bhrātr-</i> <i>putra</i> — <i>stratega</i> <i>putra</i>	CKI 358
5	Copper Plates of Helaūta (No. 33)	—	121 Azes (73/74 CE)	<i>dhātu</i>	<i>nirvāṇa-</i> <i>saṃbhāratā</i> <i>parinirvāṇa</i> <i>māitreyā-</i> <i>samavadhāna</i> <i>brāhmapuṇya</i>	<i>ātman</i>	Helaūta Tira et al	<i>arivaḡi</i> <i>kṣatrapa</i>	CKI 564

6	Gold Scroll of Ajidasena (No. 34)	Mata, Swat, Pakistan	4 Oḍi	<i>dhātu mahā-stūpa</i>	<i>sarvaduḥkhopaccheda, nirvāṇa</i>	—	Ajidasena et al	<i>oḍirāja</i>	CKI 334
7	Gold Scroll of Seṇavarma (No. 36)	—	10 Oḍi	<i>dhātu Ekauda-stupa</i>	<i>amṛta</i>	* <i>sarvas attva</i>	Seṇavarma Kujula Kadphises Sadakaṇa et al	<i>oḍirāja mahārāja rājātirāja deva-putra</i>	CKI 249
8	Reliquary Inscription of Candrabhi (No. 39)	Kalawan, Taxila, Pakistan	134 Azes (86/87 CE)	<i>śarīra gaha-stūpa</i>	<i>nirvāṇa</i>	<i>sarvasattva</i>	Candrabhi Sihaseṇa et al	<i>upāsikā bhāryā</i>	CKI 172
9	Reliquary Inscription of Urasaka (No. 40)	Dharmarājikā, Taxila, Pakistan	136 Azes (88/89 CE)	<i>dhātu bodhisattva-garbha</i>	<i>nirvāṇa</i>	<i>ātman</i>	Urasaka Iṃtavhria [Kujula Kaphises]	<i>bāhlika putra</i> — <i>mahārāja rājātirāja deva-putra</i>	CKI 60
10	Reliquary Inscription of Sataṣaka (No. 41)	—	156 [Azes] (108/109)	<i>stupa</i>	<i>buddhānām bodhi</i>	—	Sataṣaka et al	—	CKI 328
11	Gold Scroll of Śira	Taxila, Pakistan	—	<i>dhātu</i>	<i>dehajati</i>	—	Śira	—	CKI 64
12	Bodhisattva Statue of Aśvadatta (No. 56)	Mathura, India	20 Kaniṣka I (147/148 CE)	<i>pratimā dāna</i>	<i>anuttara budhajñāna</i>	<i>sarvasattva</i>	Aśvadatta	<i>bhikṣu</i>	Sk 39
13	Amitābha Buddha of Nāgarakṣita (No. 58)	Mathura, India	26 Huviṣka (153/154 CE)	<i>pratimā</i>	<i>anuttara budhajñāna</i>	<i>sarvasattva</i>	Nāgarakṣita Satcaka Balakatta	<i>pautra sārthavāha śreṣṭhin</i>	Sk 49

14	Reliquary Inscription of Saṃghamitra (No. 59)	Hadda, Afghanistan	28 [Huviṣka] (155/156 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	<i>nirvāṇasambhāra</i>	<i>sarva- sattva</i>	Saṃghamitra	<i>nava- karmika</i>	CKI 155
15	Reliquary Inscription of Vagamarega's Daughter (No. 62)	Wardak Afghanistan	51 Huviṣka (177/178 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	<i>nirvāṇa</i>	<i>*sarva- sattva</i>	— Vagamarega et al	<i>duhitṛ</i> —	CKI 509
16	Buddha Statue of Buddhavarma (No. 65)	Mathura, India	51 Huviṣka (177/178 CE)	<i>bhagavat</i>	<i>nirvāṇa</i> <i>sarvaduḥkhopa- śamāya</i>	—	Buddhavarma Saghadāsa	<i>bhikṣu</i> <i>upadhyāya</i>	Sk 77
17	Bodhisattva of Dharmapriya (No. 66)	Mathura, India	—Huviṣka	<i>bodhi- sattva</i> <i>dāna</i>	<i>anuttara nirantara</i> <i>jñāna</i>	<i>sarva- sattva</i>	Dharmapriya et al	<i>bhikṣu</i>	Sk 46
18	Buddha of Saṃghilā (No. 70)	Mohalla, Mathura, India	14 Kaniṣka II (241/242 CE)	<i>pratimā</i>	<i>sarvaduḥkha- prahāṇa</i>	—	Saṃghilā Hasthi	<i>bhāryā</i> <i>pravārika</i>	Sk 168
19	Bowl of Buddhapriya	—	—	<i>dāna- mukha</i>	<i>duḥkhādāya</i>	<i>sarva- sattva</i>	Buddhapriya et al	<i>śramaṇa</i>	CKI 404
20	Buddha Image of Ariṣṭikā (No. 72)	—	—	—	<i>duḥkhakṣaya</i>	<i>*ātman</i>	Ariṣṭikā et al	—	Sk 211
21	Avalokiteśvara of Dharmamitra (No. 73)	—	—	<i>dāna- mukha</i>	<i>amṛta</i>	<i>*ātman</i>	Dharmamitra Buddhamitra	— —	CKI 222
22	Relief of Aṃtari	Begram, Afghanistan	—	<i>dāna- mukha</i>	<i>parinirvāṇa</i>	—	Aṃtari	—	CKI 174
23	Buddha Statue of Momadatta (No. 74)	—	—	<i>dāna- mukha</i>	<i>parinirvāṇa</i>	<i>sarva- sattva</i>	Momadatta	—	CKI 256

Other instances of non-specific aspirations include the Reliquary Inscription of Ariaśrava (No. 31), which states, ‘by means of establishing and total-relinquishing may there be the attainment of cessation’: [1.]...*pariṭhaveataya eva paricaṃtaya nivaṇapratī[e] bhotu*. Or the Bowl of Buddhapriya which reads, ‘may it be for the removal of suffering’: *du[kha]daīae bhotu*.¹ However, some are more ambiguous. In particular, the aspiration in the Silver Scroll of Urasaka (No. 40) has caused some debate:

[4.]...*atvaṇo arogadakṣiṇae nivaṇae hotu a[ya] desamaparicago*.

May the total relinquishing of this gift-worthy object be for my own reward of health and cessation.

Scholars are divided as to whether this aspiration is directed towards the donor himself,² or if it is a ‘generalized, non-specific attainment’.³ The issue resides in whether *nirvāṇāya* corresponds to *ātmanah* or, since it is separated by another term in the dative, *ārogyadakṣiṇāye*, if it should be taken in a non-specific sense—this is simply a matter of interpretation. A comparative structure is found in the Copper Plates of Helaiūta (No. 33), wherein the purposes appear to apply exclusively to the donor:⁴

[1-6.]...*apaṇasa hidasuhadaye nivaṇasabharadae Metreasa-
samosaṇadae śītalakasa vadhitapariṭhidae bhagavado
rahado saṃmasaṃb(*u)dhasa Metreasa saṃmosa[ṇa](*e)
tatra pariṇivayaṇae*

¹ CKI 404.

² Ruegg, ‘The Kalawān Copper Plate Inscription: Early Evidence for Mahāyāna Type Thinking?’, 4fn4.

³ Schopen, *Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monks*, 39.

⁴ See Falk, ‘Copper-Plates of Helagupta’, 7.

...for his own welfare and happiness, preparation for *nirvāṇa*, a meeting with Maitreya, increase and establishment of coolness, a a meeting with Maitreya and therein *parinirvāṇa*.

That the donor aspires to be reborn in Maitreya's presence presumably designates his wish to be reborn in the future city Ketumatī and a desire to attain *nirvāṇa* under his teaching.¹ Falk describes this specific goal as 'Mahayanistic'.² But this is rather hasty and the Maitreya cult does not appear to have anything specifically to do with this school of thought. Maitreya's image appears in Kaniṣka I's coinage,³ implying the cult of the future Buddha was widespread already in the mid 2nd century CE, and his cult is also mentioned in several *Avadāna* sources, such as the *Candraprabhāvadāna*, wherein Maitreya is specifically localised in the Indic Northwest, in the Mañiratnagarbha Park Taxila, where he is held to have relinquished his own head in innumerable former rebirths.⁴ One must observe also that the goal of this inscription is to attain Brahma-merit and may therefore be attached to this millenarian world-view that was prevalent in this historical context.⁵

¹ See the Gilgit manuscript of the *Maitreyavyākaraṇamahāyānasūtra* in Nalinaksha Dutt, ed., *Gilgit Manuscripts: Vol. IV* (Calcutta: Calcutta Oriental Press, 1959), 196.

² Falk, 'Copper-Plates of Helagupta', 4; 17; 23.

³ Cribb, 'Kaniṣka's Buddha Coins – The Official Iconography of Śākyamuni and Maitreya', 84.

⁴ Divy 22. The *Candraprabhāvadāna* was a very popular story and is extant in several versions in Sanskrit, Chinese and Tibetan, see Hartmann, Jens-Uwe, 'Notes on the Gilgit Manuscript of the *Candraprabhāvadāna*', *Journal of the Nepal Research Centre* 4 (1980): 251–66.

⁵ Indeed, the *Maitreyāvadāna* suggests this connection, insofar as the future realm in which Maitreya shall arise is governed by the wheel-turning ruler Śaṅkha, whose Brahmin minister (*purohita*) is named Brahmāyus and the latter's wife Brahmavatī ('Possessing Brahma'), who, expanding her loving-kindness (*maitreyāṃśena sphuritvā*), gives birth to Maitreya. Divy 3. 60–61.

Other inscriptions name a specific other as the beneficiary of the soteriological aspiration.

The Buddha Statue of Buddhavarma (No. 65)

[2.]...*anena d[e]yadharmā-parityāgen[a] upadhy[ā]yasya saghadāsasya [n]irvā[n]ā[vā]ptaye=[s]t[u] mātāp[it.] + + + + + [3.] buddha[a]varmas[y]a sarvad(u)khopaśamāya*

By means of this total relinquishing of a gift-worthy object, may the preceptor Saghadāsa attain *nirvāṇa*,... [his] mother and father...for the allaying of Buddhavarma's suffering.

Similarly the Buddha of Ariṣṭikā (No. 72) wishes that the donation 'may be for the destruction of Urāṇaphvara's and Dharmmadeva's suffering': [2.]...*urāṇaphvardarasya dharmmadevasya ca dukhākṣaya* [3.]... <*bhava*>*t(u)*.

On two occasions donors wish for immortality. In the Avalokiteśvara of Dharmamitra (No. 73), for example, it is stated the donation is for the immortality of Budhamitra: *Budhamitrasa amridae*. The aspiration to attain immortality (*amṛta*) has caused some debate and several have questioned whether it can be understood as soteriological.¹ However, Michael Radich has demonstrated at length that the notion of immortality was an integral part of Buddhist soteriology in Pali sources, which are sufficient to remove any doubt regarding the soteriological purport thereof and need not be repeated here.² In the Gold Scroll of Seṇavarma (No. 36) this association is made abundantly clear:

¹ Richard Salomon and Gregory Schopen, 'On an Alleged Reference to Amitābha in a Kharoṣṭhī Inscription on a Gandhāran Relief', *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 25, no. 1–2 (2002): 10ff.

² Michael Radich, 'The Somatics of Liberation: Ideas about Embodiment in Buddhism from Its Origins to the Fifth Century C.E.' (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University, 2007), 187ff.

[10.]...*sakṣiteṇa Aviyamahanīrea payato karita utvareṇa [a] bhavagro atraturo yavada satva uvavaṇa apada va dupada va catupada va vahupada va* [11.] *ruvi aruvi saṃṇe asaṃṇe sarvasatvaṇa hidasuhadae hoto ayam edaṇe devasame aya ca ṣadha ye ca prasade se kimatraye hoto ye teṇa Śakamuṇiṇa rahato samasavudheṇa dhamo abhisavudho madaṇimadaṇo pivasaviṇayo alayasamughaso vatovacheto taṣokṣayo aṣeṣo*[12.]*viragoṇir{*o}so śato praṇito advarasa aṇijo aroga acata{*ṇ}iṭhu acadavramaio acatapayosano tatra amudae dhatue ṇivatato yatra imasa aṇavatagraṣa sasaraṣa kṣaye payosaṇe hakṣati*

In brief, beginning from the great hell Avīci up to the peak of existence, whatever beings have arisen inbetween, having no feet, two feet, four feet or many feet, having form or no form, having consciousness or no consciousness, may it be for the welfare and happiness of all beings. For what purpose may this present gift-worthy object, and faith be? The Dharma that was completely awakened due to Śākyamuni, the Noble One, the Perfectly Awakened One, is the detoxification of intoxication, the quenching of thirst, the removal of attachment, the breaking of the turning of existence, the destruction of thirst; it is without remainder, without passion, it is cessation, is calmed, advanced, without fever, immovable, without disease; it is perfect completion, like a perfect brahmacārin and a perfect end. May they extinguish in the immortal sphere, where there is destruction and an end to the cycle of existence that is without beginning or end, and where sensations are cooled.

The final group of aspirations to consider are those which express a form of soteriology one may associate with the practice of a Bodhisattva,

specifying a wish for the benefit of all beings (*sarvasattva*) or a goal specifically associated with Buddhahood.

Reliquary Inscription of Sataṣaka (No. 41):

*[S]aṭaṣake Hirmaaputra Muṃji [S]aṭaṣakaputra thuvaṃ
pratiṭhaveti apratiṭhavitapruve sarvabudhana pujae
matrapidu pujae budhana bhosi pravuṇama ṇa agho duho*

Sataṣaka, son of Hirma, and Muṃji, son of Sataṣaka, establish a stupa at a previously unestablished location, for the worship of all Buddhas, for the worship of [their] mother and father: ‘May we attain the awakening of Buddhas, neither pain, nor suffering’.

This specific aspiration to attain awakening (*bodhi*) is epigraphically unique. In literature, one would expect to find similar formulae. Indeed, there are comparable instances, although they do not occur specifically within aspirations.¹ For example, in the *Saṅghabhedavastu* of the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*:

¹ *bodhisatvā vivartiyās ca avivartiyās ca ye prathamam cittam utpādayanti samyaksambuddhā bhavema iti...yo dadyā jambudvīpaṃ saptaratnasamcayam daśabalānām ato bahutarakam puṇyam prasavati bodhāye praṇidhento*. Mvu 1. 80. ‘Reversing and non-reversing Bodhisattvas, who first give rise to the thought should become perfectly awakened Buddhas...One in Jambudvīpa, who were to give a load of seven precious substances and thereafter produce much merit, would aspire to awakening.’

Another case arises in the *Yogalehrbuch*: *ātmānaṃ praṇamya bo)[dhā]ya praṇidhānaṃ karoti*. YL 151r1, Dieter Schlingloff, *Ein buddhistisches Yogalehrbuch. Unveränderter Nachdruck der Ausgabe von 1964 unter Beigabe aller seither bekannt gewordenen Fragmente*, ed. Jens-Uwe Hartmann and Hermann-Josef Röllicke (Düsseldorf: EKÖ-Haus der Japanischen Kultur e. V., 2006), 144.

At that time, a teacher named Kāśyapa arose in the world...in whose presence the Bodhisattva, the Fortunate One, having aspired for awakening in the future, and having performed the brahmcarya, arose in Tuṣita among the gods.¹

The purport of Saṭṣaka and Muṃji's aspiration is presumably not totally distinct from such passages and these figures, to the extent they were emulating the Bodhisattva Śākyamuni, may well have regarded themselves as Bodhisattvas—although they did not name themselves as such. In the same vein, there are, finally, those inscriptions, whose purpose is for the highest knowledge of the Buddhas.

Bodhisattva Statue of Aśvadatta (No. 56)

[1.]...*bhikh(u)*[2.]*sya aśvadatasya dānaṃ tathāgata-pratimā mahākṣatrapavardhamāne acariyānaṃ mahāsaṃghiyānaṃ*
[3.] *(par)i(gra)he sarvasatvanaṃ anu-tarasya budhajñānasya prātipuriye bhavatu*

The gift, the Tathāgata statue, of the monk Aśvadatta, in the domain of the Great Satrap, into the possession of the Mahāsāṃghika teachers; may it be for the fulfilment of the highest Buddha-knowledge of all beings.

This same formula is also found on the Amitābha Buddha of Nāgarakṣita (No. 58) and a very similar example is also stated on the Bodhisattva of Dharmapriya (No. 66) which reads, 'By means of this good root may all beings...the highest uninterrupted knowledge': [4.] *im(e)na kuśalamūlena sarvasa(t)[va a]nuttarasya nirantarasya j(ñā) ///*

¹ *tena khalu samayena kāśyapo nāma śāstā loke utpannaḥ...yasya antike bodhisatvo bhagavān āyatyaṃ bodhāya prañidhāya brahmacaryaṃ caritvā tuṣite devanikāye upapannaḥ. SBV 1. 20–21.*

These inscriptions evidence the earliest firm instances of Mahāyāna thought in epigraphy.¹

The variety of soteriological aspirations renders it difficult to arrive at any firm conclusions regarding the precise nature of the practice. Since these are the earliest historical examples, we may suggest that some shift had occurred, both doctrinally and socially, to Buddhism, which now enabled donors to actively strive for liberation and performatively articulate that wish in a ritual forum.

One central factor that has escaped attention in scholarship is the historical context in which these aspirations emerged and the potential social force such soteriology served. We can see from Fig. 14.2 that the practice was not limited to any specific social grouping: whilst early relic dedications were enacted by figures associated with the Apracarājas, Oḍirājas and Kuṣāṇas, implying that soteriology was politicised, later donations of relics and statues included several mercantile and monastic figures. The only potential level at which they individuals are united is that they had sufficient capital to fund a donation. Following the principle of performative causality,² we know that the power of the present resides in the possibility of the future and therefore these aspirations could well represent rather radical examples of an instrumentalised form of soteriology, wherein the perception of a future liberation served concrete social functions in the present.

BY MEANS OF GOOD ROOTS AND GIFTS

A unique phenomenon of epigraphic aspirations in the North and Northwest is to be found in the formulae [1] ‘by means of this good root’

¹ Ruegg, ‘The Kalawān Copper Plate Inscription: Early Evidence for Mahāyāna Type Thinking?’, 4–5; Schopen, *Figments and Fragments*, 247.

² See Chapter Thirteen: The Scholastic Basis of Avadānas: Performative Causality.

(*anena kuśalamūlena*) and [2] ‘by means of this gift-worthy object’ (*anena deyadharmaparityāgena*)¹. Both occur ten times each, first within Kharoṣṭhī donative inscriptions and later in Brāhmī (Fig. 14.3).² The

¹ The translation I give of this expression is a little longwinded but nonetheless accurate. Previously it has received a whole host of different translations and interpretations. Eugène Burnouf translated ‘de l’offrande que j’ai faite de ce présent’, in which he recognises *deyadharma*, ‘not as a duty or merit of what must be given’ but as “charity, offering” and *deyadharma-parityāga* as ‘abandoning of an offering’, Eugène Burnouf, *Introduction à l’Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1844), 201; Burnouf, *Introduction to the History of Indian Buddhism*, 90fn28; 218. Léon Feer translated ‘renoncement conforme à la loi du sacrifice’, taking *parityāga* as ‘renouncing’ and as standing in relation to *deyadharma* as ‘according to the law’ (*dharma*) of ‘sacrifice’ (*deya*). Feer, *Avadāna-Çataka: Cent légendes (Bouddhiques)*, 13. Heinrich Lüders translated, ‘Schenkung einer frommen Gabe’. Heinrich Lüders, ed., *Weitere Beiträge zur Geschichte und Geographie von Ostturkestan* (Berlin: Verlag der Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1930), 24–26. John Strong translated ‘renunciation according to the law of giving’. Strong, ‘The Transforming Gift: An Analysis of Devotional Acts of Offering in “Avadāna” Literature’, 231. Jonathan Silk translated ‘sacrifice as a Dharma-gift’. Silk, *Managing Monks*, 52. And Appleton translated ‘the practice of gift-giving and renunciation’. Appleton, ‘The Second Decade of the Avadānaśataka’, 32.

This is quite a remarkable array of solutions and whilst each undoubtedly captures something of the sense, it is also evident from their semantic discord that the full purport of the term was not understood: the epigraphic translations being, in my view, overly reductive, and the literary overly free. Needless to say, the differences in translation are in part due to the lack of a comparative epigraphic and literary frame and so the necessary context, but are also symptomatic of the methodological dichotomy between epigraphic and literary studies, which evidently approaches Buddhist language in distinct manners. Indeed, none of the above translators seek to justify their interpretations and none attempt to utilise the epigraphic and literary occurrences in conjunction. For its infrequency, it is clear that the term developed as a specific and particular form of donative vocabulary and its meaning therefore can only be ascertained through a comparative analysis of the epigraphic and literary contexts.

² Damsteegt, *Epigraphical Sanskrit*, 163.

phrasing of these formulae within the donative inscriptions both share in some unusual syntactical features and are used to the same effect,¹ denoting the meritorious instrumentality of a donation. Moreover, in eight of these inscriptions the specific aspiration is soteriological. Compellingly, these two formulae occur in precisely the same context of aspirations (*prañidhāna*) and predications (*vyākaraṇa*) in predominantly (Mūla)-Sarvāstivādin *Vinaya* and *Avadāna* literature, where they are also quite rare, implying that these texts and inscriptions were originally born out of the same ritual contexts. Consider the following two examples from the Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī corpora, both of which were donated in 51 Huviṣka (78/79 CE):

Reliquary Inscription of Vagamarega's Daughter (No. 63)

[1.]...*iśa Khavadami Kadalayigavagamarigaviharammi
thu[ba]mmi bhagavada Śākyamuṇe śarira pariṭhaveti* [2.]
*imeṇa kuśalamuleṇa Maharajaratirajahoveṣkaṣa agra-
bhagae bhavatu...*

She establishes relics of the Fortunate One Śākyamuni in a stupa at the Kadalayigavagamarigavihāra in Khavada. By means of this good root may it be for the highest share of the Great King, Supreme King among Kings, Huviṣka

Buddha Statue of Budddhavarma (No. 65)

[1.]...*[a]sya [p]u[rva]yā [bhi]kṣu[ṇā] [B]uddh[a]-varmaṇā
[bhagava]taḥ [śāk]y[am]u(ni)* [2.] *pratimā pratiṣṭāpita
sarva[p]uddhapūjārtha[th]a[m] anana d[e]yadharmapari-*

¹ Heinrich Lüders took them as semantic equivalents, see Lüders, 'Appendix - A List of Brahmi Inscriptions from the Earliest Times to about A.D. 400 with the Exception of Those of Asoka', 660fn1.

*tyāgen[a] upadhy[ā]yasya Saghadāsasya [n]irvā[n]-
ā[va]ptaye-[s]t[u]*

At this previous time, a statue of the Fortunate One Śākyamuni was established by the monk Buddhavarma for the sake of worshipping all Buddhas. By means of this total relinquishing of a gift-worthy object may it be for the attainment of the preceptor Saghadāsa's *nirvāṇa*.

In these two epigraphs, we encounter the same grammatical structure, construing a donor in the nominative or instrumental case with a means in the instrumental, a beneficiary in the genitive, a purpose in the dative, and third person singular imperative forms of a verb meaning 'to be'. Damsteegt observes that this structure creates an anacoluthon, producing an illogical break in the passage after the instrumental, forcing one to begin a new sentence, as it were, and that in this sentence one is also forced to supply 'it' as the grammatical subject.¹

Presumably the unspecified 'it' refers to the donative object (or indeed to the entire action of donating). But it is also not unheard of that an instrumental serves the function of the logical subject. In this instance, one would translate the latter example as, 'May the total renouncing of this gift-worthy object be for the attainment of *nirvāṇa*'.² Such a view is supported by the Silver Scroll of Urasaka (No. 40), which represents the earliest known epigraphic occurrence of the term *deyadharmaparityāga*, where it is given in the nominative, 'May the total renouncing of this gift-worthy object be for the reward of his personal health and *nirvāṇa*': [5.] *atvaṇo arogadakṣiṇae ṇivaṇae hotu a[ya] desamaparicago*. Here the

¹ Damsteegt, *Epigraphical Sanskrit*, 133.

² Edgerton for example notes that, in distinction to Classical Sanskrit, in Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit, an instrumental can be used for the logical subject with an active verb. Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, 45.

nom. *desamaparicago* is construed with the two purposes in the dat. *arogadakṣiṇae* and *ṇivaṇae*, and the impv. *bhotu*.¹

This single occurrence of course does not provide a passable solution to the anacoluthon of the above. Since it is a phenomenon of a fairly closed temporal and geographical sphere (1st–2nd centuries CE), it may be fair to assume that the construction is a linguistic trait of the period. However, there are no textual comparisons in the contemporaneous corpus of Kharoṣṭhī manuscripts to support this surmise and for lack of an adequate linguistic explanation perhaps this unusual construction shall have to remain the subject of mere intrigue.

¹ Damsteegt, *Epigraphical Sanskrit*, 163–64.

Fig. 14.3 Inscriptions containing anena kuśalamūlena or anena deyadharmaparityāgena

No.	Title	Provenance	Date	Donation	Aspiration	Individuals		Ref.
						Name	Title	
1	Reliquary Inscription of Ariaśrava et al (No. 31)	Dir, Pakistan	98 Azes (50/51 CE)	<i>dhātu</i>	<i>parityajantā</i> <i>nirvāṇa</i>	Ariaśrava Avakaśa Aśpavarma	— <i>gupara</i> <i>bhrataputra</i> <i>stratega</i>	CKI 358
2	Reliquary Inscription of Śatrea (No. 32)	—	—	<i>dhātu</i>	<i>anena kuśalamūlena</i> <i>agradakṣiṇā</i>	Yara Śatrea	<i>bhāryā</i> —	CKI 326
3	Copper Plates of Helaüta (No. 33)	—	121 Azes (73/74 CE)	<i>dhātu</i>	<i>anena kuśalamūlena</i> <i>nirvāṇa-saṃbhāratā</i> <i>parinirvāṇa</i> <i>maitreya-samavadhāna</i> <i>brāhmaṇa</i>	Helaüta Tira et al	<i>arivagi</i> <i>kṣatrapa</i>	CKI 564
4	Silver Scroll Inscription of Urasaka (No. 40)	Dharmarājikā, Taxila, Pakistan	136 Azes (88/89 CE)	<i>dhātu</i> , <i>bodhisatva</i> <i>-gaha</i>	<i>ayaṃ deyadharmaparityāga</i>	Urasaka [Kujula Kadphises]	— <i>mahārāja</i> , <i>rājātirāja</i> , <i>devaputra</i>	CKI 60
5	Bodhisattva Statue of Bh[...] (No. 52)	Mathura, India	4 Kaniška [I] (131/132 CE)	—	<i>anena deyadharmaparityāgena</i>	Bh[...] Dharmanandi Hummiyaka	<i>bhikṣu</i> <i>sārdhaṃ-</i> <i>vihārin</i> <i>bhikṣu</i> <i>dharmakathika</i> <i>mahādaṇḍa-</i> <i>nāyaka</i>	Sk 154
6	Reliquary Inscription of Lala (No. 54)	Manikyala, Pakistan	18 Kaniška [I] (144/145 CE)	—	<i>anena kuśalamūlena</i> <i>sama</i>	Lala Kaniška [I] Veśpaśisa Budhila	<i>daṇḍa-nāyaka</i> <i>mahārāja</i> <i>kṣatrapa</i> <i>nava-karmika</i>	CKI 149

7	Amitābha Buddha of Nāgarakṣita (No. 58)	Mathura, India	26 Huviṣka (153/154 CE)	<i>pratimā</i>	<i>anena kuśalamūlena anuttara buddhajñāna</i>	Nāgarakṣita Satcaka Balakatta et al	<i>pauṭra sārtha-vāha śreṣṭhin</i>	Sk 49
8	Reliquary Inscription of Saṃghamitra (No. 59)	Haḍḍa, Afghanistan	28 [Kaniṣka I] (154/155 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	<i>anena kuśalamūlena nirvāṇa</i>	Saṃghamitra Rama	<i>navakarmika</i> —	
9	Reliquary Inscription of Vagamarega (No. 62)	Wardak, Afghanistan	51 Huviṣka (177/178 CE)	<i>śarīra, stupa</i>	<i>anena kuśalamūlena agrabhāga</i>	Vagamarega Huviṣka	— <i>mahārāja, rājātirāja</i>	CKI 159
10	Reliquary Inscription of Vagamarega's Daughter (No. 63)	Wardak, Afghanistan	51 Huviṣka (177/178 CE)	<i>śarīra, stupa</i>	<i>anena kuśalamūlena nirvāṇa</i>	— Vagamarega	<i>kṣudraduhitṛ</i>	CKI 509
11	Buddha Statue of Buddhavarma (No. 65)	Mathura, India	51 Huviṣka (177/178 CE)	<i>bhagavat</i>	<i>anena deyadharmaparityāgena nirvāṇa</i>	Buddhavarma	<i>bhikṣu</i>	Sk 77
12	Bodhisattva of Dharmapriya (No. 66)	Mathura, India	—Huviṣka	<i>bodhi-sattva dāna</i>	<i>anena kuśalamūlena deyadharmaparityāga anuttara nirantara jñāna</i>	Dharmapriya et al	<i>bhikṣu</i>	Sk 46
13	Relief of Aṃtari	Begram, Afghanistan	—	<i>dāna-mukha</i>	<i>anena kuśalamūlena parinirvāṇa</i>	Aṃtari	—	CKI 174
14	Pillar Base of Vakamihira, 1	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	—	<i>dāna</i>	<i>anena deyadharmaparityāgena acala aiśvarya</i>	Vakamihira	<i>viśvasika</i>	Sk 122

15	Pillar Base of Vakamihira, 2	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	—	<i>dāna</i>	<i>anena deyadharmaparityāgena</i> <i>acala aiśvarya</i>	Vakamihira	<i>viśvasika</i>	Sk 123
16	Pillar Base of Vakamihira, 3	Jamalpur, Mathura, India	—	<i>dāna</i>	<i>anena deyadharmaparityāgena</i> <i>acala aiśvarya</i>	Vakamihira	<i>viśvasika</i>	Sk 124
17	Pot of Yolamira (No. 67)	Dabar Kot, Balochistan, Pakistan	—	<i>prāpa deya-dharma</i>	<i>deyadharmaparityāgata</i> <i>agrpratyamśa dīrghāyus</i>	Yolamira	<i>vihārasvāmin</i>	CKI 165
18	Buddha Image of Madhurikā (No. 71)	Sāñcī, India	28 Vāsiṣka (255/256 CE)	<i>bhagavat</i>	<i>anena deyadharmaparityāgena</i>	Madhurikā Khara	<i>duhitṛ</i> —	Sk 186
19	Buddha Statue of Momadatta (No. 74)	—	—	<i>dāna-mukha</i>	<i>anena kuśalamūlena</i> <i>parinirvāṇa</i>	Momadatta	—	CKI 256

The formula ‘by means of this good root’ arises in within aspirations and predictions within several genres of Buddhist literature. These aspirations vary in their purpose, ranging from wishes to become, for example, a ruler or Brahmin,¹ a treasurer,² a god,³ to alleviate poverty,⁴ as well as the soteriological goals to become a Pratyekabuddha⁵ and Buddha. Those to contain the latter goal arise predominantly in *Pure Land* and *Prajñāpāramitā*⁶ literature and in many respects correspond to certain inscriptions of this corpus.

¹ *eko āha. ahaṃ anena kuśalamūlena rājā bhaveyaṃ kṣatriyo mūrdhnābhiṣikto. dvitīyo āha. anena kuśalamūlena brāhmaṇamahāśālakule upapadyeyaṃ ādhyo mahādhanō mahābhogo.* Mvu 3. 183. ‘One said, “By means of this good root may I be a king, a kṣatriya, whose head is anointed.” A second said, “By means of this good root, may I arise in the family of a Brāhmaṇa ‘Great Householder’ which is opulent, has much wealth and much property”’. The formula also occurs within the prediction of Aśoka, see Aś-av 34.

² *evam evāham anena kuśalamūlena ratnacitrāntakośaḥ syāṃ hiraṇyēśvaraś ca iti.* Śay-v. 32. ‘Thus, may I, by means of this good root, have a whole store of various jewels and be a master of coin.’

³ *evaṃ vayam apy anena kuśalamūlena catvāro lokapālāḥ syāma.* MSV 1. 261. ‘Thus, may we, by means of this good root, be the Four Lokapālas.’

⁴ *anena kuśalamūlena sarvajāmbudvīpakānāṃ manuṣyāṇāṃ dāridrya-samucchedaḥ syāt.* Divy 296. ‘By means of this good may there be complete removal of all Jambudvīpins’ poverty’. See also Divy 69–70, 73.

⁵ *anena kuśalamūlena cittotpādena ca dundubhīśvaro nāma pratyekabuddho bhaviṣyati.* SBV 2. 163. ‘By means of this good root and the arising of this intention, he will become a Pratyekabuddha named Dundubhīśvara’. See also MSV 1. 23.

⁶ The formula occurs in the colophon of a Kharoṣṭhī manuscript of a *Prajñāpāramitā* work: *paḍhamage postage prañāparamidae Budhamitra /// Idraśavaśa sadhaviharisa imena ca kuśalamūlena sarvasatvaṇa matrapitra... ASP^G. C. 1–2.* ‘The first book of the *Prajñāpāramitā* [of] Budhamitra, [may] this “good root” of the fellow monastic Indraśrava [be] for the...of all beings, of [his] mother and father...’ See Harry Falk, ‘The “Split” Collection of Kharoṣṭhī Texts’, *Sōka Daigaku Kokusai Bukkyōgaku Kōtō Kenkyūjo Nenpō* 創価大学国際仏教学高等研究所年報 14 (2011): 23.

Amitābha Buddha of Nāgarakṣita (No. 58)

[3.]...nāgarakṣitena bhagavato buddhasya amitābhasya
 pratimā pratiṣṭh[ā]pi[tā] [4.] (sa)[rva]buddhapujāye im[e]na
 k[u]śalam[ū]leṇa sa(rva)[satv]ā anut[t]ara[m] bud[dha]-
 j[ñ]ānaṃ prā(pnva)ṃ(tu)...

A statue of the Fortunate One, Buddha Amitābha, was established by Nāgarakṣita, for the worship of all Buddhas. By means of this good root may all beings attain the highest Buddha-knowledge.

The presence of Amitābha in an inscription indicates the expanded cosmology that would come to be amalgamated under the umbrella notion of Mahāyāna; however, the origins of Amitābha, the notion of rebirth in the western Pure Land Sukhāvātī, or indeed Buddha Akṣobhya and his eastern Pure Land Abhiratī, are unclear and in historical terms nothing is truly known about these traditions' early phases.¹ That cults surrounding these two Buddhas were present in the early Common Era in the North and Northwest is evidenced only by the above inscription, by pre 2nd century CE Chinese translations of Pure Land literature, and a *Mahāyanasūtra* from the Bajaur Collection of Kharoṣṭhī manuscripts,² dated palaeographically to the early Common Era.³

¹ For details, see Jan Nattier, 'The Realm of Akṣobhya: A Missing Piece in the History of Pure Land Buddhism', *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 23, no. 1 (2000): 77.

² Ingo Strauch, *The Bajaur Collection: A New Collection of Kharoṣṭhī Manuscripts – A Preliminary Catalogue and Survey* (Online Version, 2008), 45ff.

³ Strauch, *The Bajaur Collection: A New Collection of Kharoṣṭhī Manuscripts – A Preliminary Catalogue and Survey*, 111; Strauch, 'More Missing Pieces of Early Pure Land Buddhism: New Evidence for Akṣobhya and Abhirati in an Early Mahayana Sutra from Gandhāra', 26; Andrea Schlosser, *On the Bodhisattva Path in Gandhāra: Edition of Fragment 4 and 11 from the Bajaur*

As the Amitābha Buddha inscription offers almost nothing in regards to the shape of this Pure Land tradition, it is nigh impossible to assess the precise significance or extent of the cult in Mathura. One may venture that the function of the Buddha image for visualising the Buddha (*buddhānusmṛti*)—a practice particularly envisaged as means to attain rebirth in Sukhāvātī¹—offers partial explanation to this conundrum, although nothing certain can be said in this regard, for the goal of rebirth in that Pure Land is not mentioned. More concretely, it may be suggested on the basis of the inscription that the Amitābha cult was practised within non-monastic circles, as the mercantile social grouping of this inscription shows, which is a tenet of texts to deal specifically with Amitābha, in distinction to those of Akṣobhya, in which rebirth in Abhirati is afforded only to ascetic practitioners.²

The formula in the inscription does appear to derive from Pure Land literature. Gregory Schopen has noted a correlation between this epigraphic aspiration and another in the *Ajitasenavyākaraṇa*, wherein the goal of rebirth in the Pure Land Sukhāvātī holds a prominent position:

*atha rājā ajitasenaḥ puṣpapaṭakam grhītvā kalyāṇamitraṃ
purataḥsthāpya bhagavantam puṣpair avakiran bhagavantam
evam āha. anena kuśalamūlena sarvasatvā anuttarāṃ
samyaksambodhim abhisampadyante.*³

Collection of Kharoṣṭhī Manuscripts. Phd Dissertation. (Berlin: Freie Universität, 2016), 11.

¹ For some thoughts on the significance of *buddhānusmṛti* see Paul Harrison, ‘Buddhānusmṛti in the Pratyutpanna-Buddha-Saṃmukhāvasthita-Samādhi-Sūtra’, *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 6 (1978): 35–57.

² Nattier, ‘The Realm of Akṣobhya: A Missing Piece in the History of Pure Land Buddhism’, 90.

³ Aś-vy. 129. ‘Then King Ajitasena, having grasped a basket of flowers and having stood to the right side of [his] good friend, the Fortunate One, he

He understood the epigraphic usage of *anuttaraṃ buddhajñānaṃ* to be synonymous to the textual *anuttarāṃ saṃyaksambodhiṃ*, on the basis that the former appears in later 5th–6th century Mahāyāna inscriptions.¹ However, it is not entirely evident the two are synonyms, nor is the strict association with Mahāyāna thought. Seeking to deal with this issue, Jason McCombs struggled to find an abundance of passages that substantiate the assimilation but nonetheless concludes the two are synonyms.² In doing so, he chose to ignore the more cautionary position of Lance Cousins, who maintains that the notion of the highest knowledge is ‘ambiguous’ and not specific to the Mahāyāna thought but also found in late Pali sources (perhaps influenced by Mahāyāna thought) in respect to the attainments of both an Arhat and a Buddha.³ A clue is to be found in the *Saṅghabhedavastu* of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*, where the notion of the highest knowledge is an attainment of the Bodhisattva Śākyamuni prior to his attaining the highest perfect awakening.⁴ But these textual passages do not confirm the precise soteriological nature of the epigraphic aspiration above.

Reliquary Inscription of Saṃghamitra (No. 59)

[1.]...*pratisthapita śarira Ramaraṃṇāmi thubami*
*Saṃghamitreṇa navakarmi⟨*e⟩na* [2.] *edena k⟨*u⟩śala-*
*mule⟨*na⟩ eteṣa dharmana labhi bhavima y⟨*e⟩ṣa dharmaṇaṃ*

scattered flowers and thus said to the Fortunate One, “By means of this good-root, may all beings produce the highest perfect awakening.”

¹ Schopen, *Figments and Fragments*, 223–46.

² Jason Matthew McCombs, ‘Mahāyāna and the Gift: Theories and Practices’ (PhD, Los Angeles, University of California Los Angeles, 2014), 320–25.

³ L. S. Cousins, ‘Sākiyabhikkhu/Sakyabhikkhu/Śākyabhikṣu: A Mistaken Link to the Mahāyāna?’, *Nagoya Studies in Indian Culture and Buddhism* 23 (2003): 21.

⁴ SBV 1. 119–20.

*eta vo syet(*i) śarira sarvasatvana nirvanasaṃbharae
bhavatu...*

...A relic was established in a stupa at the Ramārāṇya by Saṃghamitra the overseer of new construction. By means of this good root, may we attain those good qualities, the good qualities that the relic may have; may it be for preparation of all beings' *nirvāṇa*.

Here the donor wishes concurrently to attain the same somatic quality of the Buddha, embodied in the good qualities (*dharma*) of his relics, implying therefore an aspiration for Buddhahood, and that all beings attain *nirvāṇa*. Elements of the formula—*edena k(*u)śalamule(*na) eteṣa dharmana labhi bhavima*—are found in several textual sources; for example in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā*:

*atha khalu sā śreṣṭhidārikā tāni ca pañca dārikāśatāni
sadāpraruditaṃ bodhisattvaṃ mahāsattvaṃ etad avocat. etā
vayam api kulaputra tavātmānaṃ niryātayāmaḥ, vayam apy
anena kuśalamūlena eteṣāṃ eva dharmāṇāṃ lābhinyo
bhavema tvayaiva ca sārddhaṃ punaḥ punar buddhāṃś ca
bhagavato bodhisattvāṃś ca satkuryāma gurukuryāma¹*

¹ ASP 31. 256. 'Then the guildman's daughter and five hundred female servants said this to Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita, 'May we here, son of a good family, hand over ourselves, and may we, by means of this good root come to attain such qualities, and with you repeatedly honour and worship the Buddhas, and Bodhisattvas of the Fortunate One.'

The earliest Chinese translation of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā* does not contain this formula, see T 224. 475c26–476a4; Seishi Karashima, *A Critical Edition of Lokakṣema's Translation of the Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, vol. 12, Bibliotheca Philologica et Philosophica Buddhica (Tokyo: The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhism, Soka

That *dharma* is here to be taken in the sense of ‘good quality’ is supported by another formula in the *Sūryāvadāna* of the *Avadānaśataka*, wherein a certain individual makes the following aspiration whilst at the stupa festival marking the death of Buddha Vipāśyin:

*tataḥ pādayor nipatya praṇidhānaṃ kṛtam. anenāhaṃ
kuśalena cittotpādena deyadharmaparityāgena ca evaṃ-
vidhānāṃ guṇānāṃ lābhī syām*¹

The precise language of the respective epigraphic and textual aspirations is formally distinct but the structural and terminological components are the same. It seems, therefore, that such formulae were widespread in

University, 2011), 520. However, a precise translation is found in Kumārājiva’s translation of 408 CE:

爾時，長者女及五百侍女白薩陀波崙菩薩言。我等今者以身奉上，持是善根因緣當得如是善法，世世常共供養諸佛常相親近。 T 227. 585a24–26.

At this time, the elder’s daughter, as well as five hundred female servants, spoke to the Bodhisatva Sadāprarudita, saying, ‘We today with our bodies make an offering; **by means of this good root may [we] attain such good qualities**, so that we will repeatedly and always together worship all Buddhas and always be close to them.

A similar formula is also found in the *Meṇḍhakāvadāna*:

*gṛhapatīḥ praṇidhānaṃ kartum ārabdhah. yan mayā evaṃvidhe
sadbhūtaḥ kṛtaḥ, anenāhaṃ kuśalamūlena yadi riktakāni
kośakoṣṭhāgārāṇi sahadarśanān me pūrṇāni syuḥ. evaṃvidhānāṃ ca
dharmānāṃ lābhī syām, prativiśiṣṭataraṃ cātaḥ śāstāram āragayeyaṃ
mā virāgayeyamiti. Divy 10. 133.*

The householder began to make an aspiration, ‘Since I have performed a service for this one truly worthy of reward, **by means of this good root may the empty granaries be full from my glance and may I acquire such qualities** that I henceforth may be more distinguished and please but never displease the teacher.’

¹ Avś 1. 383. ‘Having fallen at the feet [of the stupa] he began to make an aspiration, ‘By means of this good-root, the arising of this thought, and the total relinquishing of a gift-worthy object may I attain such qualities...’

Buddhist communities from the early Common Era. Notably they do not occur in inscriptions after this period, indicating that these textual works were inspired by close historical context.

The highest incidence of the above formula, ‘by means of this good root’, in textual sources is in combination¹ with the second, ‘by means of the total relinquishing of a gift-worthy object’ (*anena deyadharmaparityāgena*). This conjunction is found exclusively in Mūlasarvāstivādin *Avadānas* and its exclusivity to this broad textual and institutional context is also supported by its only ever occurring in (likely) Sarvāstivādin manuscripts from Central Asia² and in inscriptions mostly from from the North and Northwest³ associated with

¹ They two are likely found together in one inscription, the Bodhisattva of Dharmapriya (No. 66): [3.]...*dānaṃ b(o)dhi <*sattvaṃ ayo deyadharmapari->*[3.]*tyago sahā upaddhyāyāca(r)yyehi sahā (ā)[cār]yyeṇa dharmmadattena sahā.....*[4.]*hi sahā im(e) kuśalamūlena sarvvasa(t)[va a]nuttarasya nirantarasya j(ñā)-<*nāvāptaye >*. This reconstruction differs from Falk, ‘Two New Inscriptions from the Time of Huviṣka’, 32–35.

² See Lüders, Heinrich, *Weitere Beiträge zur Geschichte und Geographie von Ostturkestan*, p. 25; SHT 146. 5. 5–6. *Sanskrihandschriften aus den Turfanfunden. Teil IV. Ergänzungsband zu Teil 1-3 mit Textwiedergaben, Berichtungen und Wörterverzeichnissen*, ed. by Sander, Lore and Waldschmidt, Ernst (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1980), pp. 270–71.

³ One exception is to be found on a relief from Amarāvātī that depicts King Śuddhodhana and Māyā in the Aśokārāma, dated c. 150 CE:

[1.] *gahapatisa Budhino putasa Makabudhino sapi*[2.]*tukasa sabhaginikasa sabhāriyasa* [3.] *deyadhamaparikā be suciya dāna.*

The total renouncing of the gift-worthy objects, the gifts that are two railings of Makabudhin, the son of the householder Budhin along with his sister and along with his wife.

This edition is based on Amar 53, in Tsukamoto, *A Comprehensive Study of The Indian Buddhist Inscriptions Part I: Text, Notes and Japanese Translation.*, 241. Hultsch proposed that Pkt. *suci* (‘Querbalken’) is cognate with Skt. *sūci* (‘Nadel’) not *śuci* (‘rein’). Following an observation from Bühler that the *suci* has ‘kreisförmige Felder’, he erroneously takes Pkt. *paricakā* in the sense of ‘Rädern’, corresponding to Skt. *parigataṃ cakraṃ yasya* (‘von Rädern

Sarvāstivādins.¹ On these bases I argue that the *idaṃ deyadharmaparityāga* formula was a discrete element of Sarvāstivādin parlance and indeed designates a specific mode of donative practice, forwarded by this monastic institution around the turn of the Common Era.

In *Avadānas*, the formula occurs exclusively as part of aspirations (*prañidhāna*) and predictions (*vyākaraṇa*). These include aspirations directed towards worldly goals such as wealth and birth in a good family,² as well as soteriological ends, including the aspiration to please the teacher which leads to the attainment of arhatship,³ a stream-

umgebene (d.h. mit kreisförmigen Feldern bedeckt)'. E. Hultsch, 'Berichtigungen und Nachträge zu den Amarāvati-Inschriften', *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens und Archiv für indische Philosophie* 40 (1886): 343–44; Cf. Bhattacharya, 'Dāna-Deyadharmā: Donation in Early Buddhist Records (in Brāhmī)', 40. However in light of the other occurrences of the donative formula *deyadharmaparityāga*, it seems more likely the above term *deyadhamaparicakā* is the very same. A feature of this Paiśāchi Prākṛit, which was used in inscriptions of this region from the 1st century BCE–3rd century CE, and according to the Kashmiri Guṇāḍhya grammatical tradition, was developed in the Andhra kingdom under the Andhrabhṛitya Kings, includes, for example, *g > k*, and of course *tya > ca*, which is quite normal. See K. Chanda, 'Some Unpublished Amaravati Inscriptions', *Epigraphia Indica* 15 (1919): 260.

¹ See the Pot of Yolamira (No. 67).

² '*vena ahaṃ bhagavan kuśalamūlena deyadharmaparityāgena ita eva janmaprabhṛti mā kadācid ekadivasam api daridraḥ syāṃ*. Suv-a 268. 2. 'By means of this good root and the total relinquishing of this gift-worthy object, Fortunate One, may I, starting from this birth, never be poor, not even for a single day.'

³ Aspiration to please teacher (attains arhatship); for example:

tato rājñā bandhumatā bhagavataḥ śarīre śarīrapūjāṃ kṛtvā samantayojanaḥ stūpaś catūratnamayaḥ pratiṣṭhāpitaḥ krośam uccatvena. stūpamahaś ca prajñaptaḥ. tatrānyatamena gṛhapatinā prasādajātena vicitrair gandhaiḥ pralepaṃ datvā dhūpapuṣpārcanaṃ kṛtvā prañidhānaṃ kṛtam: anenāhaṃ kuśalamūlena cittotpādena deyadharmaparityāgena evaṃvidhānāṃ guṇānāṃ lābhī bhaviṣyāmi.

enterer,¹ a monk,² another's arhatship,¹ solitary awakening (although only the predictions occur),² and finally the highest perfect awakening.

evaṃvidham eva śāstāram ārāgayeyam, mā virāgayeyam iti. Avś 1. 352.

Then King Bandhumat performed the funeral ceremony on the body of the Fortunate One [Vipaśyin] and established a stupa made of four jewels measuring a *yojana* in circumference and a *krośa* in height. He arranged a stupa-festival and there a female householder became faithful and having given a wonderfully fragranced ointment she began to make an aspiration, 'By means of this good root, the arising of this intention and the total relinquishing of a gift-worthy object may I attain such qualities and may I please and not displease such a teacher.'

¹ Aspiration to please the teacher (attains stream-entry); for example:

tayā kāśyapasya samyaksambuddhasya gandhamālyavilepanaiḥ pūjāṃ kṛtvā tasmīn stūpe samāropitam, tīvreṇa ca prasādena pādayor nīpatya praṇīdhānaṃ kṛtam: anenāhaṃ kuśalamūlena cittotpādena deyadharmaparityāgena ca ādhye mahākule jāyeyam evaṃvidhānaṃ ca guṇānāṃ lābhī syām evaṃvidhaṃ ca śāstāram ārāgayeyam mā virāgayeyam iti. Adhik-v 70.

Having performed worship with fragrances, garlands and oils towards Kāśyapa, the Perfectly Awakened One, the wife of the guildsman ascended the stupa and due to extreme faith she fell at his feet and made an aspiration, 'By means of this good root, the arising of this intention and the total relinquishing of this gift-worthy object may I be born to a wealthy and great family, may I obtain such qualities and may I please and not displease such a teacher.'

² Aspiration to be a monk (*śramaṇa*) able to recollect past lives (*jātismara*):

tataḥ pādayor nīpatya praṇīdhānaṃ kṛtamḥ: yan mayā idānīm kṛcchreṇa pravrajyā pratilabdā, tathāgate ca saśrāvakaṣṇḍhe kārah kṛtāḥ, anenāhaṃ kuśalamūlena cittotpādena deyadharmaparityāgena ca yatra yatra jāyeya tatra tatra kāśyavastraḥprāvṛta eva śramaṇa-veśadhārī jātismaraś ca syām iti. Avś 2. 84.

I have now obtained the going forth with difficulty and performed services for the Tathāgata and the community of disciples. By means this good root, the arising of this intention and the total relinquishing of a gift-worthy object, may I, wherever I may be born, be dressed in yellow robes, having the appearance of a monk and with a memory of former lives.

[Aspiration] Having fallen at the Fortunate One's feet, [insert individual] began to make an aspiration, 'By means of this good root, the arising of this intention and the total relinquishing of this gift-worthy object, may I become a Buddha in a blind world that is without a protector and without a leader, a navigator for beings who have not crossed over, a liberator of the un-liberated, one who gives breath to

¹ An aspiration for Śākyamuni's future awakening (attains arhatship):

tatrānena dānapradānāni dattāni, daśavarṣasahasrāṇi brahmacāryavāsaḥ paripālitaḥ, prañidhānaṃ ca kṛtam: anenāhaṃ kuśalamūlena cittotpādena deyadharmaparityāgena ca yo 'sau bhagavatā kāśyapena uttaro nāma māṇavo vyākṛtaḥ: bhaviṣyasi tvam māṇava varṣasatāyusi prajāyāṃ śākyamunir nāma tathāgato 'rhan samyaksambuddha iti, tasyāhaṃ śāsane pravrajya araṇāvihāriṇām agraḥ syām iti. Avś 2. 91; 132.

There was a renouncer who had given gifts and offerings, had guarded the state of a brahmacārin for ten years and had made an aspiration, 'By means of this good root, the arising of a this intention and the total relinquishing of this gift-worthy object, may the youth named Uttara be predicted by the Fortunate One, Kāśyapa, "You, youth, shall be the Tathāgata, an Arhat and Perfectly Awakened Buddha called Śākyamuni within a hundred lives." May I renounce in his teaching and be the highest of the forest dwellers.'

² One such prediction formula reads as follows:

ete ānanda gāndharvikāḥ anena kuśalamūlena cittotpādena deyadharmaparityāgena ca yathākālānugatāṃ pratyekāṃ bodhiṃ samudānīya anāgate 'dhvani varṇasvarā nāma pratyekabuddhā bhaviṣyanti hīnadīnānukampakāḥ prāntaśayanāsanabhaktā ekadakṣiṇīyā lokasya. Avś 1. 17.

These *gāndharvikas*, Ānanda, by means of this good root, the arising of this intention, and the total relinquishing of a gift-worthy object should, when their time has passed, accomplish individual awakening and in a future time they will become Pratyekabuddhas named Varṇasvara, with compassion for the lesser and weak, their lodgings and sustenance in remote places, being those who are solely worthy of gifts among the people.

those who have none, and one who causes the final cessation for those who have not finally ceased.’¹

[Prediction] [The Buddha said], ‘By means of this good root, the arising of this intention and the total relinquishing of a gift-worthy object, over the course of three innumerable aeons, [insert individual] will have attained awakening, be permeated by great empathy, have accomplished the six perfections and will become a perfectly awakened Buddha named [insert name] with the ten powers, the four confidences, the three special stations of awakening and great empathy. This is the gift-worthy object of one whose mind has faith in my presence.’²

¹ *bhagavataḥ pādayor nipatya praṇidhiṃ kartum ārabdhaḥ: anenāhaṃ kuśalamūlena cittotpādena deyadharmaparityāgena ca andhe loke anāyake aparīṇāyake buddho bhūyāsam atīrṇānāṃ satvānāṃ tārayitā, amuktānāṃ mocayitā, anāśvastānāṃ āśvāsayitā, aparinirvṛtānāṃ parinirvāpayitēti.*

The Chinese translation attributed to Zhiqian 支謙 retains this aspiration formula in the following form:

發大誓願。持此施食善根功德未來世中盲冥衆生爲作眼目。無歸依者。爲作歸依。無救護者爲作救護。未解脫者爲作解脫。未安隱者爲作安隱。未涅槃者令入涅槃。T 200. 203b13–17.

[He] produced a great aspiration, ‘By means of relinquishing this food, this good root and merit [may I] in a future world, be the eyes for beings who are blind and in darkness, a refuge to those without refuge, a protector for those without a protector, a liberator for those who are not liberated, pacify those who are without peace, and cause those who have not ceased to enter cessation.’

² *anena kuśalamūlena cittotpādena deyadharmaparityāgena ca trikalpāsaṃkhyeyasamudānītāṃ bodhiṃ samudānīya mahākaruṇāparibhāvitāḥ ṣaṭ pāramitāḥ pariṇīyā...nāma samyaksambuddho bhaviṣyati, daśabhir balaiś caturbhir vaiśāradyais tribhir āveṇikaiḥ smṛtyupasthānair mahākaruṇayā ca. ayam asya deyadharmo yo mamāntike cittaprasāda iti. See, e.g., Avś 1. 1.*

Beyond the simple soteriological premises and specific terminological correspondences in our formulae, there is very little in these texts that speak to our epigraphic context. We saw above in the previous section that very few articulate an aspiration similar in purpose to these examples from literature. This finding is not unexpected, since the *Avadānaśataka* is a late and highly edited collection. In this respect it is remarkable that it has preserved these rare elements of epigraphic aspirations from a period close to its genesis. It is therefore highly probable that a soteriological aspiration, perhaps more akin to our epigraphs, served as the basis for these cases in literature.

For Heinz Bechert, it is unsurprising that Bodhisattva aspirations arise in the *Avadānaśataka*. He is of the opinion that such a phenomenon should not be attributed to Mahāyāna thought but to ideas that ‘followed quite naturally from the dynamic of early Buddhist thought’. He also observes of the *Avadānaśataka* that the Bodhisattva ideal (to which we may add soteriological practice more generally) is the practice of non-monastics, thereby reducing the distinction between the monastic and non-monastic individuals that was more prominent in the earlier phases of Indic Buddhism.¹ This is a quality quite descriptive of our epigraphic context. Along similar lines, John Strong describes the North and Northwest in the early Common Era as a period caught between the ideals of Mahāyāna and non-Mahāyāna Buddhism, a tension which he sees in the *Avadāna* literature composed at this time.² In this connection, it should be noted that Bodhisattva statues of the Northwest were clad in

¹ Heinz Bechert, ‘Notes on the Formation of Buddhist Sects and the Origins of Mahāyāna’, in *German Scholars on India. Vol. 1.* (Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1973), 7–13.

² Strong, ‘The Transforming Gift: An Analysis of Devotional Acts of Offering in “Avadāna” Literature’, 237.

attire of local elites,¹ namely, those individuals who were making epigraphic aspirations.

Relinquishing (*parityāga*) in literature is regarded as the most extreme form of donative practice, producing the highest ‘enjoyment’ (*sambhoga*).² The question of the relation between the aspiration for awakening and the practice of ‘renouncing’ (*tyāga*) has already been taken up by Binz, who also understands that renouncing should be understood as an extreme type of giving. He notes that this mode of practice is particularly associated with that of the Bodhisattva, as found in the *Jātakas*, who freely offers up his own body, either as an animal or man, for the benefit of other beings. Wolfgang Binz adds that in many textual traditions, after the Bodhisattva has relinquished his body, he oft makes an aspiration for awakening.³ Similarly, Basham also argues that some individuals would practice according to the Bodhisattva model found in the *Jātakas*, whereby ‘some pious souls made vows similar to those made by Sumedha before Dīpankara Buddha in the long distant past.’⁴

It is perhaps this model of total relinquishing, articulated as the necessary past actions of the Bodhisattva, that informs both our group of epigraphs and the textual passages of the *Avadānaśataka*. But there is one major difference: the thing totally relinquished in these sources is not life or limb but a gift-worthy object (*deyadharmā*), a material thing given in accordance with an individual’s socio-economic circumstances,

¹ For examples, see *Das buddhistische Erbe Pakistans. Legenden, Klöster und Paradiese* (Mainz: Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland & Philipp von Zabern, 2008), Kat. Nr. 193, 195.

² See AN 1. 91–92.

³ Binz, ‘Prašidhāna und Vyākaraṇa’, 210–13.

⁴ Basham, ‘Concept of the Bodhisattva’, 25–27. See also Konczak, ‘Prašidhi-Darstellungen an der Nördlichen Seidenstraße’, 28ff.

because *Avadānas* were designed to reflect the social context in which they were narrated.¹

SOTERIOLOGICAL AGENCY

In addition to the above linguistic nexuses, several other sociological and discursive features of this soteriological context also lend to the view that the *Avadānas*, and particularly those now assembled in the *Avadānaśataka*, were first designed in a cultural context akin to ours in the North and Northwest, in which we find the earliest historical indications for soteriological agency.

The first such tenet is admittedly rather troublesome to pin down, as it relates to what can only be designated as a latent discourse present in both inscriptions and literature which imply a shared context. We noted that soteriology in inscriptions was often the purview of political figures—it was rulers and related individuals that publically engaged in this practice—and it is this political undercurrent that also runs through the narratives of the *Avadānaśataka*, whereby it is invariably either a king that introduces the prospective donor to Buddhism and initiates the ritual process of the donation or a distinctly political figure related to the ruler who makes the donation.

This observation is particularly true for those *Avadānas* which contain aspirations for the highest perfect awakening. In six of the ten narratives, which variously concern a Brahmin, the daughter-in-law of a general (*senāpateḥ snuṣā*), a caravan leader (*sārthavāha*), and guildsmann (*śreṣṭhīn*), the ruler plays a central role in the process by which these individuals engage in the ritual context and make their aspiration. This indicates that soteriology, or rather the public performance of a potential soteriological attainment, was very much the purview of the politically powerful. For instance in the *Pūrṇabhadrāva-*

¹ See Chapter Thirteen: The Function of *Avadānas*.

dāna, it is king Bimbisāra who enacts a preliminary conversion of the wealthy Brahmin Pūrṇa by talking about the qualities (*varṇa*) of the Buddha, Dharma and Saṃgha. Together, Pūrṇa and Bimbisāra then kneel facing Rājagṛha (where the Buddha resides) and obsecrate his absent self with flowers, incense and water, imploring him to attend the sacrifice.¹

Of course, the presentation of rulers in this role is not that remarkable and one does not need to look hard to find such elements in almost all strata of Buddhist composition. Quite simply it was in the interests of Buddhism to present rulers, in their archetypal form, as engaging in Buddhist ritual norms. Unlike all Indic and textual contexts however, in the *Avadānaśataka*, and indeed in the *Gāndhārī Avadānas* also, political figures are presented in a much more active role, in so far as they are intimate with the Dharma and have made soteriological aspirations.

One notably popular form of aspiration in *Avadānas* is for solitary awakening (*pratyekabodhi*). This could be due to the principle that, ‘When no Buddhas have arisen, Pratyekabuddhas arise in the world, with compassion for the low and depressed, they live in remote dwelling and they alone are worthy of the peoples’ gifts.’² Thus, in a world without a Buddha and in the context of an impending disappearance of the Dharma, it was perhaps only this specific goal that was regarded as being attainable in a near cosmic temporal period—neither an Arhat nor a Buddha can arise in a period without a Buddha.³ Notably in social terms also, the goal of the Pratyekabuddha was open to householders

¹ Avś 1. 1.

² *asati buddhānāmutpāde pratyekabuddhā loke utpadyante hīnadīnānu-kampakāḥ prantaśayanāsanabhaktā ekadakṣiṇīyā lokasya*. Divy 88.

³ See Ria Kloppenborg, *The Paccekabuddha. A Buddhist Ascetic: A Study of the Concept of the Paccekabuddha in Pāli Canonical and Commentarial Literature*, *Orientalia Rheno-Traiectina* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 37–38.

(*grhapati*),¹ unlike Buddhas, who are always reborn as rulers or Brahmins.

In fact, in historical terms, the aspiration for solitary awakening is the only aspiration to occur in contemporaneous Kharoṣṭhī manuscripts. Above it was observed that several Apracarāja and Indo-Scythian figures were presented as being intimate with Buddhist doctrine and as being active in the context of a disappearing Dharma. One such figure, Zadamitra, a contemporary of the Apraca General Aśpavarma, is painted as having attained meditation (*jano pradilabh*),² and as having made an aspiration to become a Pratyekabuddha:

If the true law had disappeared, I would have attained solitary awakening.³

Thus it was accepted in the early Common Era of the Northwest and Northwest that politically powerful figures were making soteriological aspirations to become Pratyebuddhas and indeed this was even recorded in their literature—thus they were **pratyekabodhisattvas*,⁴ if you will. In the case of our soteriologically indefinable epigraphic aspirations, this particular path may well have been the inspiration but, for the reasons already elucidated, their precise soteriological goal cannot be defined.

¹ Kloppenborg, *The Paccekabuddha. A Buddhist Ascetic: A Study of the Concept of the Paccekabuddha in Pāli Canonical and Commentarial Literature*, 18–19.

² P. *jhānaṃ paṭiladdhaṃ*, see Lenz, *Gandhāran Avadānas*, 83.

³ *yadi sadharma atarahide haks[di] ? aha pracageboṣ(*i) praüni[śa] śathu*. Av^{L1} 7. 183. Salomon reads and translates: *yadi sadharma atarahide haks[di] aha pra[ca]geboṣ(*i) praüiśa = yadi sadharmo 'ntarhito bhaviṣyati aham pratyekabodhiṃ prāpsyāmi*. 'If the true Dharma will disappear, I will attain individual enlightenment'. Salomon, *Ancient Buddhist Scrolls from Gandhāra: The British Library Kharoṣṭhī Fragments*, 146.

⁴ I have only uncovered once instance of this term, found as P. *paccekabodhisatta*. Up-a 346, Saddhatissa, *Upāsakajanālaṅkāra*.

One final point of accord between inscriptions and certain *Avadānas* is found in respect to gender. To recall, several women (Fig. 14.2) in inscriptions are found making soteriological aspirations. This fact is quite striking in the context of Buddhist literature as a whole, in which women engaging in this practice is not unheard of but at the same time not widespread. Indeed, Buddhist gender discourse is characteristically male oriented and often actively diminishes women and women's chances of treading the path.¹ In some *Avadānas*, women are predicted to awakening, but in distinct witnesses of the same narrative they also undergo a sex change.²

Akin to our epigraphs, the *Avadānaśataka* goes against this stream. Therein women, or more specifically economically able or politically connected women, are depicted as making soteriological aspirations for Buddhahood. Hence, this collection represents a discursive idiosyncrasy, presumably in an effort to tailor narratives to a female audience. In her study on this matter, Bhikkhunī Dhammadinna has highlighted that the women in these narratives do not undergo a sex change.³

In the *Yaśomatyāvadāna*⁴, the daughter-in-law (*snuṣā*) of the well-known General Siṃha, one day sees the body of the Fortunate One and asks her father-in-law, 'Is there a means, by which I may also have such qualities?' (*sā śvaśuraṃ papraccha: asti kaścid upāyo yenāham apy evaṃ guṇayuktā syām iti*). It occurs to General Siṃha, that, If she were

¹ This has been observed particularly in the case of Mahāyāna literature, see Paul Harrison, 'Who Gets to Ride in the Great Vehicle? Self Image and Identity Among the Followers of the Early Mahāyāna', *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 10, no. 1 (1987): 67–90.

² Dhammadinna, 'Predictions of Women to Buddhahood in Middle Period Literature', 485.

³ Dhammadinna, 'Predictions of Women to Buddhahood in Middle Period Literature', esp. 488-494.

⁴ Av-ś 1. 8–12.

to find a reason, she would make an aspiration for the highest perfect awakening' (*yadi punar iyaṃ pratyayam āsādayet, kuryād anuttarāyāṃ samyaksambodhau prañidhānam iti*). General Siṃha gives Yaśomatī gold coins and precious substances she has some flowers fashioned out of these materials. She invites the Fortunate One and the community of disciples to eat in her house the following day. She satiates them with food and thereafter begins to sprinkle the flowers on the Fortunate One, who transforms them into a hall, umbrella and pavilion made of precious substances, that couldn't be made by a well instructed artisan or apprentice, since it was [made] by the Buddha-power of Buddhas and the Deva-power of Devas (*atha tāni puṣpāni upari bhagavato ratnakūṭāgāro ratnacchatraṃ ratnamaṇḍapa ivāvasthitam, yan na śakyam suśikṣitena karmakāreṇa karmāntevāsinā vā kartum, yathāpi tad buddhānāṃ buddhānubhāvena devatānāṃ ca devānubhāvena*). Then, like a tree whose roots had been cut, Yaśomatī falls at the feet of Fortunate One with her entire body and begins to make an aspiration. The Buddha then makes the following prediction:

Ānanda, by means of this good-root, the arising of this thought and the total relinquishing of a gift-worthy object, this girl Yaśomatī, after three immeasurable aeons have passed, shall reach awakening, and, pervaded by great compassion, shall become a perfectly awakened Buddha called Ratnamati with the ten powers, the four confidences, the three independent stations of mindfulness, and great compassion.¹

¹ *eṣā ānanda yaśomatī dārikā anena kuśalamūlena cittotpādena deya-dharmaparitṛyāgena ca trikalpāsaṃkhyeyasamudānītāṃ bodhiṃ samudānīya mahākaruṇāparibhāvitāḥ ṣaṭpāramitāḥ paripūrya ratnamatir nāma samyak-sambuddho bhaviṣyati, daśabhir balaiś caturbhir vaiśāradyaish tribhir āveṇikaiḥ smṛtyupasthānair mahākaruṇayā ca. Avś 1. 12.*

This narrative is noteworthy not only for Yaśomatī being female,¹ but also that she is a wealthy and political female figure. Hence, Buddhist discourse wanted certain types of women to be devotees and in particular those that had expendable wealth. The narrative takes it for granted that a male relation must provide the wealth for the woman to make the donation and therefore to some degree, as with the epigraphic context, a woman in a ritual is defined by her male relations.

More generally, the favourable portrayal of women in Buddhist contexts is a tenet also shared with a number of Gāndhārī *avadāna*-type texts concerning women, and pot inscriptions donated by women, both from Haḍḍa. Lenz has recently demonstrated that in both the manuscript and epigraphic sources from this specific locale, women are presented favourably. This is true for women of a presumably low social standing, such as the prostitutes (*gaṇiga*, Skt. *gaṇikā*) in the *Gaṇigāvadāna*,² and the servant of Anāthapiṇḍada, Puniga (P. Puṇṇā), in the *Punigāvadāna*,³ as well as of a high standing such as the women (*istriga*, P. *itthikā*) of Aśoka's court in a Gāndhārī *Aśokāvadāna*.⁴ In these manuscripts, women are presented as lay-practitioners, or, in the case of Aśoka's women of the court, as being able to attain high spiritual rewards, such as the Dharma-eye (*dharmacakṣu*).⁵ Of note is that the Chinese parallel

¹ The fact that the aspiration to awakening was being propagated to women, perhaps over and above other forms of aspirations, is also shown in another story from the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* of the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*, in which Ānanda is chastised by the Buddha for not making a speech (*udāhāraṇa*) to the girl that shows the colour (*varṇa*) of the highest perfect awakening and instead making a speech with the form of a 'woman's treasure' (*strīratna*) of the wheel-turning ruler, the result being that the girl made an aspiration to that end. See MSV 1. 36–38.

² Av^{L5} 90-95.

³ Av^{L5} 73-77.

⁴ Av^{L4} 223-232. For an edition and translation, see Lenz, 'Behind the Birch Bark Curtain', 56–57.

⁵ Lenz, 'Behind the Birch Bark Curtain', 61.

to this latter *Avadāna* specifically denigrates women as having a low intelligence,¹ and thus the Gāndhārī witness stands out in this regard and correlates well with the gender discourse found contemporary inscriptions, where women associated with rulers had soteriological agency.

FEATURES OF VERBALISATION IN EPIGRAPHIC ASPIRATIONS

The feature common to aspirations in literature is that they are enunciated in a performative context. Epigraphs of course are written; and this raises questions concerning the function of the written word and the value of an aspiration in this form. As far I am aware, terms for aspirations (e.g., *praṇidhāna* or *praṇidhi*) that are commonly found in the textual sources never occur in epigraphy. However, this does not detract from the principle that donative inscriptions were indeed viewed as aspirations of the same ilk. Indeed, the aforementioned linguistic features and formulae confirm as much.

It is not clear in all cases that inscriptions were thought of as aspirations. Usual constructions of a passive participle construction (e.g., *pratimā pratiṣṭhāpita*) with a donor in the instrumental or third person indicatives do not betray this quality; for example, the Buddha Statue of Momadattā (No. 74), reads, ‘By means of this good root all beings completely extinguish’: *imiṇa kuśalamuleṇa sarva satva* ‹‹para››nivāiti. If we presume that some form of this inscription (if not the inscription itself) were read aloud at the ritual occasion then the usage of a third person indicative would suggest that the aspiration was said on behalf of

¹ T 4. 286b12–13.

the donor or that the donor read aloud a version of the text recorded in the inscription.

However, several other Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions donated by figures related to the Apracarājas or Oḍirājas do betray the fact they were verbalised by using first or third person indicative, imperative or optative constructions. For example, the Reliquary Inscription of Naganamda (No. 10) states, ‘We establish the relics of the great departed one’: *mahatavipraheṇasa śarira paḍiṭhavima*. The Reliquary Inscription of Ariasrava (No. 31) reads, ‘I establish the relics of the Fortunate One’: *tasa bhagavato dhadu pariṭhavemi*.¹ And it goes on to state an epigraphic aspiration proper, ‘Thus by means of establishing and by means of totally relinquishing may there by the attainment of *nirvāṇa*’: *eva pariṭhaveataya eva paricaamtaya ṇivaṇapratī[e] bhotu*. In the Gold Scroll of Ajidaseṇa (No. 34) we also read, ‘May it here be conducive to the severance of all suffering and *nirvāṇa*’: *ayam edaṇi sabadukhovachedae nivaṇae sabatadu*.

These sources imply that as part of the ritual proceedings, a donor would enunciate his or her aspiration. All of these donations concern the establishment of relics and this performative element shall therefore be treated later in the context of stupa festivals.²

INSCRIPTIONS AND CAUSALITY

Presuming that some form of a verbalised aspiration accompanied many inscriptions, the question still remains as to the value of recording one’s donative act in writing. Above,³ we considered references to donative

¹ See also the Gold Scroll of Seṇavarma (No. 36).

² See Chapter Fifteen: Stupa Festivals.

³ See Chapter Twelve: Donative Inscriptions and Formulae in the *Vinaya*.

inscriptions in the *Vinaya* of the Sarvāstivādins and Mūlasarvāstivādins, which provide a blueprint for donative formulae found in inscriptions. However, they also do not encompass all that an inscription expresses, including the epigraphic aspiration. Indeed this latter is evidently the more important for donors, who, for the most part, seemed little concerned with expressing legally sound transfers of possession and were much more interested in the moral value to be attached to their donations and the benefits that should be accrued from it to the named individuals. In this respect the *Vinayas* offer nothing in the way of explanation. Schopen characterises the issue as follows:

[...] inscriptions look as if they were intended as records of specific gifts, but it is far from clear what possible function such records could have in a world which was governed by the certain inexorability of karma: if every act inexorably had its consequence, if Agila, for example, was “the heir of whatever action he does”, then any act was already in the most important sense indelibly, automatically, and unavoidably entered into the “record” and there could be no doubt about who did it. To record it in stone would seem at best redundant, if not, again, completely pointless. It is, of course, possible that the mere existence of such seemingly senseless records itself may indicate that the formal doctrine of karma expressed in texts had little or no hold outside of them, that actual people were far less sure of an inevitable consequence for their religious acts, that a lack of certainty, a sense of doubt in regard to formal doctrine, impelled them to “get it in writing”. But this, in turn, raises the equally

awkward question of who it was who was supposed to read these records.¹

Hence, there is some debate regarding the function of donative epigraphy: [1] where do donative inscriptions fit into the scheme of causal action (*karma*), and [2] for whom were inscriptions intended?

Even though the power of the written word as a communicative and performative strategy is perhaps self-evident, and was certainly utilised, for example, by political institutions to visually signify and disseminate their names, titles, moral worth and ritual behaviours—the ‘marks of empire’ and ‘the building blocks of the imperial narrative’, as Skinner has recently described Kuṣāṇa inscriptions²—or has markers of donation,³ possession and protection—*na kenacit hartavyaḥ* (‘it must not be taken by anyone!’), as one inscription reads⁴—this visible and public quality is not always present. Reliquary inscriptions in the Northwest were of course buried and a vast number of the inscriptions at the stupas in Sāñcī and Bharhut are placed high up and out of sight on the architectural structures, making them impossible to read.⁵ Hence,

¹ Schopen, ‘What’s in a Name: The Religious Function of the Early Donative Inscriptions’, 63.

² Skinner, ‘Marks of Empire’, 2ff.

³ On the Inscribed Plate of Saṃghamitra (No. 4) in this regard, see Falk, ‘Three Inscribed Buddhist Monastic Utensils from Gandhāra’, 393–401.

⁴ This protective formula or ‘spell’ is found on two water pitchers (*kuṇḍī*), inscribed in Brāhmī, which read *na kenaci harthavyaḥ* and *na kaiṣa harthavya*, as well as on a stone oil lamp (*dīpasthālikā*) from Swat, which states *na keṇa ci haṭavaṃ*. For further discussion, see Harry Falk, ‘Protective Inscriptions on Buddhist Monastic Implements’, in *Vividharatnakaraṇḍaka: Festgabe für Adelheid Mette*, ed. Christine Chojnacki, Jens-Uwe Hartmann, and Volker M. Tschannerl, *Indica et Tibetica: Monographien zu den Sprachen und Kulturen des indo-tibetischen Kulturraumes*, Band 37 (Swisttal-Odendorf: Indica et Tibetica Verlag, 2000), 251–57.

⁵ Schopen, ‘What’s in a Name: The Religious Function of the Early Donative Inscriptions’, 63–65.

these examples indicate that the written word itself likely held some causative value for donative ritual practice. Few examples can be drawn on from literature to explain this quality. There are, however, some passages that have been overlooked in scholarship thus far, which may shed some light on the matter.

The first example comes from the *Śroṇakoṭikarṇāvadāna*, in which the caravan leader (*sārthavāha*) Śroṇakoṭikarṇa sets out on a voyage overseas in search of wealth. On the way he loses his caravan and winds up wandering the ancestral realm (*pitṛloka*). His parents miss him and are misled into believing on several occasions that he has returned. Out of despair they enact the following:

In the parks, community halls and temples [in Vāsava], Śroṇakoṭikarṇa's parents presented and established [bells],¹ umbrellas, fans, water pots, and shoes that were inscribed with these letters, 'If Śroṇakoṭikarṇa is still alive, this is for his speedy return, for his quick return. Otherwise, if he has died and passed away, this is so that the life that he has been born into shall be followed by another, even better existence.'²

This inscription of Śroṇakoṭikarṇa's parents thus resembles an epigraphic aspiration; insofar as it expresses a wish for their son's return or, in the worst case, the betterment of his future existence. It is also fundamentally different in that the inscription is intended as something more akin to a notification of missing persons to be hung in communal

¹ Divy 15.

² *tābhyām udyāneṣu svakasabhādevakuleṣu cchatrāṇi vyajanāni kalaśāni upānahāni cākṣarāṇi abhilihitāni dattāni sthāpitāni yadi tāvac chroṇaḥ koṭikarṇo jīvati laghu āgamaya kṣipramāgamaya. atha cyutaḥ kālagataḥ tasyaiva gatyupapattisthānāt sthānāntaraviśeṣatāyai.* Divy 1. 16; translation from Rotman, *Divine Stories. Divyāvadāna Part I*, 46.

spaces. Indeed, it is the value of the notice that is specifically played out, for upon reading it, Śroṇakoṭikarṇa eventually returns home. To some extent the existential part is also addressed, in that the contingencies of his journey also led him to hear a teaching of the Dharma from Mahākatyāyana and experience stream-entry (*śrotāpatti*).¹ This specific causal connection is not directly explicated however.

The second example is found in the *Upoṣadhāvadāna*, which details certain events in the past life of the deity (*devaputra*) Upoṣadha in order to explain to some doubtful monks why he had attained stream-entry in his present existence. The Buddha explains that when a Brahmin, Upoṣadha had observed the eight-fold abstention (*upavāsa*). But due to his being idle in respect to the moral observances (*śikṣāśaithilya*), he was reborn as a *nāga* in a hell where hot sand (*taptavālukā*) was poured on him daily, until only his bones remained. Pondering his fate, he realises which action had caused his great suffering and resolves to re-enact the eight absentions. To do this, he takes the form of a Brahmin and scares a king into performing the ritual. Yet, the king does not know how. The king sends a message throughout the realm, offering a golden basket (*hiraṇyapiṭaka*), which he fixes to the top of a flag, to any who can assist in achieving this end. The story then relates:

A certain elderly woman, the daughter of a mason, showed a pillar to the king, ‘Here at this pillar my father performed repeated acts of worship with fragrances, incense and flowers. Having dug it up you should inspect it.’ The king gave an order to his workers, ‘This pillar should be dug up!’ The king’s workers dug up the pillar and underneath they found a gold-document inscribed [with] the eight-limbed abstention,

¹ Divy 17.

along with the five moral precepts of the lay-practitioner (*upāsaka*) and the twenty-seven wings of enlightenment. Noting it down, the king gave the eight-limbed abstention for the *nāga*.¹

Here, the very knowledge, revival and continuation of the ritual abstention (Skt. *upavāsa*, BHS. *upoṣadha*) are afforded by the discovery of a gold-document inscribed with doctrinal lists. Thus, by implication, the written word served in the preservation of a centremost Buddhist ritual practice. This excavation of course bears striking similarities to the modern day archaeologist and epigraphist pouring over an unearthed inscription to decipher its tenets.

The function of an inscription in this regard is known elsewhere to literature.² It could also be associated with instances of inscribing an image of the Buddha or other fashioned object with tenets of doctrine as a means to record and spread Buddhist knowledge.³ But further, as a concrete behavioural phenomenon, the act of inscribing doctrine on gold documents and other objects is also witnessed archaeologically in the

¹ *yāvad anyatamā vṛddhā strī palagaṇḍaduhitā. tayā rājñāḥ stambho darśitaḥ. atra me stambhe pitā asakṛdgandhadhūpapuṣpārcanaṃ kṛtavān. tam utpāṭya pratyavekṣasveti. tato rājñā pauruṣeyāṇām ājñā dattā: ayaṃ stambha utpāṭyatām iti. tato rājapuruṣaiḥ stambha utpāṭitaḥ. tasyādhistāt suvarṇa-patrābhilikhito 'ṣṭāṅgasamanvāgata upavāso labdhaḥ saha pañca copāsaka-śikṣāpadāni saptatrimśac ca bodhipakṣyādharmāḥ. tato rājñā tasya nāgasyāṣṭāṅgasamanvāgata upavāso likhitvā dattaḥ. Avś 1. 339–340.*

² In the *Dharmaveśyavadāna* the Bodhisattva inscribes a verse on some gold documents (*suvarṇapatreṣu*) and disseminates them throughout Jambudvīpa, which reads:

*dharma caret sucaritaṃ nainaṃ duścaritaṃ caret,
dharmacārī sukhaṃ śete loka 'smiṃ ca paratra. Avś 2. 220.*

One should observe the Dharma, should observe good, not bad conduct.

An observer of the Dharma rests in comfort, in this world and the next.

³ See, e.g., Adhik-v 65–66; Divy 300, 547.

Northwest, and this narrative could shed light on certain of these, which list long sets of doctrinal principles. Notable among these are the Gold Scroll of Seṇavarma (No. 36), which lists several key tenets of Buddhist doctrine, or indeed the Reliquary Inscription of Śvedavarma (No. 55), which includes a full formula of dependent origination (*pratītya-samutpāda*). But what was the purpose in doing so? Perhaps one possible intention of these donors was to inscribe, bury, and consequently preserve the Dharma at a time when we know Buddhists thought was being lost. This surmise is substantiated by Seṇavarma's inscription, which itself records the ruler dug up a former dedication and even relates his expectation that others may dig up his donation, for which he curses them.

A still more concrete example arises in the *Aśokāvadāna*, wherein Aśoka donated inscriptions along with the relics and their reliquaries, which, following archaeology, describes a behaviour of the post-Aśokan period and even more so our present context:

Meanwhile the king had eighty-four thousand boxes of gold, silver, crystal and beryl made, into which he put the relics, as well as eighty-four thousand reliquaries and inscription plates.¹

The *Aśokāvadāna* is a story about excavating old stupas and stealing relics. Embedded in the narrative therefore is the assumption that stupas would be dug, a matter confirmed by the several inscriptions which record the rededication of relics.² With this expectation in mind, perhaps donors of relics were aware of the 'grave robbers' or 'treasure seekers', who are all too familiar to the present day, and composed inscriptions

¹ *yāvad rājā caturaśītikaraṇḍasahasraṃ kārayitvā sauvarṇarūpyasphaṭika-vaidūryamayāṇāṃ teṣu dhātavaḥ prakṣiptāḥ. evaṃ vistareṇa caturaśītikumbhasahasraṃ paṭṭasahasraṃ. Aś-av. 53-54; Divy. 381.*

² See Chapter Fifteen: The Rededication of Relics in the Indic Northwest.

with a view that they would indeed be read again at some unknown time. In such cases the inscription would serve as an informative record of the meritorious act of bygone years. Indeed one of the rare references to epigraphy in the *Upoṣadhāvadāna* mentioned above suggests this very phenomenon.

One final phenomenon to mention is the value of inscribing one's name, for the impression left by inscriptions is that in doing so the dedicated merit would accrue to the specific individuals, implying a casual or 'mystical efficacy'.¹ However, there is some debate as to the value of a written name in this regard. In broader Indic ritual contexts the name (*nāman*) is seen as a representation of an individual's identity and its usage in ritual produces an effect on the named person, whether for positive or negative ends. In this regard Schopen writes:

If it is true that when a person's name is present the person is present; if it is true that, in physical absence by journey or death, if a person's name is left behind so too is the person, then we must begin to suspect that having one's name carved...must have placed the person there as well.²

Indeed, this corresponds to the scholastic principles found in *avadāna* literature described in the previous chapter. In this connection, we may repeat the aforesaid passage from the *Śayanāsanavastu* which states that one assigns the merit in the name of a beneficiary.³ And Schopen also observed elsewhere in the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya* that monastics would recite daily the details of a donation, including the date and the

¹ Konow, *Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions: With the Exception of Those of Aśoka*, cxiii.

² Schopen, 'What's in a Name: The Religious Function of the Early Donative Inscriptions', 70–72.

³ Schopen, *Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monks*, 6–7; Schopen, 'Art, Beauty and the Business of Running a Monastery in Early Northwest India', 302.

name of the donor, in a structure very much akin to that of an epigraphic record.¹

A single Kharoṣṭhī manuscript recently edited by Mark Allon has provided the first material evidence that writing was used for such purposes by monastic institutions in the Northwest. Though the manuscript is highly fragmentary, he has convincingly argued on formal and stylistic grounds that it constitutes a ‘ledger recording gifts to a Buddhist monastery’ in a format ‘more akin to a donative inscription’.² This potentially confirms the long-held suspicion that inscribed records would have had written counterparts³ and it is presumable such administrative documents were common-place, particularly in light of the fact other written texts, such as wills, loans, and monetary donations, are recorded as standard in the *Vinaya* of several monastic institutions.⁴

This more bureaucratic function of names in inscriptions is highlighted by Richard Salomon, who, echoing a handful of the sentiments above, surmises that the proclamatory nature of inscriptions suggests they ‘were not so much intended to have a “mystical efficacy” as to enhance the effect of the public spectacle that must have accompanied the dedication of the relics which they recorded...to glorify the sponsor.’ He goes on to argue that in light of the ‘workings of *karma*, there is no need for the date of a pious deed to be recorded, since that deed will inexorably have its effect at the moment in the future

¹ Schopen, *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters*, 273.

² Mark Allon, ‘A Unique Gāndhārī Monastic Ledger Recording Gifts by Vima Kadphises (Studies in Gāndhārī Manuscripts 2)’, *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 42 (2019): 1–46.

³ Salomon, ‘Gandharan Reliquary Inscriptions’, 169.

⁴ For cases from the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*, see Schopen, *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters*, 6–15. Written records (疏記) in the *Mahāsāṃghika-vinaya* are used for the transference of assets from a stupa to the community and vice versa: see T 1425. 251c28.

when it has reached its “ripeness””, and therefore such inscriptions are ‘bureaucratic, rather than metaphysical.’¹

But what is to be gained from bifurcating the social and mystical elements of an inscription? It is apparent to me that possible oppositions between the mystical and socially glorifying, the temporal and the atemporal, and the bureaucratic and metaphysical are neither desirable nor indeed necessary. They serve a utility if only to demonstrate their mutuality in a context where, correlatively, what is mystic is social and what is temporal is atemporal. Additionally there is no self-evident bureaucratic function in dating an inscription that is to be buried and a vast number of inscriptions of many periods and localities did not include a date and possess no other administrative function.

¹ Salomon, ‘Gandharan Reliquary Inscriptions’, 168.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN: RELICS AND STUPAS

The Indic Northwest is unique to archaeological contexts for presenting a rare confluence of archaeological, art-historical, epigraphic, numismatic, and textual authorities pertaining to the dedication of the Buddha's relics. Indeed, one of the most emblematic features of this region around the turn of the Common Era is the sudden arising of an unprecedented surfeit of relic and stupa dedications. Notwithstanding a large number of stupas, reliquaries, and associated objects excavated in the region,¹ there are a total of 70 Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions found on 65 objects (five are rededicatory) dateable to between the late 2nd century BCE and 2nd century CE (Fig. 15.1).² From the second half of this period also, a host of reliefs from stupa sites render scenes of relic acquisition and dedication, many of which are familiar to events

¹ For a catalogue of reliquaries and associated objects, see David Jongeward, 'Survey of Gandhāran Reliquaries', in David Jongeward et al, *Gandharan Buddhist Reliquaries*, Seattle: Early Buddhist Manuscripts Project, 2012, pp. 39–110.

² All inscriptions are numbered (No. 1–70) and ordered, as far as possible, in chronological order. The proposed chronology, however, is not absolute; for further discussion on the matter, see Stefan Baums, 'A Framework for Gandhāran Chronology Based on Relic Inscriptions', in Rienjang Wannaporn and Peter Stewart (eds), *Problems of Chronology in Gandhāran Art: Proceedings of the First International Workshop of the Gandhāra Connections Project, University of Oxford, 23rd–24th March, 2017*, Oxford Archaeopress Archaeology, 2018, pp. 53–70.

described in two narrative cycles, the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*¹ and *Aśokāvadāna*.² The idiosyncrasy thus raises some rather fundamental questions as to the historical reasons for this spur, whence such an abundance of relics derived, and the function such narrative cycles may have served in this regard.

Dedicating relics and stupas stands as one of the most prominent ritual modes in the Buddhist tradition. As a consequence, there are a vast array of studies that deal with the archaeological remains, epigraphic records and textual accounts concerning the practice and an equal profusion of theories to match, which seek to elucidate the economic and social functions of relic establishments as marking the Buddha's and, by extension, Buddhism's institutional presence, the somatic nature of relics, and, to a lesser extent, the ritual practices surrounding them. These studies are too numerous to fully elucidate here and this section, rather, examines the historical development and social and political nature of relic dedications in the Indic Northwest primarily on the basis of epigraphic sources. In light of newly discovered *Vinaya* regulations and instances of Buddhist propaganda to advocate the theft of relics by monastic and political individuals, it elucidates the processes and patterns of Buddhism's institutional expansion and the role such dedicating and rededicating relics at stupa festivals (*stūpamaha*), as a political medium.

¹ For an overview of relevant relief art, see David Jongeward, 'The Buddha's Last Days as Portrayed in Gandharan Sculpture', in David Jongeward et al, *Gandharan Buddhist Reliquaries*, Seattle: Early Buddhist Manuscripts Project, 2012, pp. 9–38.

² Mahmood ul-Hasan, 'Depiction of Asoka Raja in the Buddhist Art of Gandhara', *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, 2017, 54(2): 155–62.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF RELICS AND STUPAS

Buddhist literature leaves the impression that interring the deceased under a tumulus or stupa was a widespread practice, predating its introduction into Buddhism. Passages in Pali literature state that four types of individual were considered ‘worthy of a stupa’ (*thūpāraha*); sometimes only two are listed, a Tathāgata and a wheel-turning ruler,¹ sometimes it is four, additionally including disciples of the Tathāgata (*tathāgatasāvaka*), Pratyekabuddhas,² and in other instances individuals such as queens³ are said to have received the same treatment. However, this apparent exclusivity is peculiar to Pali sources. André Bareau has shown on the basis of several *Vinaya* sources in Chinese that stupas were something of a banality and available to all.⁴ We read in the *Vinaya* 鼻奈耶⁵, for example, that ‘when ordinary people die the earth is beaten to construct a tumulus’.⁶ Similarly the *Vinayamāṭṛkāsūtra* 毘尼母經⁷ states that ‘above corpses, one raises a stupa’.⁸ The only distinction between these and former passages is that the deceased is not cremated,⁹

¹ AN 1. 78.

² DN 2. 143; AN 2. 245.

³ AN 3. 63.

⁴ André Bareau, ‘La construction et le culte des stūpa d’après les Vinayapiṭaka’, *Bulletin de l’École française d’Extrême-Orient* 50, no. 2 (1962): 230.

⁵ T 1646. This is the oldest translated work of a *Vinaya* text, produced by Zhu Fonian 竺佛念 in 462 CE.

⁶ 凡常人死與築土爲墳。 T 1464. 897c29–30.

⁷ T 1463. This text is dated to the 4th century CE but neither its translator nor the date of translation is known. The work is a commentarial comparison of the **Sarvāstivādivinaya* 十誦律, belonging to the Sarvāstivādivinaya and a work of the **Dharmaguptakavinaya* 四分律.

⁸ 死屍上起塔。 T 1463. 815c27–28.

⁹ Excavations have uncovered several stupas to contain entire skeletons. In a stupa at Sahrī-Bāhlol, H. W. Bellew uncovered a grave, which contained a full

which Bureau suggests was due to the process of cremation being too costly for most.

The aetiological account of the stupa cult in Buddhism is retained in one narrative cycle, the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, which relates that following the death of the Buddha in Kuśinagara, funerary rituals were performed on the body (*śarīre śarīrapūjā*)¹, consisting in the preparation and cremation of the Buddha's corpse and the internment of the remaining relics within a stupa.² Following political contention and the threat of war among the peoples of the Gangetic Plains, the remaining bones (*asthi*) were ultimately divided by the Brahmin Droṇa among six

skeleton, three feet above another cavity at the centre of the stupa containing ashes, bits of charcoal and a host of human and animal bones. H. W Bellew, *A General Report on The Yusufzais in Six Chapters with A Map* (Lahore: Government central press, 1864), 137ff. Errington explains them as being 'funeral rites of some other religious being incorporated in an essentially Buddhist funerary deposit'. Errington, 'The Western Discovery of the Art of Gandhāra and the Finds of Jamālgarhī', 121. Whilst this may well be the case, the passages cited from the *Vinaya* could suggest otherwise.

¹ For details of the funerary proceedings, see John Strong, 'The Buddha's Funeral', in *The Buddhist Dead: Practices, Discourses, Representations*, ed. Bryan J. Cuevas and Jacquelin I. Stone (Honolulu: Kuroda Institute. University of Hawaii Press, 2007), 32–59.

² DN 2. 142–143, MPV 48.8ff. For a synopsis and comparative analysis of this and other major witnesses of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* in Chinese, Pali and Sanskrit, see Ernst Waldschmidt, *Die Überlieferung vom Lebensende des Buddha. Eine vergleichende Analyse des Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra und seiner Textentsprechungen, zweite Teil, Vorgangsgruppe V-VI*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1948, pp. 289ff. Similar versions of this narrative, in marginally distinct forms, are found in the Chinese translations of the Mahīśāsakas, Haimavatas, Dharmaguptakas and Sarvāstivādins. For references see Frauwallner, *The Earliest Vinaya and the Beginnings of Buddhist Literature*, 43–44.

collectives¹—the Mallas of Pāpa, Bullakas of Calakalpakā, Krauḍyas of Rāmagrāma, Brahmins of Viṣṇudvīpa, Licchavis of Vaiśālī, Śākyas of Kapilavastu—and King Ajātaśatru of Magadha, each of whom established a relic stupa (*śarīrastūpa*) within their own domains. Two other stupas were also constructed; the Brahmin Droṇa made one for the urn (*kumbha*) that contained the relics and the Brahmin Pippalāyana made one for the ashes (*aṅga*).² A verse addendum to the text in Pali and Sanskrit also adds another four eye-tooth (*daṃṣṭrācatuṣka*) relics, established in the Tridaśa heaven, in Gandhāra³, Kalinga, and Rāmagrāma,⁴ thereby bringing these places far afield into the Buddhist fold.

The *Aśokāvadāna* narrative cycle thereafter recounts that the Mauryan Aśoka takes a four-fold army unit, opens up seven (or eight) of the so-called Droṇa stupas, and divides the relics, rededicating them within numerous Dharmarājikā stupas throughout his polity, including such sites in the Northwest as Taxila. The Buddhists, therefore, sought to relate Buddhism's institutional expansion and establishment in the Northwest with Aśoka defining the limits of his empire through a specifically Buddhist medium.⁵

¹ On the potentially collective nature of relic dedications, see Matthew Milligan, 'Corporate Bodies in Early South Asian Buddhism: Some Relics and Their Sponsors According to Epigraphy', *Religions*, 2019, 10(4).

² DN 2. 159ff; MPS 25; 50-51.

³ For a discussion of tooth relics, their occurrence in the records of Chinese travellers, and their journey through Central Asia to China, see John Strong, *Relics of the Buddha* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2004), 185.

⁴ DN 2. 167, MPS 51. 23-24.

⁵ A synopsis and comparative analysis of the major witnesses can be found at Jean Przyluski, *La légende de l'Empereur Açoka (Açoka-Avadāna) dans les textes Indiens et Chinois*, Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1923. For a study and translation of the Skt., see John Strong, *The Legend of King Aśoka. A Study and Translation of the Aśokāvadāna*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983.

Much has been written on the historical veracity of these cycles, and the entire lack of material remains for stupas prior to the 3rd century BCE, and only some indication that Aśoka engaged in rebuilding a stupa, have prevented any firm conclusions being made.¹ Indeed, material evidence for stupas arises across the Indic sphere from around the 2nd century BCE, after which time a relic cult surrounding the Buddha² and his disciples³ also began to emerge.

¹ For a recent discussion, cf. Harry Falk, 'The Fate of Aśoka's Donations at Lumbinī', in Patrick Olivelle, Janice Leoschko, and Himanshu Prabha Ray (eds), *Reimagining Aśoka: Memory and History*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 204–16; Skilling, 'Relics: The Heart of Buddhist Veneration', pp. 11ff.

² The inscribed reliquary from Piprahwā in Uttar Pradesh has caused some debate in determining the origins of the relic cult:

*iyam salila-nidhāne budhasa bhagavate Sakiyanaṃ sukutibhatinaṃ
sabhaginikanaṃ saputadalanam. Piprahwā 1*

This is the deposit of the relics of the Buddha, the Fortunate One of the worthy brothers, little sisters, sons, and wives of the Śākya.

Several scholars contend either that the relic was dedicated by the immediate family members of the Buddha or by his scion of a later period. Now the latter view is generally upheld, for if it were from the time even close to that of the Buddha, it would represent the earliest evidence for the Brāhmī script and would predate all other written records by at least a century. Both the palaeographic and archaeological evidence point to a date in the late Aśokan Period or more likely to a date in the 2nd century BCE. Härtel, 'Archaeological Research on Ancient Buddhist Sites', 74ff.

³ Several inscribed reliquaries found at Sāñcī, Satdhara, and Ander stupas in Madhya Pradesh name the disciples Śāriputra and Mahāmaudgalyāyana, LL 152–53, 680–84. These objects are widely thought to correspond to the account given in the *Mahāvamsa* regarding the spread of Buddhist 'missionaries' across South Asia at the time of Aśoka, see Geiger, *The Mahāvamsa or The Great Chronicle of Ceylon*, xx.

RELICS AND STUPAS IN THE NORTH AND NORTHWEST

Following the account of the *Aśokāvadāna*, it has long been argued in scholarship that several stupas in the Northwest derive from the Mauryan Period. These include, most famously, the Dharmarājikā near Taxila, Punjab,¹ the Jamālgaṛhī stupa near Mardan, the Manikyala stupa near Rawalapindi, and the Chakdara and Butkara I stupas in Swat.² Their attribution to the Mauryan Period was largely made on the typological basis of their having circular bases, and to that extent are to be differentiated from other stupas with quadrate bases dated to the Indo-Scythian and Kuṣāṇa Periods.³ Numismatists have more recently challenged these dates⁴ and favour a date in the 2nd century BCE due to a greater number of Indo-Greek coins at these and other sites.⁵ Indeed, it is from the latter end of the Indo-Greek Period that archaeological and epigraphic evidence for stupas and relic dedications begin to arise also.

Yet, Kharoṣṭhī⁶ and Brāhmī¹ inscriptions of the early Common Era explicitly designate the Dharmarājikā stupa near Taxila and the

¹ John Marshall dates the stupa to the Mauryan Period purely on architectural form, admitting the conclusion is not founded on any firm material evidence. Marshall, *Structural Remains*, 236.

² Göbl, *A Catalogue of Coins from Butkara I (Swāt, Pakistan)*, 11.

³ Kottkamp, *Der Stupa als Repräsentation des buddhistischen Heilsweges*, 260–63.

⁴ Errington, 'Numismatic Evidence for Dating Buddhist Remains', 191–92. In the case of Butkara I, Domenico Faccenna maintains that the earliest stratum (GSt. 1) is to be dated to the Mauryan Period. Faccenna, 'At the Origin of Gandharan Art', 279.

⁵ See Appendix 1 in Errington, 'Numismatic Evidence': 211–13.

⁶ Three mention the Dharmarājikā at Taxila: CKI 218, 60 and 68. Another is mentioned at Aūdiya, CKI 465, as well as one at Thulabrayaa, CKI 556, and one at Trama, CKI 256. A Dharmarājikā is also referred to in one Kharoṣṭhī

Butkara I stupa in Swat, in addition to four others of unknown location, as ‘Dharmarājikā’. The Reliquary Inscription of Indravarma I (No. 14) specifically states that it acquired relics from a Mauryan Period stupa: *ime ca śarire muryakaliṇate thubute*. This stupa may perhaps be equated with another named in the Buddha Statue of Momadatta (No. 74), which was also established in the likely Apracarāja capital Trama, at a Dharmarājikā established by Aśoka: *[Tra]matithaṇaṇagaraṃmi Dhama-raiaṃmi Aśorayapraistavidami*. This indicates that Aśoka’s ritual landscape of the however imagined past was strongly present in the minds of Buddhists some centuries after his reign and indeed that it informed their institutional history in the region.

TYPES OF STUPAS

These so-called Dharmarājika stupas of Butkara I in Mingora and the Dharmarājikā, near Taxila, are nonetheless demonstrably the earliest such structures in the Northwest. This is shown by the fact that they served as the central stupa around which several other types of stupas and shrines were constructed, ultimately forming larger stupa complexes. In a recent study, Wannaporn Rienjang has also shown that the earliest relic deposits at these smaller ‘subsidiary’ stupas at the Dharmarājikā site likely begin to arise from the mid 1st century BCE, as coin issues of Apollodotus II (c. 65–50 BCE) and Azes I (c. 48–0 BCE) were found in therein.²

manuscript dated to the early Common Era. Lenz, ‘Ephemeral Dharma; Magical Hope’, 138ff.

¹ A Dharmarājikā is recorded in an inscription at Mathurā, dated 34 Huviṣka (161/162 CE). Harry Falk, ‘A New Kuṣāṇa Bodhisattva from the Time of Huviṣka [2 Figures]’, *Annual Report of The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhism* 15 (2012): 13.

² Wannaporn Rienjang, ‘Honouring the Body: Relic Cult Practice in Eastern Afghanistan with Comparison to Dharmarajika Pakistan’ (PhD, Cambridge, University of Cambridge, 2017), 293.

In epigraphy, these structures bear the name *gaha-stupa*, whose precise purport is not clear. In the Gold Scroll of Seṇavarma (No. 36), several such great *gaha-stupas* of the Oḍirāja Seṇavarma's father and grandfather are mentioned as having been burned when the nearby central Ekaūḍa stupa was burnt: [1.]...*yada io ekaiūḍe dadhe tatra aṃṇa pi* [2.] *mahia pidarapidamaḥaṇa mahamṭe adura gahathuva dadha*. Whether this refers to the fact that his father Ajidaseṇa and grandfather Vijidaseṇa were themselves interred in these stupas or if they had made their own relic and stupa dedications is not clear.

Other reliquary inscriptions from Swat also name such structures. One from Swabi records that a relic gift was established in a *gavhra-stupa*: [1.] (**śa*)[*ri*][*ra*][*ṇ*] *pratiṭhavedi gavh[r]a*[2.] (**thubammi*)...[*daṇa-mu*][*kh*][*o ca*].¹ And a second records the dedication of relics by Teyamitra in a Bodhisattva-*gaha* at a monastery of the same name: *Teyamitre[ṇa] .uh..eraputreṇa prati[ṭhavi]t[a] bhagavado śarira Śakamuṇisa budhasatvaga*<**haṃ*>*mi*² <**budha*>*satagahaṃmi viharami*.³ Two other dated inscriptions from the Taxila region also bear these appellations. The Reliquary Inscription of Candrabhi (No. 39) from Kalawan, dated 134 Azes (86/87 CE), states a relic was established in a *gaha-stupa*: [2.] *śarira praistaveti gahathu*[3.]*bami*. And the Reliquary Inscription of Urasaka, dated two years hence to 136 Azes (88/89 CE), also states that relics were established in the donors personal

¹ CKI 135.

² I take the term *budhasatvagaha* as a synonym for *bodhisattvagaha*. There is textual precedence for the assimilation, for example, in the *Suvikrāntivikrāmapariṣcchāprajñāpāramitāsūtra* it states: *bodhisattva ity anubuddhasattvasyāitad adhvācanam, yena sarvadharmā buddhā jñātāḥ*. Svp 1. 10. Vaidya, *Mahāyānasūtrasaṃgrahaḥ: Part One*, 10. This can be translated as: 'Bodhisattva' is an epithet for a being who has become awakened and by whom all the awakened factors are known.

³ CKI 457.

Bodhisattva-*gaha* at the Dharmarājikā stupa: [2.]...*ime pradistavita bhagavato dhatuo Dhamaraie Takṣaṣi(*la)e taṇuvae bosisatvagahami.*

The exact find-spots of these two latter inscriptions—A1 at Kalawan¹ and G5 at the Dharmarājikā²—confirm archaeologically that the *gaha*-stupa and Bodhisattva-*gaha* consist of small stupas surrounding the central monument. John Marshall describes the A1 *gaha*-stupa, situated to the northwest corner of the site at Kalawan in the following terms:

Of the buildings which encompass court A on its other sides, the most important by reason of the finds made in it is the stūpa shrine A1, which, along with the adjoining shrines A13 and the smaller chapels A15, A16 and A17, forms a solid block of buildings on the eastern side of the court. The oldest part of this block is the shrine A1, which consists of a square antechamber with an entrance on its western side and an octagonal shrine behind, containing a small circular stūpa.³

He goes on to say that A1 was raised above the courtyard floor and was accessible only by steps. Several reliefs from Gandhara depict stupas with steps leading to an entrance where a reliquary was put on display, indicating that there was a practice of worshipping ‘accessible relics’. In essence, these reliefs are confirmed by the accounts of Faxian and

¹ See John Marshall, *Taxila. An Illustrated Account of Archaeological Excavations Carried out at Taxila under the Orders of the Government in India between the Years 1913 and 1934: Vol. III: Plates* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), Pl. 72.

² See Marshall, *Plates* Plate 45.

³ Marshall, *Structural Remains*, 326.

Xuanzang, who also record that relics were put on display during the day for the purpose of worship.¹

Following their accounts, Kurt Behrendt describes the *gaha*-stupa structure as a ‘new type of rectangular stupa shrine [that] characteristically has a front ante-chamber (sometimes open) that provides access to an inner room where the stūpa is housed’.² He argues that these smaller enclaves were originally designed to hold relics, although these are now absent from the archaeological record. Rienjang also deals with the reliefs that depict ‘accessible relics’ and draws our attention to several examples of ‘two-celled shrines’ at the Dharmarājikā site (a group within which the aforementioned G5 Bodhisatva-*gaha* may be included) and Butkara I. These shrines, she notes, include an antechamber and an inner chamber, which may well have had doors, wherein the relics could have been kept and brought out for display purposes. Due to the paucity of evidence however she nevertheless concludes that ‘there are no relics in greater Gandhara known to have come from an accessible stupa or relic shrines.’³ The A1 *gaha*-stupa would also be a good candidate for this type of structure. Nevertheless, the relics and their containing reliquary, a stupa shaped schist casket topped with umbrellas,⁴ were not accessible and were found inside a relic chamber that had been cut into the *kañjur* of the ‘small circular’,

¹ Beal, *Buddhist Records. Vol. II*, 96; Legge, James, *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms; Being an Account by the Chinese Monk Fâ-Hien of His Travels in India and Ceylon, A.D. 399–414, in Search of the Buddhist Books of Discipline. Translated and Annotated with a Korean Recension of the Chinese Text*, 35.

² Kurt Behrendt, ‘Relic Shrines of Gandhāra: A Reinterpretation of the Archaeological Evidence’, in *Gandhāran Buddhism: Archaeology, Art, Texts*, ed. Pia Branacaccio and Kurt Behrendt (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2006), 84ff. Parenthesis added.

³ Rienjang, ‘Honouring the Body’, 10.

⁴ For an image, see Jongeward, “Survey of Gandhāran Reliquaries,” 72, Fig. 3.25.

concealed with pebbles and an additional slab of limestone.¹

In concealing the relics, and in placing the *gaha*-stupa within a covered inner chamber, I would argue that ritual activities surrounding these specific stupas were entirely distinct from the ‘accessible relics’ depicted in reliefs and mentioned in accounts of Chinese travellers, which imply that the purpose of the relics’ being accessible is that they formed the centrepiece of a public ritual. Yet, the ‘ritual architecture’, to coin Lars Fogelin’s term, of the A1 *gaha*-stupa and the G5 Bodhisatva-*gaha* present an entirely opposite state of affairs: they are private and enclosed. This would suggest that ritual activities surrounding this type of stupa would be ‘individualistic’ and ‘solitary’, such as with circumambulation,² or were limited to small, perhaps more personal groups. This architectural plan is in accord with Butkara I where various reliquaries were found in such smaller structures around the central stupa.³

Although we have established architecturally to what structures the terms *gaha*-stupa and Bodhisatva-*gaha* refer, there is some debate regarding their precise meaning. Early, and indeed more recent, scholarship that has dealt with matter proposed that *gaha* is equivalent to Skt. *gr̥ha* (‘chapel’), producing a Skt. *gr̥hastūpa* (‘chapel-stupa’) and Skt *bodhisatvagr̥ha* (‘bodhisatva-chapel’).⁴ Textually, this understanding

¹ Marshall, *Structural Remains*, 326–28.

² Lars Fogelin, ‘Ritual and Representation in Early Buddhist Ritual Architecture’, *Asian Perspectives* 42, no. 2 (2003): 129–54.

³ For an architectural plan of Butkara I, with structures marked according to their containing reliquaries and or relics, see Faccenna and Gullini, *Reports on the Campaigns 1956–1958 in Swat (Pakistan). Reports and Memoirs*.

⁴ See Basham, ‘Concept of the Bodhisattva’, 29; Konow, *Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions: With the Exception of Those of Aśoka*, 77; Marshall, ‘The Date of Kaniṣka’; Salomon, *Indian Epigraphy: A Guide to the Study of Inscriptions in Sanskrit, Prakrit and the Other Indo-Aryan Languages*, 269; Ruegg, ‘The Kalawān Copper Plate Inscription: Early Evidence for Mahāyāna Type Thinking?’, 3.

would correspond to an exact cognate found in the P. and BHS. *gaha*; for instance, a passage of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* also deals with different types of places of worship (*caitya*) states:

In the case that a bodhisattva worships a stupa, a *gaha*, a *kūṭa*, an old *caitya* or a new *caitya* when directed toward the Tathāgata, this is called *caitya*-worship.¹

The term *gaha* in this passage is rather elusive. In the text's commentary, the *Bodhisattvabhūmividyākhyā* (T. *Byang chub sems dpa'i sa'i rnam par bshad pa*), the term is translated as *gtsang khang phyur bu* (lit. 'the pile which is a pure abode') and is explained as 'a square structure that contains images'. To that extent, it is contrasted with a *kūṭa* (T. *gtsang khang*), which houses both images and relics.² This understanding of *gaha* does not lend itself to the present context, insofar as no images (only reliefs) were found within the structures of our present five examples that have provenance.

Additionally, there is no instance of *gaha* in the sense of *gr̥ha* recorded in the corpus of Gāndhārī literature and the compounded term

¹ *tatra yad bodhisattvas tathāgatam uddisya stūpaṃ vā gahaṃ vā kūṭaṃ vā purāna-caityaṃ vā abhinava-caityaṃ vā pūjayati. iyam asyocyate caitya-pūjā.* Bbh 231.

² Artemus Engle, trans., *The Bodhisatta Path to Unsurpassed Enlightenment. A Complete Translation of the Bodhisattvabhūmi. Ārya Asaṅga.* (Boulder: Snow Lion, 2016), 388fn981. Hirakawa also draws our attention to similar vocabulary within the Chinese translations of the *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya* and *Sarvāstivādivinaya*, wherein a type of architecture called *takan* 塔龕 or *kanta* 龕塔 ('stupa with niches') occurs, T 1425. 498a18; T 1435. 415c5. He writes: 'According to the vinaya, a shrine 塔龕 was made on the four sides, garbha, of the stūpa, and also an image 龕像 was carved. This means that shrine was made in the garbha of the stūpa and an image of the Buddha placed within.'" Hirakawa, *A History of Indian Buddhism*, 205.

as *graha-* in used more commonly in this purport.¹ Scholars have also proposed a distinct cognate in the Skt. *garbha* ‘womb’, ‘inner chamber’.² In observing the phenomenon of ‘simplified consonant groups’ between Indic and Khotanese terminologies, H. W. Bailey argued that the Khotanese term *gava*, previously understood as ‘hut’, should be related to the MI. *gabbha* or OI. *garbha* in the sense of a ‘cell’ or ‘chamber’.³ Building on these observations, Harry Falk proposed a similar geminate simplification process, arguing that ‘the sound change from *bha* to *ha* could be explained as *garbha* > *gabbha* > *gābha* > *gāha*, written in Kharoṣṭhī as *gaha*’.⁴ A similar formation occurs in the Sinhalese *dāgaba*, a modern rendering of the P. *dhātugabbha*, found in the *Mahāvamsa*, which designates the ‘relic-chamber’ or ‘interior’ of the stupa.⁵ However, a linguistic difficulty still remains in so far as the

¹ Skt. *gr̥hastha*: G. *grahatha*, CKI 12, 13, *ghahatha*, Dhpk^K 32a. *gehatha*, CKI 26. Skt. *gr̥hapati*: G. *grahavati*, CKI 172. *Grahavadi*, Av^{L3} Ar2, Av^{L5} r74. *gamhavati*, CKI 249.

² See H. W. Bailey, ‘Gāndhārī’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 11 (46 1943): 779; Baums, ‘Catalog’, 229fn65; Harry Falk, ‘Five New Kharoṣṭhī Donative Records from Gandhāra’, *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* 9 (2003): 78.

³ Bailey examples the usage of P. *gabbha* and *gābha* in a Brāhmī inscription. Bailey, ‘Gāndhārī’, 779. See also, Mv 27. 15.

⁴ Falk, ‘Five New Kharoṣṭhī Donative Records from Gandhāra’, 78.

⁵ Geiger notes: ‘A *dāgaba* [in modern day Sri Lanka] consists essentially of three elements. The dome, usually hemispherical, and ordinarily raised on a cylindrical base forms the principal part. In the upper part of this is the relic chamber. The second part is a square block of brickwork...and finally, the conical spire (*chatta* = parasol) that crowns the whole.’ Geiger, *The Mahāvamsa or The Great Chronicle of Ceylon*, 218fn1. Many studies on stupa symbolism have pointed out that the stupa itself, and in particular the container at the top of a stupa’s domes (*harmikā*), where the relics are often placed, is referred to as the *dhātugabbha* (in Sri Lanka) in the sense of a ‘container of the world’ and the ‘cosmic egg’. Such cosmic symbolism, as is often argued, can be found in similar expressions within the Vedic corpora, e.g., *hiranyagarbha* (‘golden womb’). See Kottkamp, *Der Stupa als Repräsentation des*

process *gaha* < *gabbha* < *garbha* presents a loss, not only of the aspirated *bha*, but also of the post-vocalic *-r*. Such a phenomenon (to my knowledge) is unattested elsewhere in Gāndhārī and therefore the option of a BHS. *gaha* seems more likely. But there is one remaining linguistic argument to be found in the single instance of Bodhisattva-*gavhra* quote above. This term can only be explained as witnessing a change from *bh* > *vh*, which are two closely connected sounds and present nothing unusual, as well as the alveolar tap *-r* undergoing metathesis, a common occurrence in Gāndhārī, meaning that in this single instance the term must be cognate with *garbha*.

Further to these linguistic uncertainties are also questions of intention. Noting these ‘strange’ terms, Falk proposes that a ‘*garbha-stūpa* differs from other *stūpas* by the nature of its deposit’ and that a *bodhisatvagarbha* as a ‘stupa with the ashes is regarded as a place of origin for the Bodhisattva.’¹ These simple statements tell us very little about what was truly intended and further Falk’s latter assessment regarding the relation between the stupa and the Bodhisattva is entirely unjustified and his reasoning left unexplained without reference to an evidential basis. There are comparisons to be found in the textual sources for such terminology. Stefan Baums, for example, has suggested it be related to an expression found on several occasions in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra*:

Any son or daughter of a good family, in order to worship
the Tathāgata, the Noble One, the Perfectly Awakened One
who has completely extinguished, should make a *koṭi* of

buddhistischen Heilsweges, 67; Adrian Snodgrass, *The Symbolism of the Stupa* (SEAP Publications, 1985), 192–200.

¹ Falk, ‘Five New Kharoṣṭhī Donative Records from Gandhāra’, 78.

stupas formed from the seven precious substances that are wombs for the relics of the Tathāgata.¹

On this basis, Baums argues that the seven precious substances (*saptaratna*), mentioned in this passage, correspond to the smaller objects discovered along with the physical remains at archaeological digs.² This observation appears largely empty however: the *saptaratnamaya* here refers to the stupa itself and not the objects donated along with its establishment. Yet another comparable description arises in the *Aśokāvadāna*:

‘Ānanda, do you see this boy who threw dust into the bowl of the Tathāgata?’ ‘Yes sir.’ ‘Ānanda, by means of this good-root, this boy shall become a king named Aśoka in Pāṭaliputra a hundred years after the Tathāgata has completely extinguished. He will be a wheel-turning ruler with the four treasures, a possessor of Dharma and a King of Dharma. He shall make my corporeal relics (*śarīra*) and physical elements (*dhātu*) widespread and shall have eighty-four thousand Dharmarājikās established. He will undertake this for the welfare of many peoples.’

After I have set like the sun he shall be the only king,
Aśoka, the widely famed one,

He shall adorn Jambudvīpa with wombs of my physical
elements (*dhātugarbha*),³

And have them worshipped by mortals and immortals alike.

¹ *yaḥ kaścit kulaputro vā kuladuhitā vā tathāgatasyārhatāḥ samyaksaṃbuddhasya parinirvṛtasya pūjāyai koṭīśaḥ saptaratnamayāms tathāgata-dhātugarbhān stūpān kārayet. ASP 3. 31–36*

² Baums, ‘Catalog’, 229fn66.

³ Strong translates *dhātugarbha* as ‘reliquary’, Strong, *The Legend of King Aśoka. A Study and Translation of the Aśokāvadāna*, 204.

His gift-worthy object was that he threw dust into the bowl of the Tathāgata.¹

Although none of these textual passages fully elucidate the terms *gahastupa* and *Bodhisatva-gaha*—there are arguments in favour of taking *gaha* in the sense of ‘house’ or ‘womb’—the association between relics and womb terminologies was perhaps the more prevalent of the two and likely represents the most viable solution. Particularly in light of the occurrence of the term *dhātugarbha* in the Aśokāvadāna, this conclusion seems the more probable: this text (or a form of this text) was current in the Northwest at this time. Furthermore, we cannot ignore that Butkara I was regarded a Dharmarājikā in the early Common Era and it is not inconceivable that those who constructed these monuments were emulating the terminology and practice advocated in narrative cycles of the idealised ruler Aśoka. Indeed, in relation to the matter of relic theft, we shall see below this was almost certainly the case.

In addition to stupas, three Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions relate that a relic was dedicated within, or perhaps under, a pillar (*śilāstambha*). The Silver Scroll of Utara (No. 15) states the donor Utara and here husband Prince Indravarma I establish relics and erected a pillar: [1.]...*Utara (*kuma)[2.][ra]bhaya sadha Iṃdravarmeṇa kumarena bhagavato dhatue*

¹ *paśyasi tvam ānanda dāraṇaṃ yena tathāgatasya pātre pāṃśvañjaliḥ prakṣiptaḥ. evaṃ bhadanta. ayam ānanda dāraṇaṃ anena kuśalamūlena varṣaśataparinirvṛtasya tathāgatasya pāṭaliputre nagare ‘śoko nāmnā rājā bhaviṣyat. caturbhāgacakravartī dhārmiko dharmarājā. yo me śārādhātūn vaistārikān kariṣyati. caturaśītīdharmarājikāsahasraṃ pratiṣṭhāpayiṣyati. bahujanahitāya pratipatsyate. iti. āha ca*

astamgate mayi bhaviṣyati saikarājā yo ‘sau hyaśoka iti nāma viśālakīrtiḥ,

maddhātugarbhaparimaṇḍitajambuṣaṇḍam etat kariṣyati narāmara-pūjitaṃ nu.

ayam asya deyadharmo yat tathāgatasya pāṃśvañjaliḥ pātre prakṣiptaḥ. Aś-av 34, Divy 26. 368–369.

pratistaveti śīlastambho [hi]te. And the Silver and Gold Scrolls of Mahazada et al (No. 16) state more specifically that the donor establishes a relic within a stone pillar in the region of the Apracarāja capital, Tramaṇa: [2.] *śari[ra] praethavedi [Tra]manosami śīla[3.]stabhami*. This specific practice, therefore, was limited epigraphically to the Northwest, and more specifically to the domain of the Apracarājas, in the valleys to the north of Peshawar. Notably, it finds archaeological correspondence in square relic chambers that were found below column pedestals at Butkara I, dated 1st–3rd century CE,¹ and thus partially during the reign of the Oḍirājas.

TYPES OF RELICS

There are three forms of relics known to the North and Northwest: [1] corporeal relics (*śarīraka*), interred in stupas, [2] relics of items the Buddha used (*paribhojika*), and [3] relics commemorating his actions (*uddeśika*).²

¹ Domenico Faccenna, *Butkara I (Swāt, Pakistan), 1956-1962. 5 Vols* (IsMEO, 1980), 643.

² Following paradigms used in the study of Christian ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ relics in Mediaeval Europe, scholarship has tended to forcefully conflate all objects associated with the Buddha as functional equivalents in awarding a locale with the Buddha’s ‘presence’. The Theravāda tradition conceives of three kinds of relics (*-dhātu*): corporeal (*śarīraka-*), items of usage (*pāribhogika-*), such as the Buddha’s alms-bowl, and locations (*uddesika-*), such as the Buddha’s birth-place which are marked by the symbols or representations which grant that affiliation (e.g., a footprint, statue, etc.). The presence of these objects is portrayed as effecting equivalent spiritual benefits for one who comes into contact with them. See Willis, ‘Relics and Reliquaries’, 13–16. Despite a functional identity, however, corporeal relics should be understood as a different epistemological order to the other two. Cf. Jacob N Kinnard, ‘The Field of the Buddha’s Presence’, ed. David Germano and Kevin Trainor (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 117–44; Robert H. Sharf, ‘On the Allure of Buddhist Relics’, *Representations* 66 (1999): 75–99.

Of the 60 inscriptions to record corporeal relic dedications, a majority of 48 refer to *śarīra* or *dhātu*. However, not all specify these are the Buddha's and could hence be the remains of other figures considered worthy of a stupa (e.g., a monastic figure).¹ In addition to the relics recorded in inscriptions, there are many more donations of un-inscribed reliquaries that often contain bones or ash, along with other smaller objects,² and even more records of the Buddha's corporeal relics—e.g., bones (*asthi*)³ and finger-nails⁴—recorded in the textual tradition and in the records of Chinese travellers.

Several of these accounts similarly record an array of *paribhojika* and *uddeśika* relics in the region. Examples belonging to the former category are alms-bowls of the Buddha, represented severally as an object of veneration in reliefs on image-pedestals, stupas or archway decorations,⁵ as well in the form of oversized stone bowls which are found at Charsadda (Puṣkalāvātī), a site of the Kāśyapīyas,⁶ in Kandahar, and twice at Mathura, where one was in the possession of the Mahāsāṃghikas.⁷ An example of the latter category is the aforementioned Buddha's footprint found at Tirat in Swat where, on a

¹ On this issue, see Salomon, 'Gandharan Reliquary Inscriptions', 170; Schopen, *Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monks*, 165ff.

² Wannaporn Rienjang, 'Bodily Relics in Gandharan Stupas', *Gandhāran Studies* 7 (2013): 7ff.

³ For example, the Mathura Elephant Inscription is a small stone that records the donation of the teacher's collar-bone relic (G. *śastakadhātu* = Skt. *śāstryakṣadhātu*). CKI 49.

⁴ The *Divyāvadāna* records that a hair-and-nail (*keśanakha*) stupa was established in Gandhara by two merchants during the Buddha's lifetime, Divy 196. Xuanzang records that the nail-parings of the Buddha resided in a stupa near the monastic complex constructed by Sarvāstivādin patriarch Upagupta. Beal, *Buddhist Records. Vol. II*, 182.

⁵ Kuwayama, 'The Buddha's Bowl in Gandhāra', 956–58.

⁶ See Chapter Nine: Kāśyapīyas.

⁷ See Chapter Nine: Mahāsāṃghikas.

rock, the Buddhas feet were chiselled and inscribed underneath with a legend that reads ‘the feet of the Buddha Śākyamuni: *bodhasa śakamuṇisa pādaṇi*.¹ Both Songyun 宋雲 and Xuanzang 玄奘 record seeing this footprint and relate that the Buddha left the impression after he had converted Apalāla with the help of Vajrapāṇi. The latter describes Apalāla’s abode as being marked by a spring to the northeast of Mingora at the source of the Swat River, which is likely not too far-flung from the actual find-spot.² This account corresponds to the narrative concerning the Buddha’s journey along the Northern Route with Vajrapāṇi found in the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* and *Divyāvadāna*,³ as well as in several Gandharan reliefs from the c. 2nd century CE.⁴

In this context, relics served two primary functions: legitimation and politicisation. They acted as a means for Buddhist and political institutions alike to expand their institutional presence and to legitimise, politicise, and ritualise the very landscape of the Northwest. Supporting artistic and textual traditions arose in the region, making the claim that Śākyamuni, both in his previous lives as a Bodhisatva and in his historical life as a Buddha, had visited specific locations in the region. It was by virtue of this association that a ritual landscape was subsequently installed and many specific locations came to be marked and memorialised by relics. As Kuwayama Shoshin writes: ‘Gandhāra

¹ CKI 36. The inscription is written in a Kharoṣṭhī of the Indo-Scythian Period, see Konow, *Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions: With the Exception of Those of Aśoka*, 8–9.

² T 2087. 882b28–29. For a translation see Beal, Samuel, pp. 121–23. See also Deane, H. A., p. 156.

³ MSV 1. 2; Aś-av 2; Divy 27. 385.

⁴ See Filigenzi, ‘Sūrya, the Solar Kingship and the Turki Śāhis: New Acquisitions on the Cultural History of Swāt’, 173; Harald Ingholt, *Gandharan Art in Pakistan* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1957), 100; Ihsan Ali and Muhammed Naeem Qazi, *Gandharan Sculptures in the Peshawar Museum (Life Story of the Buddha)* (Mansehra: Hazara University, 2008), 235–38; Zin, ‘Vajrapāṇi in the Narrative Reliefs’, 76.

needed something around which Buddhists could gather and upon which Buddhism could find firm roots and ties with Mid-India'.¹

THE SOMATIC NATURE OF RELICS

Gregory Schopen proposed the now influential notion that the Buddha's relics were regarded as 'living entities'.² By this, he means two things: that relics were deemed as ontologically living, that their 'presence' is equal more than functionally to that of the living Buddha, and concomitantly that relics were regarded as a 'legal person'.

The former idea is premised on the earliest inscribed record of a relic dedication in the Northwest, the Reliquary Inscription from Menander's Reign (No. 1). Schopen adopts the widely accepted reading, which states, 'the relic of the Blessed One Śākyamuni which is endowed with life was established' (Skt. *prāṇasameṭaṃ [śarīraṃ bhagavataḥ śākyamuneḥ] pratiṣṭhāpitaṃ*); yet an inspection of the object itself reveals the reconstruction to be untenable. Below is an admittedly conservative but deliberately faithful edition of the inscription.

Reliquary Inscription from Menander's Reign (No. 1)

[Upside of lid, rim] [A]...*minedrasa maharajasa kaṭiāsa
divasa 4 4 4 1 1 pra[ṇasa]me[na]...*

[Upside of lid, centre] [A¹] [*śa*]...(prati)[*thavi*]ta.

[Underside of lid] [A²] [*p*]raṇasame[na]...śakamunisa

[A] [...] of Menander, the Great King, day 14 of Kārttika.

Equal to life [...]

[A¹] [...] were established.

[A²] Equal to life [...] of the Fortunate One Śākyamuni.

¹ Kuwayama, 'The Buddha's Bowl in Gandhāra', 962.

² Schopen, 'Burial "Ad Sanctos"', 203ff.

Notable is the absence of any term for ‘relic’. Whilst it is quite certain it once occurred, the reading ‘endowed with life’ (Skt. *prāṇasameta*) is not assured, nor that it should be construed therewith. This is due to reasons of both space and content. In A and A¹, it can be estimated that no less than 20 *akṣaras* separate what others have read as pra[ṇasa]meda from [śa>(*kamunisa), and a similar number conceivably fall between praṇasame[da] and śakamunisa in A²; all reconstructions fall short of this number and fail to consider other potential lacunae, such as a donor’s name. Harry Falk (who regards the inscription to be a forgery) quite rightly points out that as a description of relics the expression *praṇasamedā* is highly untoward and is simply unattested elsewhere.¹ However, due to the way in which the lid has been shorn, the final character could equally be read as –na, thus producing the instrumental form Skt. *prāṇasamena* (‘by one equal to life’), a highly common personal adjective in literature for a family member, friend etc., and in this case perhaps the missing donor and agent of the verb (prati)[thavita]—the ‘ground’, in this case it seems, is rather shaky.

Ultimately led by this passage, Schopen goes on to argue that further epigraphs and texts to describe relics as being ‘suffused’ (*paribhāvita*)—or, tellingly, ‘enlivened’, as he opts to translate—with ‘moral conduct (*śīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), understanding (*prajñā*), liberation (*vimukta*), and knowledge and seeing (*jñānadarśana*)’, should be regarded as conceptual extensions of the ‘living entities’ notion.

Gold Scroll of Seṇavarma (No. 36)

[7.] *ima dhadu śilaparibhāvita samasiprañavimuti-
ñānadraśa(*ṇa)paribhāvita²*

¹ Falk, ‘The Introduction of Stūpa-Worship in Bajaur’, 349–53.

² This specific phrasing is only found in inscriptions associated with individuals in the domains of the Apracarājas and Oḍirājas. The Reliquary

I establish this relic, which is pervaded by conduct, concentration, understanding, liberation, and knowledge and seeing

An almost direct parallel is found in the *Milindapañha*, as already noted by Fussmann:¹

Certainly, Great King the Fortunate One himself completely ceased in the sphere of *nirvāṇa* that has no remainder having established the physical element jewel which is pervaded by conduct, concentration, understanding, liberation and knowledge and seeing through liberation, as well as the Dharma, *Vinaya*, the rules, and the teaching'.²

The notion that relics are pervaded by conduct, concentration, understanding, liberation, and knowledge and seeing, denotes the doctrinal principle of the five pure aggregates (*anāsraṅgā*): the 'epitome of the ideal state of a liberated or realised being in all his dimensions'.³ Michael Radich argued against Schopen's notion of living relics and argued instead that these five attributes, being qualities associated with the Buddha, indicate that relics were regarded as

Inscription of Ariasrava (No. 31): [1.] *śilaparibhavi*<*to> *samasiparibhavito vimutiparibhavito vimutiparibhavit[o] tasa bhagavato dhadu*. And the Reliquary Inscription of Kopsakasa (No. 29): [1.] *bhagavato Śakamuṅ[i]sa* [2.] *[boṣi]veṃto te dhaduve śilapari*[3.]*bhavida sama[s]iparibha*[vi]da *praṇa*[4.]*paribhavida to dhaduve*.

¹ Fussman, 'Documents épigraphiques kouchans III: l'inscription de Senavarma, roi d'Oḍi, une nouvelle lecture', 25.

² *evam eva kho mahārāja bhagavā sīlasamādhipaññāvimuttivimuttiñāṇa-dassanaparibhāvitaṃ dhāturatanañca dhammañca vinayañ ca anusatthiñ ca satthāraṃ ṭhapayitvā sayam anupādisesāya nibbāṇadhātuyā parinibbuto*. *Mil* 1. 98, 110.

³ Radich, 'Somatics of Liberation', 465; 528ff.

‘embodiments’ and ‘veritable bodies’ of the Buddha.¹ When considered from a functional perspective one also arrives at a different conclusion, for in Pali sources the five pure aggregates denote the five attributes (*pañcadhamma*) required for a monk to be worthy of gifts (*āhuneyya*) and an unsurpassed field of merit (*anuttara puññakkhetta*).² In this sense, the relics functionally serve as a field of merit for others’ merit cultivation. It is to this extent also that the relics served as marking the presence of the Buddha.³

The value of the relics as field of merits is also embedded within the soteriological practice. In the three inscriptions above, this somatic soteriology of relics, in particular, is juxtaposed with the donors’ own soteriological aspirations⁴, a matter made quite explicit in the Gold Scroll of Seṇavarma (No. 36) by means of clever word play centred upon the respective notions of the relics and awakening. This inscription describes the physical element (*dhātu*) as constituting the very body (*śarīra*) by means of which both the Tathāgata went to the sphere (*dhātu*) of *nirvāṇa* and the beneficiaries of the aspiration to awakening may disappear in the immortal (*amṛta*) sphere (*dhātu*). This somatic association is also made clear in the Reliquary Inscription of Saṃgharakṣita (No. 13), in which the donor aspires to attain the qualities (*dharma*) of the relics and wishes that they may serve to prepare all beings for *nirvāṇa*: *eteṣa dharmana labhi bhavima y(*e)ṣa dharmaṇaṃ eta vo syet(*i) śarira sarvasatvana nirvanasaṃbharae bhavatu*. Since soteriological aspirations in inscriptions are only found in relation to relic or Bodhisattva and Buddha establishments, it appears that it was

¹ Radich, ‘Somatics of Liberation’, 466. For a further summary of his views and relevant textual quotations, see Radich, ‘Somatics of Liberation’, 566ff.

² The ideal monk is said to be endowed with *sīla*, *samādhi*, *pañña*, *vimutti* and *vimuttiñāṇadassana*, AN 3. 134–135.

³ Radich, ‘Somatics of Liberation’, 474ff.

⁴ See Chapter Fourteen: Soteriology.

for the reason of the distinct somatic characteristics of these objects that such a goal was enabled.

INSCRIBED RELIC DEDICATIONS

The 70 inscribed relic dedications afford insight into the historical development and sociological and political nature of the practice in the Indic Northwest (Fig. 15.1). Only two inscriptions can be placed in the reign of the Indo-Greeks (c. 180–75 BCE), after which time the practice increases during the Indo-Scythian (c. 75 BCE–30 CE) and Indo-Parthian (c. 30–55 CE) periods, and even moreso during the reigns of the early and middle Kuṣāṇas (c. 55–187 CE). Approximately half of all relic dedications were made in this latter period.

In the earlier periods, more than half the relic dedications were enacted by or in conjunction with rulers. The practice was thus predominantly a political activity and was used to affirm their sovereignty in individual locales. None of the Indo-Greek, Indo-Scythian, or Indo-Parthian¹ suzerains engaged directly in the practice. Rather we find regional governors (G. *meridarkha*; Gk. *μεριδάρχης*) and (great)-satraps (Skt. (*mahā*)-*kṣatrapa*), presumably governing locally as the representative of an imperial administration. The majority of dedications, however, were made by the rulers (*rāja*), princes (*kumāra*), generals (*stratega*; Gk. *στρατηγός*), wives (*bhāryā*), women of the inner court (*antahpurikā*), and other figures related to two local dynasties, the Apracarājas and Oḍirājas. Both groups appear in Buddhist narrative literature and their inscriptions imply that they were inspired

¹ See, however, the Reliquary Inscription of Ariaśrava (No. 31). Some regard this section of the inscription on the inside of the bowl to be a fake. Akira Sadakata, 'Inscriptions kharoṣṭhī provenant du marché aux antiquités de Peshawar', *Journal asiatique* 284 (1996): 308ff.

by such instances of Buddhist propaganda as the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* and *Aśokāvadāna*, imparting issues of stupa destruction and relic acquisition and rededication.

During the Kuṣāṇa Period, this demographic changes. Certain Kuṣāṇa suzerains, including Kujula Kadphises, Kaniṣka I, and Huviṣka, are found participating in relic dedications as beneficiaries. Establishing relics had thus transformed into an instrument of imperialism. At this time, the practice also becomes more widespread within society; the vast majority of donors do not bear a title and this indefinable, by definition inclusive, social group—encompassing individuals with the economic means to fund a dedication—constitutes approximately 40% of all dedications. That the practice had become accessible to a wider populace is reflected also in the material quality of dedications in the Kuṣāṇa period, which lacked corporeal relics and had degraded in their material value.¹ This means that less capital was required to engage in this practice.

¹ Rienjang, 'Honouring the Body', 307ff.

Fig. 15.1 Inscribed Relic Dedications

No	Title	Provenance	Date	Donation	Ruling Group	Monastic Institution	Individuals		Ref.
							Name	Title	
1	Reliquary Inscription from Menander's Reign	Shinkot, Bajaur Pakistan	Unknown year of Menander	<i>śarīra</i>	Indo-Greek	—	—	—	CKI 176
2	Reliquary Inscription of Theodotus	Swat, Pakistan	—	<i>śarīra</i>	—	—	Theodotus	<i>meridarkh</i>	CKI 32
3	Reliquary Inscription of Unknown Meridarkh	Taxila, Pakistan	—	stupa	—	—	—	<i>meridarkh</i>	CKI 33
4	Reliquary Inscription of Namipala	Buner, Pakistan	11 [Azes] (37/36 BCE)	<i>śarīra</i>	Indo-Scythian	—	Namipala	<i>mahākṣatrapa</i>	CKI 827
5	Relic-Chamber Slab Inscription of Gomitra	—	12 [Azes] (36/35 BCE)	<i>śarīra</i>	—	—	Gomitra	<i>mahaṛṣi, dharmakathika</i>	CKI 464
6	Gold Scroll of Tora et al	Haḍḍa, Afghanistan	39 Azes (9/8 BCE)	stupa	—	—	Tora et al	<i>sahāya</i>	CKI 455
7	Reliquary Inscription of Loṇa	Charsadda, Pakistan	—	<i>śarīra</i>	Apracarāja	—	Loṇa Viṣuvarma	<i>antaḥpurikā kumāra</i>	CKI 247
8	Reliquary Inscription of Naganamḍa	Samarbagh, Pakistan	50 [Azes] (2/3 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	Apracarāja	Dharmaguptaka	Naganamḍa Taravia	<i>bhārya meridarkh</i>	CKI 454

9	Reliquary Inscription of Vijayamitra	Shinkot, Bajaur Pakistan	5 Vijayamitra (3/4 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	Apracarāja	—	Vijayamitra	<i>apracarāja</i>	CKI 176
10	Copper Plate of Patika	Taxila, Pakistan	78 Maues (3/4 CE(?))	—	Indo- Scythian	—	Patika Liako Kusuluko Rohiṇimitra	<i>putra</i> <i>kṣatrapa</i> <i>upadhyāya</i> , <i>navakarmika</i>	CKI 46
11	Reliquary Inscription of Sihila et al	Shahpur, Taxila, Pakistan	—	stupa	—	—	Sihila et al	—	CKI 65
12	Reliquary Inscription of Saṃgharakṣita	—	60 [Azes] (12/13 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	—	—	Saṃgharakṣita	—	CKI 403
13	Reliquary Inscription of Indravarma I	—	64 Azes (15/16 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	Apracarāja	—	Indravarma I Utara Rukhuṇaka Viṣuvarma Vaga Vijayamitra Ramaka Daṣaka et al	<i>kumāra</i> <i>rājaputra</i> <i>gṛhinī</i> <i>mātr</i> <i>jīvaputra</i> <i>apracarāja-</i> <i>bhārya</i> <i>apracarāja</i> <i>stratega</i> <i>apracarāja</i> <i>mātula</i> <i>mātulāni</i>	CKI 242
14	Silver Scroll of Utara	Bajaur, Pakistan	—	<i>dhātu</i> , <i>śilā-</i> <i>stambha</i>	Apracarāja	—	Utara Indravarma Dhramasena	<i>bhāryā</i> <i>kumara</i> <i>navakarmika</i>	CKI 265

15	Mathura Lion Capital	Mathura, India	—	<i>śarīra</i>	Indo-Scythian	Sarvāstivāda	Yasi Kamui Rajula et al	<i>agramahiṣī mahākṣatrapa</i>	CKI 48
16	Elephant Capital	Mathura, India	—	<i>śastaka-dhātu</i>	—	—	—	—	CKI 49
17	Reliquary Inscription of Rukhuṇa	Bajaur, Pakistan	27 Vijayamitra 73 Azes 201 Yoṇa (25/26 CE)	stupa	Apracarāja	—	Rukhuṇa Viṣuvarma Vijayamitra Indravarma	<i>bhāryā apracarāja apracarāja stratega</i>	CKI 405
18	Reliquary Inscription of Utara	—	—	stupa	Apracarāja	—	Utara Indravarma	<i>bhāryā stratega</i>	CKI 255
19	Silver Scroll of Mahazada et al	—	—	<i>śarīra, śilā-stambha</i>	—	—	Mahazada et al	—	CKI 327
20	Gold Scroll of Mahazada et al	—	—	<i>śarīra, śilā-stambha</i>	—	—	Same as above	—	CKI 332
21	Relic-Chamber Slab Inscription of Ramaka	Bajaur, Pakistan	74 Azes (26/27 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	Apracarāja	—	Ramaka Yola...	— <i>kṣatrapa</i>	CKI 251
22	Reliquary Inscription of Ramaka and Uḍita	Bajaur, Pakistan	—	<i>śarīra</i>	Apracarāja	—	Ramaka Uḍita	— —	CKI 243
23	Gunyar Relic Chamber Slab	Malakand, Pakistan	76 Azes (28/29 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	—	—	—	—	CKI 544
24	Reliquary Inscription of Śatruleka	Bajaur, Pakistan	77 Azes (29/30 CE)	<i>dhātu</i>	Apracarāja	Kāsyapīya	Śatruleka Vijayamitra Indravarma et al	<i>kṣatrapa apracarāja stratega, gandhāra-</i>	CKI 257

									<i>svāmin</i>
25	Reliquary Inscription of Prahodi	Bajaur, Pakistan	32 Vijayamitra (30/31 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	Apracarāja	—	Prahodi Vijayamitra Śirila Aśorakṣida	<i>antaḥpurikā</i> <i>apracarāja</i> <i>stupa-</i> <i>navakarmika</i> <i>navakarmika</i>	CKI 359
26	Anonymous Inscription Reliquary	Swat, Pakistan	80 Azes(?) (32/33 CE)	—	—	—	—	—	CKI 828
27	Reliquary Inscription of Dhramila's son et al	Aṭhayi —	83 Azes (35/36 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	—	—	Dhramila et al	—	CKI 266
28	Reliquary Inscription of Indragivarma	—	—	—	Apracarāja	—	Indragivarma Vijayamitra	<i>kumara</i> <i>apracarāja</i>	CKI 402
29	Reliquary Inscription of Indravarma II	—	—	<i>śarīra</i>	Apracarāja	—	Indravarma II Aśpavarma Indravarma I Utara Vijayamitra Indrivasu	<i>kumāra</i> <i>stratega</i> <i>stratega</i> <i>bhāryā</i> <i>apracarāja</i> <i>apracarāja</i>	CKI 241
30	Reliquary Inscription of Ariaśrava et al	Dir, Pakistan	98 Azes (50/51 CE)	<i>dhātu</i>	Apracarāja Indo- Parthian	Dharmaguptaka	Ariaśrava Avakaśa Aśpavarma	— <i>gupara</i> <i>bhrataputra</i> <i>stratega</i>	CKI 358
31	Reliquary Inscription of Śatra	—	—	<i>dhātu</i>	—	—	Śatra	—	CKI 326

32	Copper Plate Inscription of Helaüta	—	121 [Azes] (73/74 CE)	<i>dhātu</i>	—	Dharmaguptaka	Helaüta Tira et al	<i>kṣatrapa</i>	CKI 564
33	Reliquary Inscription of Kopśakasa(?)	Tramaṇa, —	—	<i>dhātu</i>	—	—	Kopśakasa(?)	<i>mahārāja(?)</i>	CKI 266
34	Quoted Inscription of Vasuseṇa	—	—	<i>śarīra</i>	Oḍirāja	—	Vasuseṇa Utaraseṇa	<i>oḍirāja</i> <i>oḍirāja</i>	CKI 249
35	Gold Scroll Inscription of Ajidasena	Mata, Swat, Pakistan	4 Oḍi	<i>dhātu,</i> <i>mahā-</i> <i>stūpa</i>	Oḍirāja	—	Ajidasena	<i>oḍirāja</i>	CKI 334
36	Silver Scroll Inscription of Ayadata	Swat, Pakistan	5 Oḍi	<i>dhātu,</i> <i>dhātu-</i> <i>stūpa</i>	Oḍirāja	—	Ayadata; Varmaseṇa	<i>kumāra</i> <i>oḍirāja</i>	CKI 401
37	Gold Scroll Inscription of Seṇavarma	—	14 Oḍi	<i>dhātu</i>	Oḍirāja Kuṣāṇa	—	Seṇavarma Kujula Kadphises Priamitra et al	<i>oḍirāja</i> <i>mahārāja,</i> <i>rājātirāja</i> <i>stūpapāla</i>	CKI 249 (No. 34)
38	Reliquary Inscription of Śivarakṣidaka	Panr, Swat, Pakistan	—	<i>stupa</i>	—	—	Śivarakṣidaka	—	CKI 267
39	Reliquary Inscription of Teyamitra	Swat, Pakistan	—	<i>śarīra,</i> <i>bodhisatv</i> <i>agaha</i>	—	—	Teyamitra	—	CKI 457

40	Reliquary Inscription of Priavaśa	—	127 Azes (78/79 CE)	—	Kuṣāṇa	Mahīśāsaka	Priavaśa; [Kujula Kadphises]	<i>śramaṇa</i> <i>yabgu</i> , <i>mahārāja</i>	CKI 331
41	Reliquary Inscription of Priavaśa's Wife	—	—	—	—	—	—	<i>Priavaśabhār</i> <i>ya</i>	CKI 240
42	Copper Plate Inscription of Caṃdrabhi et al	Kalawan, Taxila, Pakistan	134 Azes (86/87 CE)	<i>śarīra</i> , <i>gaha-</i> <i>stūpa</i>	—	Sarvāstivāda	Caṃdrabhi et al	<i>upāsikā</i>	CKI 172
43	Silver Scroll Inscription of Urasaka	Dharmarājikā, Taxila, Pakistan	136 Azes (88/89 CE)	<i>dhātu</i> , <i>bodhisatv</i> <i>agaha</i>	Kuṣāṇa	—	Urasaka [Kujula Kadphises]	— <i>mahārāja</i> , <i>rājātirāja</i> , <i>devaputra</i>	CKI 60
44	Reliquary Inscription of Śivarakṣida	Bimaran, Nangarhar, Afghanistan	—	<i>śarīra</i>	—	—	Śivarakṣida	—	CKI 50
45	Anonymous Reliquary Inscription	—	139 Azes (91/92)	<i>dhātu</i>	—	—	—	—	CKI 563
46	Reliquary Inscription of Sazaṃduṣa et al	—	144(?) [Azes] (96/97 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	—	—	Sazaṃduṣa Sroṣena	— —	CKI 466
47	Reliquary Inscription of Dhamavadaaṭa	—	147 [Azes] (99/100 CE)	—	—	—	Dhama- vadaaṭa?	<i>bhaṭṭara</i>	CKI 536
48	Reliquary Inscription of Sadaśaka et al	—	156 [Azes] (108/109 CE)	stupa	—	—	Sadaśaka Muṃji	— —	CKI 328 (No. 51)

49	Reliquary Inscription of Khadadata	—	157 [Azes] (109/110)	stupa	—	—	Khadadata	—	CKI 225
50	Reliquary Inscription of Utaraya	—	157 [Azes] (109/110)	<i>dhātu</i>	—	—	Utaraya	<i>bhikṣuṇī</i>	CKI 226
51	Reliquary Inscription of Aprakhaha	—	172 [Azes] (124/125)	<i>śarīra</i>	—	—	Aprakhaha	—	CKI 328 (No. 48)
52	Reliquary Inscription of <i>Macayemaṇa</i>	Charsadda, Pakistan	303 [Yoṇa] (127/128 CE)	<i>śarīra</i> , stupa	—	—	<i>Macayemaṇa?</i> Avakhazada	— <i>kṣatrapa</i>	CKI 178
53	Reliquary Inscription of Trami	Charsadda, Pakistan	—	<i>śarīra</i>	—	—	Trami	—	CKI 177
54	Relic-Chamber Slab Inscription of Lala et al	Manikyala, Pakistan	18 Kaniṣka [I] (144/145 CE)	—	Kuṣāṇa	—	Lala Kaniṣka [I] Veśpaśisa Budhila	<i>daṇḍanāyaka</i> <i>mahārāja</i> <i>kṣatrapa</i> <i>navakarmika</i>	CKI 149
55	Reliquary Inscription of Ganavhryaka's Son	Manikyala, Pakistan	—	—	—	—	— Ganavhryaka	<i>kāpiśīkṣatrapa</i> <i>a</i> <i>kṣatrapa</i>	CKI 150
56	Reliquary Inscription of Ayabhadra	Sanghol, Punjab, India	—	—	—	—	Ayabhadra	<i>upāsaka</i>	CKI 239
57	Reliquary Inscription of Sacabhama	—	—	—	—	—	Sacabhama	<i>bhāryā</i>	CKI 400

58	Reliquary Inscription of Śira	Gangu, Taxila, Pakistan	—	<i>dhātu</i>	—	—	Śira	—	CKI 64
59	Anonymous Reliquary	Kabul	—	—	—	—	—	—	CKI 600
60	Anonymous Reliquary Lid	Afghanistan	18 [Kaniška I] (144/145 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	—	—	—	—	CKI 152
61	Reliquary Inscription of Śveḍavarma	Kurram Valley, Pakistan	20 [Kaniška I] (146/148)	<i>śarīra</i>	—	Sarvāstivāda	Śveḍavarma	—	CKI 153
62	Reliquary Inscription of Mitravarma	Jalalabad, Nangarhar, Afghanistan	20 [Kaniška I] (146/148)	<i>dhātu- śarīra, stupa</i>	—	—	Mitravarma	—	CKI 368
63	Reliquary Inscription of Saṃghamitra	Haḍḍa, Afghanistan	28 [Huviška] (154/155 CE)	<i>śarīra</i>	—	—	Saṃghamitra	<i>navakarmika</i>	CKI 155
64	Reliquary Inscription of Budhapriya et al	Jalalabad, Nangarhar, Afghanistan	—	—	—	—	Budhapriya et al	—	CKI 511
65	Anonymous Relic-Chamber Slab Inscription	Swabi, Pakistan	—	<i>śarīra, garbha- stupa</i>	—	—	—	—	CKI 135
66	Reliquary Inscription of Vagamarega	Wardak, Afghanistan	51 Huviška (177/178 CE)	<i>śarīra, stupa</i>	Kuṣāṇa	Mahāsāṃghika	Vagamarega Huviška	— <i>mahārāja, rājātirāja</i>	CKI 159

67	Reliquary Inscription of Vagamarega's Daughter	Wardak, Afghanistan	51 Huviška (177/178 CE)	<i>śarīra</i> , stupa	Kuṣāṇa	Mahāsāmghika	— Vagamarega	<i>kṣudraduhitr</i>	CKI 509
68	Reliquary Inscription of Mahasena and Saṃgharakṣita	Shah-ji-ki- Dheri, Peshwar Pakistan	—	<i>gaṇḍa- karaṇḍa</i> (perfume box)	Kuṣāṇa	Sarvāstivāda	Mahasena Saṃgharakṣita	<i>āgnisāla- navakarmika</i>	CKI 145
69	Anonymous Copper Plate Inscription	Rani Dab, Pakistan	—	—	—	—	Yodamuṇi	<i>kṣatrapa</i>	CKI 442
70	Reliquary Inscription of Saṃghilaga et al	—	—	<i>śarīra</i>	—	—	Saṃghilaga et al	—	CKI 975

It is rare to encounter monastic figures in the role of donor across this period. Where they do arise, however, they are invariably individuals serving specific pedagogic functions or administrative roles associated with managing the economic and structural affairs of the stupa. Equally, monastic institutions are rarely represented, with those named including the Kāśyapīyas, Mahīśāsakas, and the Mahāsāṃghika, but most predominantly the Dharmaguptakas and Sarvāstivādins.

STUPA DESTRUCTION AND RELIC THEFT¹

It is often proposed in scholarship that the history of Buddhism is a history of the spread of the Buddha's corporeal relics (*śarīra*, *dhātu*).² This model derives from certain textual passage which advocate the division and widespread (P. *vitthārika*, Skt. *vaistārika*)³ distribution of relics as a means to spread Buddhism. Relics, as observed, are viewed as endowing a locale with the 'presence' of the Buddha and by extension the Buddhist institution. But there are some substantial and semiotic differences between stupas and relics. The institutional value of the former resides in their being fashioned as permanent, fixed structures and in their power to signify the presence of relics. The latter, contrarily,

¹ A version of these findings are also presented in Henry Albery, 'Stupa Destruction, Relic Theft and Buddhist Propaganda: (Re)-Dedicating the Buddha's Relics in the Indic Northwest', in *Power, Presence and Space: South Asian Rituals in Archaeological Context*, ed. Henry Albery, Jens-Uwe Hartmann, and Himanshu Prabha Ray (New Delhi: Routledge, 2020), 103–40.

² See Peter Skilling, 'Relics: The Heart of Buddhist Veneration', in *Relics and Relic Worship in Early Buddhism: India, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Burma*, ed. Janice Stargardt and Michael Willis, Research Publication 218 (London: The British Museum, 2018), 4–5.

³ See DN 2. 166; Aś-av 34; 51

are impermanent, divisible and transportable¹—indeed their multiplication was predicated on this quality. This paradoxical relation, it seems, presented the Buddhists with a predicament, necessitating that the means of their diversifying relics entailed the destruction of stupas. Consequently, a dichotomy arose in the practices towards stupas and relics that were deemed acceptable. On the one hand, stupa destruction and relic theft were prohibited, however, in some cases, they were also prescribed.

Schopen not only argued that the Buddha's relics were regarded as a 'living presence' but also that relics and stupas were 'cognitively classified as "legal persons" of rank' and thus one should not damage a stupa or steal any items regarded as belonging to it. He quotes three Brāhmī inscriptions from Sanchi, dated to c. 1st century BCE, which state that anyone who destroys a stupa 'commits an act like the five whose results are without interval' (*pacānatariyakāraka*).² Peter Skilling has shown that these inscriptions correspond to a list of five crimes in Theravāda commentarial works whose results are regarded as being 'without interval' (*ānantarika*)—matricide, patricide, dominicide, drawing the blood of a Tathāgata, and schisming the monastic community—which was expanded to include acts of violence towards stupas and relics.³ A similar enumeration is also found in Sarvāstivāda scholastic literature under the name of actions that are 'equivalent to those without interval' (*ānantaryasabhāga*)—corrupting a mother or female noble one, killing a bodhisattva or a student, stealing the monastic community's capital, and destroying a stupa⁴. Each of these

¹ On this distinction, see Sharf, 'On the Allure of Buddhist Relics'.

² Schopen, 'Burial "Ad Sanctos"', 206ff.

³ Peter Skilling, 'Ideology and Law: The Three Seals Code on Crimes Related to Relics, Images, and Bodhi-Trees', *Buddhism, Law & Society* 1 (2015): 70ff.

⁴ Abhidh-k-bh 4. 107, Yaśomitra's commentary makes a somatic equivalence between destroying a stupa and drawing the blood of a Tathāgata. Abhidh-k-vy

acts is said to effect immediate rebirth in the correspondingly named hell, Avīci (‘without interval’).¹ This notion was indeed widespread and several other passages can be found throughout Buddhist literature.²

However, not all forms of violence were regarded as transgressive and there were certain circumstances under which stupas could be destroyed. For instance, in the *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya* 摩訶僧祇律:³

On destroying a stupa: If [a monk] angrily destroys a stupa of the Fortunate One, he commits a *sthūlātyaya* (‘gross

430. For full discussion and further textual references, see Jonathan Silk, ‘Good and Evil in Indian Buddhism: The Five Sins of Immediate Retribution’, *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 35, no. 3 (2007): 260ff.

¹ See Rhys-Davids and Stede, *The Pali Text Society’s Pali-English Dictionary*, s.v. avīci.

² The *Ekottarikāgama* 增一阿含經 preserves another enumeration of acts that result in being reborn in Avīci 阿鼻地: ‘killing [one’s] mother and father, destroying a Buddha-stupa, provoking disorder in the monastic community, and holding erroneous and mistaken notions’. 殺害父母, 壞佛偷婆, 鬪亂衆僧, 習邪倒見. T 125. 748a8–11. Another passage in the *Vinaya* 鼻奈耶 also states: ‘[a monk who] steals the capital of a stupa goes to hell’. 盜塔寺物入地獄. T 1464. 854b25–26. Four ‘grave prohibitions’ (重禁) are found in two highly expanded 5th century translations of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* 大般涅槃經: ‘Disobeying one’s mother and father, killing an arhat, breaking a stupa and destroying a monastic community, and causing a Buddha’s body to bleed.’ 反逆父母, 殺阿羅漢, 破塔壞僧, 出佛身血. T 374. 431a8–9; T 375. 672b12–13.

³ T 1425. Translated by Buddhahadra 佛陀跋陀羅 and Faxian 法顯, c. 416–418 CE. For details, see Shayne Clarke, ‘Vinayas’, in *Brill’s Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, ed. Jonathan Silk, Handbook of Oriental Studies (Handbuch der Orientalistik): Section Two. India 29/1 (Leiden: Koninklijke, 2015), 64.

offence’). Actions that are crimes have many results. If one desires to repair and improve [the stupa], it is not a crime.¹

Stupa vandalism is thus prohibited as a *sthūlātyaya*, a violation that can be expunged through confession before the entire community of monks.² However, when destruction was necessitated due to a stupa being dilapidated, then such actions were allowed.

On account of the abundance of material and textual evidence, it seems the issue of a stupa being destroyed was a quotidian issue. Archaeological evidence from a host of stupa sites in the Northwest indicates periodic phases of structural restoration and cosmetic refurbishment. In textual sources also, which most often attribute this form of destruction to reasons of neglect (both wilful and unintentional),³ several such circumstances are described, defining who should organise and fund the repairs and the materials they should use to do it. The issue led to the *Sarvāstivādins* and others to devise specific monastic ‘regulations on maintaining stupas and monastic complexes’

¹ 破塔者，若瞋恚破世尊塔者得偷蘭罪，業行罪報多，若欲治更作好者無罪。T 1425. 444c10–11.

² See the *Pinimu jing* 毘尼母經 (*Vinayamātrkā*), dateable to the Qin 秦 Period (351–431 CE) at the latest. T 1463. 843a12–17. For a brief summary of differing definitions of a *sthūlātyaya*, see Hubert ユベール Durt デュルト, ‘Kairitsu Ni Okeru Jūzai, Keizai No Kubetsu: Chūranja (Sthūlātyaya) Wo Chūshin to Shite’ 戒律に於ける重罪□輕罪の區別: 「偷蘭遮」(Sthūlātyaya) を中心として’, *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū* 印度学仏教学研究 26, no. 2 (1978): 999–996.

³ Two narratives of the *Avadānaśataka* indicate that Pratyekabuddha-stupas were particularly prone to neglect, becoming ‘dilapidated and cracked by wind and heat’ (*avarugṇaṃ vātātapābhyāṃ pariśīrṇam*), and did not receive repairs perhaps because they did not garner quite the same institutional interest as those containing relics of the Buddha or his disciples, Avś 1. 119; 1. 134.

(治塔僧坊法),¹ stating who should carry out the repairs (in this case monks), and elsewhere how the repairs could be financed. For instance, in the *Sarvāstivādinayavibhāṣa* 薩婆多毘尼毘婆沙, it states:

In the case that a powerful [individual] desires to break stupas or destroy images. If, by using donated gifts they can be fully restored; the flowers and fruits from the grounds of the stupa may be sold; equally, if the stupa has money or other means of support, materials can be obtained—is suitable to the circumstances²

Another passage in the *Mahāparinirvānasūtra* 大般涅槃經 also reads:

If one with wilful intention destroys a Buddha-stupa this constitutes a gross offence. One should not be familiar or associated with such a person. If a king or minister sees a stupa old and worn he desires to repair it and make offerings to the relics. Here within the stupa, they obtain the previous substances and thereafter transfer it to the monks.³

There was thus the widespread expectation that individuals would destroy a stupa, whether as an act of malicious intent, or, as the act of a Buddhist ruler wishing to make repairs, and consequently methods and rulers were devised to deal with the issue. In these two cases, the stupa itself had capital, whether in its grounds or within itself, which could be used for such repairs. These descriptions correspond to certain coin

¹ See the *Sarvāstivādinaya* 十誦律, T 1435. 416c11–21. Discussed further in Bareau, ‘La construction et le culte des stūpa d’après les Vinayapīṭaka’, 367.

² 若有強力欲破塔壞像。若以贈遺得全濟者。當賣塔地花果。若塔有錢。若餘緣得物隨宜消息。T 1440.524c11–12.

³ 若以貪心破壞佛塔犯偷蘭遮。如是之人不應親近。若王大臣見塔朽故。為欲修補供養舍利。於是塔中或得珍寶即寄比丘。T 374. 405c24–28.

deposits found within layers of stupas structures in the Northwest, which were conceivably placed there to fund any repairs.¹

Moreover, specific administrative roles were assigned to the task of making these repairs and managing the wealth of the stupa, such as the ‘monastic administrator’ (*vaiyāpṛtyakara*) or ‘overseer of new constructions’ (*navakarmika*),² a title,³ in addition to others such as the ‘overseer of new stupa constructions’ (*stūpanavakarmika*)⁴ and ‘protector of a stupa’ (*stūpapāla*),⁵ that is attested in the present epigraphic corpus, indicating direct monastic oversight.

Apparently, monastics sometimes showed little initiative in the upkeep of a stupa and therefore several narratives depict non-monastic figures as taking up the duty, presenting the task a ritual means to cultivate good roots (*kuśalamūla*), to make aspirations (*prañidhāna*), and to effect more favourable existential states.⁶ Other cases make clear that

¹ For instance, a deposit of 44 coins (dated post-4th century CE) was found in niche Q1 of Butkara I. Domenico Faccenna, Robert Göbl, and Mohammad Ashraf Khan, ‘A Report on the Recent Discovery of a Deposit of Coins in the Sacred Area of Butkara I (Swat, Pakistan)’, *East and West* 43, no. 1/4 (1993): 95–114.

² These administrative roles were allocated responsibility over the financial affairs and general upkeep of a monastery and stupa. Silk, *Managing Monks*, 27–30; 87.

³ See CKI 46, CKI 265, CKI 359, CKI 149. An ‘overseer of new constructions of the fire hall’ (*agniśāla-navakarmika*) also occurs, see CKI 145.

⁴ See CKI 359.

⁵ See CKI 249.

⁶ Two previous existence stories outline how the stupa of the Buddha Kāśyapa and its court (*stūpāṅga*) were dirtied following a stupa festival (*stūpamaha*). No one attended to the matter until two non-monastic figures noticed and, having recollected the Buddha’s qualities (*buddhaguṇān anusmṛtya prasādajātena*) which gave rise to a feeling of graciousness (*prasāda*), then clean the stupa and make an aspiration (*prañidhāna*) for which they attain arhatship in a future existence. Avś 1. 354–362. For further discussion, see Ulrich Pagel, ‘Stūpa Festivals in Buddhist Narrative Literature’, in *Festschrift für Michael Hahn zum 65. Geburtstag von Freunden und Schülern überreicht*,

the onus of a stupa's upkeep was often placed on a ruler and that the service effected desirable benefits in the present and future existences.¹ For instance, a past life narrative of Kuṇāla, Aśoka's son, in the *Aśokāvadāna*, relates that he was born into the Mauryan lineage due to his repairing the stupa of Krakucchanda, constructed by another ruler named Aśoka, because thieves had taken the jewels and left only the dirt and wood.²

In some cases, this form of support was envisaged as a transfer of taxes to the monastic institution and in the *Avadānaśataka* such application of state resources is dichotomised in terms of the Buddhist and non-Buddhist ruler, the former willing to establish systems of redistributive taxation, and the latter removing these taxes in an act of

ed. Konrad Klaus and Jens-Uwe Hartmann (Wien: Arbeitskreis für tibetische und buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, 2007), 389.

¹ See for example the rather brief 'Avadāna of the Gandhāran King Who Repaired a Stupa to Obtain Longevity' 乾陀衛國王治故塔寺得延命緣 in the 5th century translation of the *Samyuktaratnapīṭaka* 雜寶藏經:

昔乾陀衛國。有一國主。有一明相師。占王。却後七日。必當命終。出遊獵行。見一故塔。毀敗崩壞。即令群臣共修治之。修治已訖。歡喜還宮。七日安隱。相師見過七日。怪其所以。問王言。作何功德。答言。更無所作。唯有一破塔。以泥補治。由治塔故。功德如是。T 203. 469a6–13.

In ancient Gandhāra there was a single ruler of the country. One morning a fortune-teller predicted to the king, 'After about seven days your life will come to an end.' The king went on a hunting expedition and saw an old stupa, damaged, ruined, crumbling, and destroyed. Accordingly, he had officials carry out maintenance on it. When the maintenance was finished, satisfied, he returned to the palace. For seven days he was safe. The fortune-teller saw that seven days had past and for that reason was surprised. He questioned the king saying, 'What produced this merit?'; He replied. 'Nothing was done. There was only this single old stupa which was repaired with mud'. From maintaining a stupa, such is the merit.

² Aś-av 124–125.

wilful neglect. In one episode, we read that the Buddhist ruler Bimbisāra established a hair-and-nail stupa of the Tathāgata and provided taxes for its upkeep. However, his son Ajātaśatru, having killed his father, arranged it so that neither gifts nor taxes were given to the stupa. A woman of the inner palace (*antahpurikā*)¹ named Śrīmatī transgresses the diktat and places some lamps and garlands at the stupa, although she pays for this act of defiance with her life.² The support of rulers was thus considered transient and in such cases other economically or politically powerful individuals with expendable wealth are portrayed as assuming the duty of a stupa's maintenance.³

Due to Buddhism's expansionist policy being tied to relics, it was required that modes of relic acquisition, which may be perceived as stealing, were morally justified. Kevin Trainor has already considered several such cases in which 'relic theft is not a theft'⁴ from post-5th century CE Theravāda commentarial and *Vamsa* literature. For example, the 2nd century BCE dedication of relics in the Mahāthūpa in Sri Lanka by King Duṭṭhagāmaṇī, was legitimised in these sources on the basis that arhats had made aspirations (*patthanā*) to steal relics from the *nāgas* in Rāmagrāma and received predictions (*vyākaraṇa*) of their theft from the

¹ Two such women of the court of the Apracarājas are recorded making relic dedications, CKI 247, 359.

² Avś 54. 307-308.

³ One need not look far to find stories of merchants repairing stupas when rulers do not. In one famous story, the caravan leader (*sārvavāha*) Śroṇakoṭīkarṇa funds repairs of Kāśyapa's stupa when the ruler Sujāta removes taxes allotted by his father Kṛkin. Cf. MSV 4. 190–193, Divy 1. 22–23. A similar story occurs in the *Fobenxing ji jing* 佛本行集經 concerning Kāśyapa's stupa, which was broken apart, destroyed, collapsed and fallen down (破壞崩落). Here a group of merchants, having acquired wealth on their voyages, repair the stupa, made aspirations, and were ultimately reborn at the time of Śākyamuni, attaining arhatship. T 190. 852a4–c8.

⁴ Kevin Trainor, 'When Is a Theft Not a Theft? Relic Theft and the Cult of the Buddha's Relics in Sri Lanka', *Numen* 39, no. 1 (1992): 1–26.

Buddha. Thus, what would appear contingently to be a theft of relics was returned to a necessity, pre-determined already by the Buddha. Trainor suggests that whether a relic theft is regarded as a theft or not resides in the act's intentionality. If it was conducted with the correct view, then the accusation of theft can be avoided.¹ This was necessary because the *Theravādivinaya* defined theft as a *pārājika* ('grave offence'), which leads to a monk being expelled from the monastic community.²

But relic theft is not dealt with specifically in this corpus.³ Indeed, the only group of texts, as far as I am aware, to deal with the matter of relic theft are *Sarvāstivādivinaya* and *Mūlasarvāstivādivinaya*. Thus, in the *Upālipariṣcchā* section of *Sarvāstivādivinaya* 十誦律):⁴

[Upāli] further asked: 'If one steals the Buddha's relics what crime is effected?' [The Buddha] responded, saying: 'A *sthūlātyaya*. If with respectful intention, one thinks thus,

¹ TrTrainor, 'When Is a Theft Not a Theft? Relic Theft and the Cult of the Buddha's Relics in Sri Lanka', 9ff. Monika Zin also records a similar case concerning the 1st century BCE establishment of the Kanaganahalli stupa by King Chimukha, founder of the Satavāhana Dynasty, where one inscription at the site implies the ruler was given relics by the *nāga* king. Monika Zin, *The Kanaganahalli Stūpa: An Analysis of the 60 Massive Slabs Covering the Dome* (New Delhi: Aryan Books International, 2018), 132–34.

² Vin 3. 41–67.

³ On a related case in which a monk destroys a nun's stupa and scatters her relics, see Vin 4. 308–309; T 1428. 766c3–23, Ann Heirmann, 'The Discipline in Four Parts': *Rules for the Nuns According to the Dharmaguptakavinaya. Part I. Introduction*, vol. 47, Buddhist Tradition Series (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2002), 879–80. And in the *Mūlasarvāstivādivinaya-kṣudrakavastu*, Derge 'dul ba Da 172b2–174b5; see Gregory Schopen, 'The Suppression of Nuns and the Ritual Murder of Their Special Dead in Two Buddhist Monastic Texts', *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 24, no. 6 (1996): 562ff.

⁴ T 1435. For details of the translation, see Clarke, 'Vinayas', 70–72.

“The Buddha is truly my teacher”, then taking with [such] pure intention is not a crime.’¹

This passage appears to confirm Trainor’s initial hunch that relic theft could indeed be mitigated simply by virtue of having the proper intention. However, this simple explanation is further complicated by another passage in the **Sarvāstivādanikāyavinayamātrkā* 薩婆多部毘尼摩得勒伽 to deal with *pārājika*:²

Taking a Buddha’s relic that has an owner, if stolen for one’s livelihood [and if it values] a full [five *māṣa*]³, it is a *pārājika*; not a full [five *māṣa*], it is a *sthūlātyaya*.⁴ Even if it increases unwholesomeness, taking [for] both others and oneself is not a *sthūlātyaya*. If it is for the sake of performing worship, [one thinks thus], ‘The Buddha is my teacher, I

¹ 又問：若盜佛舍利得何罪。答曰：偷蘭遮。若尊敬心作是念，佛亦我師，清淨心取無罪。T 1435. 380a2–4. The commentary of Daoxuan 道宣 (d. 667 CE), states: ‘Stealing relics in the **Sarvāstivādinaya*: “With a pure intention to perform worship, one thinks, saying: “You are indeed the teacher, I am indeed the teacher.”” Thinking in this manner there is no crime.’ 十誦中偷舍利。並淨心供養自作念言：彼亦是師，我亦是師。如是意者無犯。T 1804. 55c6–8. Another commentary of Gyōnen 凝然 (d. 1321) adds that the relics should not have an owner. T 2246. 86b3–4.

² T 1441. For details, see Clarke, ‘Vinayas’, 81.

³ *Qian* 钱 (‘coin’). For a brief discussion of this term in legal contexts, see I. B. Horner, trans., *The Book of Discipline (Vinaya-Piṭaka) Vol. I (Suttavibhaṅga)*, Sacred Books of the Buddhists (London: Luzac and Company, 1949), xxii. *The Book of Discipline (Vinaya-Piṭaka) Vol. I (Suttavibhaṅga)*, tran. I. B Horner, London: Luzac and Company, 1949, p. xxii.

⁴ Daoxuan comments: The *Sarvāstivāda*[*vinayavibhāṣā*] [see T 1440. 517a10–12] says, ‘this means to sell them on.’ 薩婆多云：謂轉賣者。T 1804. 55c8–9.

should perform worship’, [and the relic values] a full five *māṣa*, [it is] a *duṣkṛta* (‘misdemeanour’).¹

This passage implies that relics had become items of trade, insofar as they were being weighed and sold as other commodities. The severity of a case of relic theft is here attached to the weight of the relics; if more than five *māṣa*, then the monk could be expelled from the community for committing a *pārājika*. However, if the relics weigh less than five *māṣa*, and if conducted for the purpose of ultimately worshipping the relics, then the monk only commits a misdemeanour, requiring that the crime be admitted to another monk to be expiated.

Juhyung Rhi has also drawn attention to a related case concerning the theft of relics from Buddha statues, which he was able to relate to certain images from the Indic Northwest, which have small recesses under the *uṣṇīṣa* that are conjectured by some to have contained relics.² These regulations are phrased in similar terms to the foregoing; I quote a passage from the *Mūlasarvāstivādanikayavinayavibhaṅga* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶:

If an image has relics, and [one] takes it, it is a *pātayantika* (‘offence causing one to fall’); without relics, it is a *duṣkṛta*. If [one] produces a thought of the Great Teacher, taking is not a crime.³

¹ 取佛舍利有主，若爲自活偷，滿，波羅夷，不滿，偷羅遮。若增惡取彼我俱無偷羅遮。若爲供養故，佛是我師，我應供養，滿五錢，突吉羅。T 1441. 612b5–9

² Rhi, ‘Images, Relics, and Jewels’.

³ 若像有舍利，執得墮罪；無舍利者惡作。若作大師想，持者無犯。T 1442. 847a2–3. See also, T 1443. 988c6–7. The Tibetan reads: If a monk steals a statue together with relics, he incurs a *pātayantika*. If the statue is without relics, it is a *duṣkṛta*. dge slong gis sku gzugs len na sku gdung dang bcas pa len na ltung byed du ‘gyur la | sku gdung med pa len na ñes byas su ‘gyur ro ||

It seems that the threat of larceny was not only an issue limited to monastic behaviour but that other individuals outside the institution would also steal relics. This is shown by a similarly phrased regulation in the *Upāsakapañcaśīlatvasūtra* 優婆塞五戒相經:

If a householder with the intention of stealing steals relics, in committing the transgression [the act] could be regretted. If with a respectful intention one thinks thus, ‘The Buddha is truly my teacher’, then taking with [such] pure intention is not a crime.¹

None of these regulations define the precise circumstances under which relic theft may have occurred. However, one other occurrence of the expression, ‘the Buddha is truly my teacher’ (佛亦我師), in a unique version of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*² in the *Sarvāstivādinaya* may serve to clarify at least one case.

sDe dge'i bka' 'gyur, 'Dul ba Ja 241a1. In these cases, stealing a Buddha image with relics is deemed a *pātayantika*, an offence which, in line with former prohibitions of destruction and theft, ‘cause one to fall’ into hell if not expiated before the monastic community. A verse summary in the **Mūlasarvāstivādanikayavinayakārika* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶頌 (*) clarifies: 像等有舍利，觸時得本罪。若無身骨者，觸時便惡作。T 1459. 641a18–19. ‘[Taking] an image etc., which has a relic, at the time of contact produces a base crime (Skt. *mūlāpatti*). If there are no bones, at the moment of contact it is a *duṣkṛta*.’ The commentary, *Mūlasarvāstivādanikāya-vinayaśaṅgraha* 根本薩婆多部律攝, states: 盜設利羅，世尊馱都，有人守護意欲供養。作大師想者。犯惡作罪。T 1458. 535b17–18. ‘Someone who steals relics of the Fortunate One to protect [them], intending to perform worship and producing a thought of the Great Teacher commits a *duṣkṛta*.’

¹ 若有居士以盜心偷舍利，犯中可悔。若以恭敬心而作是念，佛亦我師，清淨心取者無犯。T 1476. 942a29–b2.

² T 1435. 445c11–447a11. For a comparative analysis, see Ernst Waldschmidt, *Die Überlieferung vom Lebensende des Buddha. Eine vergleichende Analyse*

Following the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*, cremation, and installation of his relics by the Mallas of Kuśinagara, the aforementioned claimants—the Mallas of Pāpa, Bullakas of Calakalpakā, Krauḍyas of Rāmagrāma, Brahmins of Viṣṇudvīpa, Licchavis of Vaiśālī, Śākya of Kapilavastu and King Ajātaśatru of Magadha—stake a claim.

At that time, King Ajātaśatru directed his great minister, the Brahmin Varṣakāra, saying: 'Go to Kuśinagara where all the Mallas are. Bear my message, and extend my immeasurable greetings, "Are [you] strong, at ease, and well in body and mind?" Say to all: "*The Buddha is truly my teacher and is mine to be honoured.* Today in your domain he [entered] *parinirvāṇa*. Please divide the relics; I desire to erect a stupa in Rājagṛha to perform worship. One who shares with me is good. If you don't share with me, I will raise an army and forcibly seize [them from] you.'" Orders received, the minister promptly assembled a four-fold army unit and went to Kuśinagara.¹

Of course the war never comes to pass, because the Brahmin Droṇa divides the relics among the eight claimants, who thereafter establish the relics in a stupa in their own domains. Nonetheless, we see here that the threat to steal the relics is justified on precisely the same grounds of intention as the aforesaid regulations.

A very similar story is to be found in the *Aśokāvadāna*, which tells the ruler Aśoka subsequently took his four-fold army unit, to the

des Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra und seiner Textentsprechungen. Zweiter Teil (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1948), 289ff.

¹ 爾時阿闍世王勅其大臣婆羅門婆利沙迦羅言：汝往到拘尸城諸力士所。持我言致問無量：氣力安隱身心樂不。又語諸人：佛亦我師，我之所尊。今於汝國般涅槃。請分舍利，欲於王舍城中起塔供養。與我者善。若不見與，當舉兵衆以力奪汝。受勅即嚴四種兵直至拘尸城。T 1453. 446b17–25.

relics from the eight Droṇa stupas and divided the relics, rededicating them within Dharmarājikā stupas throughout his polity. The implicit acts of destruction and theft are again mitigated¹ by the ruler's intention to establish the relics for the purpose of worship.²

The primary function of these regulations and narratives, therefore, is to justify the acts of stupa destruction and relic theft by monastics and other alike. Such ambivalence towards these primary objects of Buddhism, no doubt, was a product of the problem inherent in their methods of expansion. It was indeed demanded that such acts be committed for the benefit of the monastic institution.

These narratives can be localised in the Indic Northwest on several grounds. A number of scholars have shown that the contents of the Sanskrit version bespeak an archaeological context remarkably similar to the one we encounter in the post-2nd century CE Northwest, naming the *dīnāra* coin and mentioning inscribed gold plates in relic dedications.³ The existence of a c. 1st century CE Kharoṣṭhī manuscript collection retained in the British Library (BL) to contain an 'Avadāna of King Aśoka' (*avadaṇo rayasa aśogasa*)⁴ confirms the presence of the narrative in general terms. And some lesser studied *Aśokāvadānas* of

¹ Other strategies of mitigation are also employed, see Strong, *Relics of the Buddha*, 132–236.

² The various versions of the *Aśokāvadāna* are broadly similar in their recount of the episode and the elements of destruction and theft are sometimes downplayed and sometimes emphasised, cf. Aś-av 52; T 99. 165a13–16; T 2043. 135a3–7.

³ Strong, *The Legend of King Aśoka. A Study and Translation of the Aśokāvadāna*, 26ff; Max Deeg, 'From the Iron Wheel to Bodhisatvahood', in *Aśoka in History and Historical Memory*, ed. Patrick Olivelle (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2009), 4. See also Chapter Fourteen: Inscriptions and Causality.

⁴ Av^{L4} 223–230r; a parallel is to be found in the *Da zhuangyan lun jing* 大莊嚴論經 (**Kalpanāmaṇḍitikā*), attributed to Aśvaghōṣa 馬鳴 (c. 2nd century CE) and translated by Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (d. 416 CE), T 201. 285c6–287, see Lenz, 'Behind the Birch Bark Curtain', 46–61.

two collections entitled *Za piyu jing* 雜譬喻經 (**Samyuktāvadānasūtra*)—one attributed to Lokakṣema 支婁迦讖 (2nd century CE)¹ and another to an unknown translator working in the Later Han Period (c. 25–220 CE)²—are notable for the retain alternative versions of specific narrative elements that are potentially shared with the relief art from the Northwest. These narrative motives include Aśoka’s offering of dirt to the Buddha;³ his successful acquisition of relics from a *nāga*-king in a lake in the northern region⁴ through a merit-weighting contest (in most other witnesses he unsuccessfully attempts to take the relics from Rāmagrāma);⁵ and his establishment of stupas, here numbered distinctly at 1,200 (not the more often encountered tradition of 84,000).⁶

¹ Aśoka occurs in one narrative, T 204. 501a1–15. For a complete translation of this work, see Akira Sadakata (定方晟), ‘『雜譬喻經』訳注 (Japanese Translation of Tsa-p’i-yü-ching)’, *東海大学紀要. 文学部 (Bulletin of the Faculty of Letters of Tokai University)* 51 (1989): 47–55. According to Karashima Seishi the attested translator is incorrect and the work is more likely a product of the 3rd century. Karashima and Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya, ‘The Avadāna Anthology from Merv, Turkmenistan’, 343.

² Aśoka occurs in the fifth, sixth, and seventh narrative, T 205. 503a19–c20.

³ T 204. 501a6–9. For art-historical witnesses, see Ingholt, *Gandharan Art in Pakistan*, Fig. 110-11; I. Kurita, *Gandhāran Art. I: The Buddha’s Life Story*. (Tokyo: Nigensha, 2003), 351–59. It is possible these reliefs depict the Kuṣāṇa ruler Kaniṣka I, whose own narrative cycle includes this episode in the Buddha’s journey along the Northern Road in the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* of the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*, see MSV 1. 2.

⁴ T 205. 503b4

⁵ T 205. 503b2–16; see Przulski, *La Légende de l’Empereur Açoka (Açoka-Avadāna) dans les textes Indiens et Chinois*, 189–90. There is only one possible depiction of Aśoka’s engagement with the *nāgas* to acquire relics, See Kurita, *Gandhāran Art. I: The Buddha’s Life Story.*, 530; ul-Hasan, ‘Depiction of Asoka Raja in the Buddhist Art of Gandhara’, 163–65.

⁶ T 205. 503a19–b1. Although Aśoka’s Dharmarājikās have not been identified in art, other related events, such as his collection of the relics and political subjugation of the Mallas, are present. *Ibid*: 162–63.

We must here recall also the narratives of decline recorded in the *Aśokāvadāna* and other works, which state that in the invasions of the Śuṅgas, Indo-Greeks, Indo-Scythians, Indo-Parthians, and Kuṣāṇas led to the destruction of stupa and the theft of relics.¹ Such circumstances could well have precipitated the necessity to define cases of stupa destruction and relic theft. To take these accounts seriously demands that we search for material evidence from the period of their reigns, which may indicate vandalism of these sites. However, archaeological reports are almost silent on the issue, noting that destruction layers of stupas were produced for the most part by earthquakes and not by human agency, as there is little evidence of burning.

One relevant example arises in John Marshall's analysis of a 'great conflagration' in the procession path at the Dharmarājikā, Taxila, which he dates to the 1st–2nd century CE. He reports the fire did not affect the main stupa (a sign it was accidental) but that it did cause the 'scorched, calcined, and shattered condition of the stonework on the inner faces of these early shrines' which 'can only be explained on the hypothesis that timber and other inflammables were piled up against the sides of the structure'. However, he ultimately discards the possibility of political vandalism on the largely unfounded premise that 'we know of no anti-Buddhist foes at Taxila during this period'.² This latter assumption has limited grounds and Buddhist accounts tell otherwise. Nonetheless, there is little material evidence for political vandalism, and even if such actions did occur it was unlikely they were region-wide and enacted as part of political policy.

¹ See Chapter Two: Narratives of Decline.

² Marshall, *Structural Remains*, 250.

THE RE-DEDICATION OF RELICS IN THE INDIC NORTHWEST

That relics were commonly taken from existing stupas and established anew is attested on several grounds: archaeologically, when coins found in a deposit significantly predate other items or the stupa's architecture,¹ and epigraphically, when an object is inscribed twice, recording two distinct dedications,² when it directly refers to a previous dedication,³ or, as Richard Salomon has argued, when garbled inscriptions are to be understood as copies of inscriptions unearthed in former deposits.⁴

One case is recorded on a twice-inscribed, cylindrical steatite reliquary from the aforementioned Shinkot in the Bajaur region of Pakistan. This record simultaneously evidences the earliest instance of a relic dedication and rededication in the region. There is some debate among epigraphers regarding the dates and authenticity of the inscriptions,⁵ but it likely bears two groups: one dated to the reign of the

¹ MacDowall, 'The Chronological Evidence of Coins in Stūpa Deposits'. For specific cases, see Marshall, *Structural Remains*, 271–73; Elizabeth Errington, 'Gandhara Stupa Deposits', *Arts of Asia* 28 (1998): 87; Elizabeth Errington, 'The Buddhist Remains of Passani and Bimaran and Related Relic Deposits from South-Eastern Afghanistan in the Masson Collection of the British Library', in *Relics and Relic Worship in Early Buddhism: India, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Burma*, ed. Janice Stargardt and Michael Willis, Research Publication 218 (London: The British Museum, 2018), 44.

² See Fig. 15.1, [1] 9, [27] 33, [48] 51.

³ See Fig. 15.1, 13, [34], 37.

⁴ See Fig. 15.1, 31, 52. For further discussion, see Salomon, 'The Rededication of Buddhist Reliquaries: A Clue to the Interpretation of Problematic Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions'.

⁵ Much of the debate concerning periodisation has centred on highly debatable palaeographic evidence, which has produced quite divergent opinions. Cf. Majumdar, 'The Bajaur Casket of the Reign of Menander'; Konow, 'New Traces of the Greeks in India'; Salomon, 'The "Avaca" Inscription and the Origin of the Vikrama Era', 63–64; Salomon, 'Indo-Greek Era', 382; Baums, 'Catalog', 202–3. Harry Falk takes an altogether different view and regards several parts of both inscriptions to be forgeries. Falk, 'The Introduction of

Indo-Greek Menander (c. 155–130 BCE)¹ and another to the 5th year (3/4 CE) of the Apracarāja Vijayamitra (c. 2 BCE–30 CE).² The latter records in one line:

[i]me śarira palugabhutao na sakareti tasa śariati kalade na śadhro na piṇḍoyake yi pitri grīṇayati tasa ye patre vapomua

The relic became broken, is not worshipped, [and] so disintegrated over time. Neither *śrāddha*, nor *piṇḍa* and water are brought for the ancestors, [and] so the bowl is not fully covered

Harry Falk argues that this portion of the inscription is a modern day forgery, for which a mixture of disconnected linguistic,³ and thematic arguments are marshalled to underpin his position. He observes in particular that the notions of *śrāddha* and *piṇḍa* in a Buddhist inscription are wholly untoward, bearing no relation to other epigraphic and textual sources.⁴ However, this conclusion is a little hasty. It must be noted that we know almost nothing about the construction of early Buddhist stupas, nor indeed about the types of practices that were conducted there, which must have been discrete to different locales. It is true that the gifting of

Stūpa-Worship in Bajaur’, 349–53. Salomon has refuted Falk’s arguments at several levels and contends the inscriptions are genuine. Richard Salomon, ‘The Fine of Art of Forgery in India’, in *Écrire et transmettre en Inde classique*, ed. Gérard Colas and Gerdi Gerschheimer, Études thématique (Paris: École française d’Extrême-Orient, 2009), 128ff.

¹ No. 1.

² No. 11.

³ Following Gérard Fussman, he argues that *paluga-* (‘broken’) in D¹ is a highly suspect “Magadhism” derived from P. *palugga* and not the Skt. *prarugṇa*, and that *bhutao*, *śariati* (Skt. *śīryati* ‘is perished’) and *grīṇayati* (Skt. *grahayati*) are linguistic abnormalities. Gérard Fussman, ‘L’indo-grec Ménandre ou Paul Demiéville revisité’, *Journal Asiatique* 281 (1993): 107.

⁴ Falk, ‘The Introduction of Stūpa-Worship in Bajaur’, 351–52.

piṇḍa is predominantly associated with the non-Buddhist *śrāddha* rituals, in which balls of rice are given for ancestors. However, John Strong has provided evidence, which suggests that relics were divided into balls and were associated with the *śrāddha* ritual¹.

More problematic is the implication in this inscription that the very structural integrity of the stupa was dependent on the offering of balls and water. Superficially this corresponds to aetiological accounts of the stupa in several *Vinayas*,² which collectively relate that the stupa erected over Buddha Kāśyapa's remains at Toyikā was initially formed by a multitude of devotees stacking mud-balls (塗, Skt. *mṛttikā-piṇḍa*) atop one another to create a hemisphere. André Bareaux attributes this form of stupa to the period of Aśoka in the late 3rd century BCE and points out that such a structure would have (for obvious reasons) been prone to decay—again this reasoning is also given in D¹, which states 'the relic became broken, is not worshipped, and therefore is disintegrated due to time'. Whether such evidence can be used to authenticate the inscription is tenuous and hindered by several factors. Whilst it is conceivable a stupa erected in the mid 2nd century BCE could have had this form, a lack of archaeological data for the dedication itself means this conjecture can be neither confirmed nor denied. Moreover, the structural form the inscription implies does not correspond archaeologically to any candidates regarded as deriving from either a late Mauryan or Indo-Greek period: the cores of Butkara I in Mingora and the Dharmarājikā near Taxila comprise a mound of 'rounded pebbles'³ or 'rough rubble limestone masonry'.⁴

¹ Strong, 'The Buddha's Funeral', 47.

² Bareaux, 'La construction et le culte des stūpa d'après les Vinayapiṭaka', 232; 268. See also Schopen, *Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monks*, 28.

³ Faccenna, 'Mingora: Site of Butkara I', 88.

⁴ Marshall, *Structural Remains*, 236.

A lack of worship at the stupa implies that wider social issues between the dedication from the time of Menander in the late 2nd century BCE and that of Vijayamitra in the early 1st century CE had prevented those who would normally attend to the relics from doing so. Although the true reasons for this neglect are beyond us, one may conjecture that this could be attributed to broader issues precipitated by the military conflicts of the Indo-Greeks and Indo-Scythians—indeed we find not dissimilar concerns in other re-dedicatory records.

Another ground for a relic-redication is also mentioned in the Gold Scroll of Senavarma (No. 36), who rededicated relics and enlarged the Ekaüḍa-stupa formerly established by his ancestor Vasuseṇa, whose own dedicatory inscription is quoted.

[2.]...iśa Ekaüḍami vijuvapati tae dahiasa thuvasa vipariṇame kide se me sarve upaḍa vitate mulaśave ukṣivita¹ avaśita² tatra pratīhava[3a]ṇia lihitia Utaraseṇaputre Vasuseṇe Oḍiraya Iṣmahokulade se imo Ekaüḍo pratīhaveti...

...When the Ekaüḍa was struck by lightning an alteration to the burnt stupa was made by me. Everything was torn up and spread out [and] the original-śava was raised up and removed. Therein was an inscription concerning the establishment: ‘Son of Utaraseṇa, Vasuseṇa, the Oḍirāja and descendant of the Ikṣvākus; he establishes the Ekaüḍa’...

¹ Skt. *utkṣipta* (‘raised up’) appears to denote a specific ritual action of ‘excavating’ or ‘removing’ as opposed to ‘interring’ or ‘depositing’ (*prākṣip*) relics. This latter ritual act is found in several relevant textual passages concerning the relic dedications of Aśoka. Divy 22. 327; Aś-av 53–54.

² Otto Böhtlingk and Rudolph Roth, *Sanskrit-Wörterbuch: Siebenter Teil ष-ह* nebst den Verbesserungen und Nachträgen zum ganzen Werke (St. Petersburg: Buchdruckerei der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1886), *√śā* (‘wegnehmen’) + *ava*.

In this case the destruction of the stupa was due to lightning; apparently not an altogether uncommon problem.¹ However, the same inscription also records another reason for destruction, namely, human agency:

[12] *ye [va]ṇa imo Ekaüḍo thuvo ṇiṭhidao viṇiṭhi*[13]*tao daheati ite udhu deve va maṇuṣe va yakṣe va ṇage va suvaṇi va gadharve va kuvhaḍe va se Aviyamahaṇiraa padeati...*

But whoever should burn the Ekaüḍa stupa after it is fully completed, henceforth, whether god, man, *yakṣa*, *nāga*, *suparṇin*, *gandharva* or *kumbhāṇḍa*, may they fall into the great hell Avīci...

Seṇavarma's expectation of destruction and his curse² that the perpetrator is reborn in Avīci evidence the presence of the aforementioned actions whose results are without interval (*ānantaryakarma*), mentioned in scholastic literature. This implies further that the legal prohibitions surrounding stupa destruction and relic theft can be contextualised in the Northwest in the early Common Era.

A final inscription suggests also that the above regulations of the *Sarvāstivādinaya* allowing relic theft were also current in this context. This occurs in another re-dedicatory inscription, found on the body and upper lid of a spherical schist reliquary from Bajaur, Pakistan (Fig. 4.3), that was donated by another Apracarāja figure, Prince Indravarma I, in 63 Azes (15/16 CE).

[Body] [1] *saṃvatsarae tremṣaṭhimaē 20 20 20 1 1 1*
maharayasa ayasa atidasa kartiasa masasa divasae ṣoḍaśae

¹ In the 6th century CE, Sung Yun 宋雲 records that the Kaniska Stupa had been repaired having been thrice burnt by lightning. T 2092. 1021a27–b15.

² See Chapter Fourteen: Curses.

*imeṇa cetrike kṣeṇ[e]*¹ *idravarma kumare apracarayaputra*
 [2] *ime bhagavato śakamuṇisa śarira pradīḥaveti ṭhiae*
gabhirae apradīḥavitaprave [pa]teśe brammaṇi
prasavadi...

[Upper Lid] *ime ca śarira muryakaliṇate*² *thubute kiḍa-*
*paḍiharia*³ *avhiye aheṭhi majimami pradīḥavaṇami pradi-*
ṭha[v]i[d]a

¹ The moon on the 16th day of the month Kārttika in a *pūrṇimānta* ('full moon') reckoning corresponds to the new moon in conjunction with the constellation *citrā*, to which the *vṛddhi* form *cetrika* ('of *citrā*') may pertain. For an alternative explanation, cf. Baums, 'Catalog', 207–8.

² Falk, 'The Introduction of Stūpa-Worship in Bajaur', 348–49. Previous editions read: *muryaka-liṇate thubute* ('from the Muryaka cave stupa'), see e.g., Salomon and Schopen, 'Indravarman Avaca Casket Inscription Reconsidered', 108–9.

³ This term is a *bahuvrīhi* governed by *śarīra*; however, interpretations of its purport have varied wildly. Drawing on potential parallels in textual sources, Richard Salomon and Gregory Schopen suggested Skt. *kṛtaparihārika* ('for which the ritual procession has been done'). Salomon and Schopen, 'Indravarman Avaca Casket Inscription Reconsidered', 112–13. Harry Falk read Skt. *kṛtaprāṭihārya* ('effected transfiguration', i.e., by which a transfiguration was effected), associating the term with the Buddha's *yamakapāṭihārya* ('duplicate miracle'), performed by relics in the *Mahāvamsa*, whereby 'the relics transform themselves visibly into a form of the Buddha and demonstrate his corporeal and spiritual presence', Harry Falk, 'Another Reliquary Vase from Wardak and Consecrating Fire Rites in Gandhāra', in *Religion and Art: New Issues in Indian Iconography and Iconology*, ed. Claudine Bautze-Picron (London: The British Association for South Asian Studies, 2008), 76–77. Baums opts for the same reading but differs in his understanding of the compound, translating 'on which a miracle has been performed', Baums, 'Catalog', 208. Falk's interpretation is undoubtedly possible, and indeed perhaps more favourable than the one I suggest; although it is hindered by the c. 5th century CE Sri Lankan *Mahāvamsa* being contextually divorced from the Indic Northwest. I suggest therefore, the latter element of the compound could be interpreted as deriving from Skt. *pari-√hr̥*

[Body] [1] In the sixty-third 63 year of the Great King Azes past, on the 16th day of the month Kārttika, at this moment of *citrā*, Prince Indravarma [I], son of the Apracarāja [Viṣuvarma], establishes [2] this relic of the Fortunate One Śākyamuni at a permanent, deep, previously unestablished location, and produces Brahma-merit [...]

[Upper Lid] And these relics, having been taken from a Mauryan period stupa, were established in a central location that is without danger, without trouble.

Indravarma I appears to have been here inspired by the *Aśokāvadāna*, referring to a dedication from the period of Aśoka's rule and rededicating relics, just as that is ruler did in this narrative cycle. Indravarma I also imparts a concern for the relic's safety, indicating that the Mauryan Period stupa was in danger, justifying therefore the removal of its relics.

The practice of rededication here is indicated also by the doctrinal formula to establish a relic at a previously unestablished location with the goal of producing Brahma-merit. This formula is known to nine other epigraphs, several of which are found on twice-inscribed and thus rededicated objects. The practice of rededication, therefore, was enshrined in doctrine. In this regard, we must note something of a cosmological verticality with regards to practices towards stupas and the Buddhist institution. Whilst divisive acts (i.e., destroying a stupa, schisming a monastic community) result in being

or *prati-√hṛ* ('to take'), producing *kṛtapārihārya*, *kṛtapārihārika* or *kṛtaprātihārika* ('having taken', lit. 'on which taking has been performed'), thereby construing it syntactically with the abl. *muryaka-liṅate thubute*. A possible alternative meaning of *prati-√hṛ* is 'protect' ('having protected', lit. 'on which protection was performed').

reborn in Avīci their opposites (i.e., establishing a stupa, uniting a monastic community) cause rebirth in the Brahma-world.¹

STUPA FESTIVALS

The establishment of relics within a stupa was always marked by a festival (*maha*). The earliest such account of a festival is found in the initial funerary proceedings *sarīrapūjā* (Skt. *śarīrapūjā*)² enacted upon the Buddha's body before they were placed in a stupa at a crossroads, whereafter people placed wreaths, perfumes, and colours.³ Similarly, it is stated in the *Aśokāvadāna* that Aśoka, when he established his eighty-four thousand Dharmarājikā stupas, organised a *pañcavārṣika* festival.⁴ That festivals occurred in the Northwest is also made clear by both epigraphic records and in the *Avadānas* and *Vinaya* of the Mūlasarvāsti-

¹ See Chapter Fourteen: Eschatology and Brahma-Merit.

² In the *Dīghanikāya*, Ānanda is told that he should not be involved in *sarīrapūjā* (Skt. *śarīrapūjā*). Previously this was understood as an injunction against all monastics to perform worship (*pūjā*) towards the relics (*sarīra*); however, Schopen has clearly demonstrated that this passage has nothing to do with a relic cult and that *sarīrapūjā* in several Theravāda and Mūlasarvāstivāda texts was understood as the funerary proceedings, enacted before the relics were created after cremation. He also observes that by the time of the Milindapañha's composition, where the same injunction arises but in respect to all monastics, *sarīrapūjā* was no longer understood as 'funerary proceeding' but 'relic worship'. This, he argues, is a product of 5th century Sri Lanka. Schopen, *Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monks*, 99ff. Due to the regular engagement of monastics in relic establishments in the Northwest, it seems that this issue was not recognised.

³ DN 2. 142.

⁴ Aś-av 56ff. For a detailed discussion see Deeg, 'Origins and Developments of the Buddhist Pañcavārṣika – Part I: India and Central Asia'.

vādins, where stupa festivals are indeed mentioned fairly frequently. However, Ulrich Pagel observes:

...the passages from the vinaya raise as many questions as they answer. While they tell us about the purpose of one particular kind of stūpa festival, the vinaya does not discuss the activities that took place at such festivals. It does not disclose the scale of the celebrations, the occasions on which they were held, who organized and paid for them, who participated in them or how they are positioned within the larger context of stūpa worship. In fact, the vinaya does not tell us very much at all about stūpa festivals.¹

In general most *Vinayas* that concern either stupa festivals do not discuss relic-stupas of the Buddha,² or they simply specify the types of behaviour one should enact at an already established stupa.³ Pagel gleaned that the principal function of stupa festivals was to raise funds for the monastic institution and was able to differentiate different forms of the festival along these economic lines. For instance, when the stupa festival concerns worship at the stupas of disciples, the wealth acquired would be divided among individual monks, or among the entire community when at stupas of the Tathāgata. He also draws our attention to some features of the proceedings: a stupa festival would typically be held towards the end of the ‘summer retreat’ and would go on through the night, attracting merchants selling their wares and monks who would

¹ Pagel, ‘Stūpa Festivals’, 374.

² Pagel, ‘Stūpa Festivals’, 377–78.

³ The Pali *Vinaya* is silent on the matter, see Schopen, *Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monks*, 86.

teach the Dharma; there would also be professional fights¹ put on for the public²—'since stūpa festivals were financed through contributions from various sources, they probably accommodated a variety of interests and catered to the religious, economic, and political ambitions of all their sponsors.'³

In *Avadāna* literature, narrations of funerary proceedings (*śarīrapūjā*) and the subsequent stupa festival follow a typical structure and utilise common textual formulas with only minor variations. This enables one to collectively summarise them as follows. Once a Buddha or Bodhisatva has performed the duty of the Buddha and, like a fire without kindling, completely ceased in the sphere of *nirvāna* without remainder (*buddhakāryaṃ kṛtvā indhanakṣayād ivāgnir vārānasyāṃ nirupadhiśeṣe nirvāṇadhātau parinirvṛtaḥ*), the contemporaneous ruler organises a funerary ritual (*śarīrapūjā*) in which the body is placed on a pile of fragranced sticks and burnt to a cinder (*sarvagandhakāṣṭhaiś citāṃ citvā dhmāpitaḥ*). Once the fire had cooled (*nirvāpita*) the bones (*asthi*) are sometimes washed,⁴ and then poured into a reliquary (*kumbha*), often made of gold (*suvarṇa*) or the four precious substances (*catūratnamaya*). This is placed, along with an inscription plate (*paṭṭa*) in one case,⁵ in a relic stupa, which is also sometimes made of the four

¹ Wrestlers are depicted on stele and reliefs, for instance from Mohammed Nari and Peshawar, see *Das buddhistische Erbe Pakistans. Legenden, Klöster und Paradiese*, Kat. Nr. 219; 220.

² Avś 1. 69; 70.

³ Pagel, 'Stūpa Festivals', 377ff.

⁴ One account, now only extant in Chinese, tells us that the Mallas wash the relics: 洗舍利, T 5. 174b. See Strong, *Relics of the Buddha*, 117. The Reliquary Inscription of Śatruleka (No. 23) states that a certain Patruśīśara washes the relic: *imi dhātu prakṣalavati patruśīśara*.

⁵ *yāvad rājā caturaśītikaraṇḍasahasraṃ kārayitvā sauvarṇarūpyasphaṭika-vaidūryamayāṇāṃ teṣu dhātavaḥ prakṣiptāḥ. evaṃ vistareṇa caturaśīti-kumbhasahasraṃ paṭṭasahasraṃ*. Aś-av 53–54, Divy 26. 381.

precious substances and invariably measures a *yojana* in circumference and half a *yojana* in height. The stupa is established at a crossroads (*caturmahāpathe śārīrastūpaḥ pratiṣṭhāpitaḥ*) and an umbrella, banner, and flag are raised (*chatradhvajapatākāś cāropitāḥ*).¹ The establishment ritual is completed upon raising the staff (*yaṣṭi*), which, from epigraphic sources, was overseen by monks.²

After the establishment, a festival then ensues and here other devotees are given the opportunity to show their faith: to raise banners, flags, and umbrellas and so forth, as well as to venerate the stupa with incense, fragrances, garlands, oils, and coins, which would be fixed to the stupa. They would often recite the Buddha's qualities (*buddhānusmṛti*), and make aspirations (*praṇidhāna*), detailing the purpose of their ritual practice.³ A central function of establishing a stupa therefore was to create other opportunities for beings to acquire faith. Societal norms dictated that the internal disposition of faith is then externalised and performed in a donative act and the donor's spiritual or worldly intentions articulated in an aspiration.⁴

¹ Cf. MSV 1. 7; Adhik-v 69; SBV 1. 162; 2. 106; MPS 49.20; Avś 1. 61. 349; 62. 352; 63. Divy. 22. 327; 37. 583.

² Schopen, *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters*, 21. One example from the *Divyādāna* reads: *yat khalu sārthavāha jāñīyās tad eva poṣadhe pañcadaśyāṃ śiraḥsnāta upoṣadhoṣita idaṃ mañiratnaṃ dhvajāgre āropya...* Divy 116. 'At the *poṣadha* on the fifteenth [night], the caravan leader washed his head and observed the *upoṣadha*. Then, having placed the precious jewel onto the top of the banner...'

³ See Avś 1. 19. 110-11; 68. 365-366; 70. 387; 2. 71. 5-6. On aspirations, see Chapter Fourteen.

⁴ For discussion of the relation between sacred objects and faith, see Andy Rotman, 'The Erotics of Practice: Objects and Agency in Buddhist Avadāna Literature', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 71, no. 3 (2003): 555-78; Andy Rotman, 'The Power of Proximity: Creating and Venerating Shrines in Indian Buddhist Narratives', in *Buddhist Stūpas in South Asia: Recent Archaeological, Art-Historical, and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Jason Hawkes and Akira Shimada (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Pali sources are quite clear as to the spiritual benefits of worshipping a stupa; namely, that one can produce welfare (*hita*) and happiness (*sukha*) and be reborn in heaven (*sagga*),¹ most often Tāyatimsa.² This result is oft repeated throughout *Avadānas* also. However, the possibilities are herein expanded to include soteriological attainments. Strong observes of these texts that stupa worship was considered efficacious towards becoming an Arhat or Pratyekabuddha, but not the highest goal of a perfectly awakened Buddha. Needless to say, this latter goal is opened up in Mahāyāna sources.³

¹ DN 2. 142–143.

² Kottkamp, *Der Stupa als Repräsentation des buddhistischen Heilsweges*, 144ff.

³ Strong notes three attitudes towards the relationship between the Buddha, his relics, and attaining awakening. The Theravāda tradition holds that one can only make a bodhisatva vow in the presence of a living Buddha, whereas in a number of Mahāyāna sources (he quotes the *Śikṣāsamuccaya* and *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*) it is possible to simply worship a relic with the correct resolve and one can attain any of the three soteriological goals. In distinction, the *Avadānaśataka* presents another view in that worship of the physical remains of the Buddha was not efficacious to attaining all soteriological paths and only enabled the attainment of arhatship, in distinction to worship of a living Buddha. Strong, *Relics of the Buddha*, 31–32. Strong does not consider the distinction between making and worshipping a relic-stupa and in stories where a stupa is made, this is most often conducted by a king who in doing so provides other individuals with the opportunity to worship and gain merit. As far as I am aware it is never stated the king attains *samyaksambodhi*, however, in other cases (such as the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*) making a stupa is explicitly connected with awakening. The construction of stupas made of seven precious substances (*saptaratnamaya*) and that are wombs for the physical element of the Tathāgata (*tathāgatadhātugarbha*) are mentioned in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra* and given as a means to make much merit, however, they are subordinated in terms of their merit-making practice to the composition, recitation, worship etc. of the *prajñāpāramitā*: ASP 3. 30, 33.

Little more can be extracted from the textual sources in regards to precisely what occurred at stupa festivals. However certain strategies can be utilised that go some way to solving a few of the unanswered questions. In particular, archaeological finds and donative epigraphs enable a bit more colour to be added to the picture of a stupa festival.

In respect to archaeological sources, the specific form of the stupa, whether for instance a large central stupa or a smaller peripheral *gaha*-stupa, alters the manner in which the ritual action was directed. The former for instance, due to spatial semiotics, lends to a public festival, whereas small stupas suggest more private circumstances.¹ The various donative objects uncovered at stupa sites in the Northwest indicate the specific material and economic nature of the donation, suggesting the economic means of the donor and the broader trade networks through which the objects were acquired. Donative inscriptions offer a different set of data, specifying a date, which reveals the temporal significance² and thus the specific ritual occasion of the stupa festivals, and they list the types of donors—the organisers and funders of stupa establishments—as well as a host of other participants, who we may conjecture were present at the ritual. They also evince certain types of doctrinal knowledge, such as Brahma-merit and soteriological aspirations,³ which informed the ritual.

On these bases, we can get a better sense of the circumstances, scale, and the demographic of those participating in the ritual. Collectively therefore these sources give us a remarkably unique insight into the nature of this type of Buddhist practice as it existed in the North and Northwest, and there are several concordances, discordances, and general points that may be elaborated upon in light of the archaeological and epigraphic material.

¹ See above in Chapter Fifteen: Types of Stupas.

² See Chapter Eleven: Time and Practice.

³ See Chapter Fourteen: Epigraphic Aspirations.

First, the economic standing of the donors is indicated by the material quality of the donation. We noted above that material worth is not correlated with the amount of merit one produces;¹ however, in the social field, the substantial economic cost of the establishment, in addition to the donation of smaller items of value, appears to have been important. The donation of relics and the construction of a stupa are always accompanied by the donation of smaller items. These include gold, silver or copper sheets of metal (upon which an inscription may be rendered), decorated or gilded schist containers of either ovoid or stupa shape, depending on the region, and a host of other items that were being traded during the Kuṣāṇa period, including other smaller gold and silver containers, within which the relics are found, as well as gold and silver flowers, coral pearls, quartz, beryl, crystal, green glass and turquoise and in some cases coins.² This is a pattern of donative practice witnessed across the spectrum of Gandharan reliquaries and on this basis, it seems the donation of relics was an expensive affair and no doubt required a certain amount of expendable wealth.

As Liu Xinru observes, many of these trade items, it seems, were valued in Buddhist literature, as they may arise within the standard list of seven precious substances: gold (*suvarṇa*), silver (*rūpya*), beryl (*vaiḍūrya*), crystal (*sphāṭika*), pearl (*muktā*), red coral (*lohitikā*) and

¹ See Chapter Thirteen: The Function of Avadānas.

² For a summary of all Gandharan reliquaries and associated objects, see Jongeward, 'Survey of Gandhāran Reliquaries'. Robert Brown also observed that in the Kuṣāṇa graves of Tilya Tepe a similar host of items were found and thus speculates that the origins of donating such expensive items along with relics should be sought here. Most notable are the small rosettes identical to those found in reliquary donations, as well as several cosmetic and perfume boxes that are identical in shape and form to Gandharan reliquaries. Robert L. Brown, 'The Nature and Use of the Bodily Relics in Gandhāra', in *Gandhāran Buddhism: Archaeology, Art, Texts*, ed. Pia Branacaccio and Kurt Behrendt, Asian Religion and Society Series (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2006), 192ff.

another form of coral or perhaps ammonite or agate (*musāragalva*).¹ In the broader Indic cultural context, several of these objects were held to have medicinal, healing, and divinatory properties, to be inherently precious, durable, and connected to the earth and body. On this basis, and due to their prevalence in later relic establishments in which true bodily or ‘corporeal’ relics of bones or ash were not found, Wannaporn Rienjang argues that the beads came to symbolically embody, or function as ‘incorporeal relics’.²

Relic donations in Gandhāra specifically are also quite unique in that many include the donation of coins, a phenomenon not witnessed outside of the regions of the Northwest at this time.³ In her survey of all reliquaries and stupas from eastern Afghanistan, Errington has found that a third included coins with the relic deposit.⁴ This practice likely began from the Indo-Scythian Period and continued until after the Kuṣāṇa Period.⁵ Since this phenomenon is unique to the Northwest in the early centuries of the Common Era, it becomes an important tool for dating texts that show an awareness of this practice and thus presuppose this cultural context. We have already had cause to mention the *Aśokāvadāna* and *Hiranyapāṇyavadāna* in regards to their mentioning the *dīnāra*, a coin first issued by Vima Kadphises (c. 113–127 CE) and

¹ Xinru Liu, ‘Buddhist Ideology and the Commercial Ethos in Kuṣāṇa India’, in *Buddhist Stupas in South Asia: Recent Archaeological, Art-Historical, and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Jason Hawkes and Akira Shimada (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 182.

² Rienjang, ‘Honouring the Body’, 32ff.

³ Although little can be said as to the imagined value of donating coins in this fashion, it may well be the case, as recently suggested by Wannaporn Rienjang, that coins functioned as a surrogate for rulers; a temporal marker and means to honour them through the coin donation. Rienjang, ‘Honouring the Body’, 329.

⁴ Elizabeth Errington, ‘Reliquaries in the British Museum’, in *Gandharan Buddhist Reliquaries*, by David Jongeward et al. (Seattle: Early Buddhist Manuscripts Project, 2012), 130.

⁵ See the table in Errington, ‘Gandhara Stupa Deposits’, 80.

in the case of the latter, stating that a *dīnāra* was fixed to a stupa in a donative act. And the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* also retains knowledge of this highly localised norm.¹ The specific coinage to which it refers, the *kārṣāpaṇa*, is less precise in this regard and designates a measurement of coinage that predates our period. However, it was a weight of silver coinage also employed by the Kuṣāṇas and the neighbouring Western Kṣatrapas during the early centuries of the Common Era, and hence, it is not unlikely that this section of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* may be situated in a period of the North and Northwest in the first half of the Common Era.²

Stupa festivals were arranged at specific times. Second, stupa festivals were dictated by temporal norms.³ Of the 70 inscriptions, 41

¹ Bbh 233.

² The *Bodhisattvabhūmi* and in particular its first and earliest section, the *Ādhārayogasthāna* (where the coin) are given a *terminus ante quem* of the 5th century, primarily on the basis of the Chinese translations. Little to nothing is known about the exact origins of the text and tradition attributes the work to Maitreya and that it was transmitted to Asaṅga, who is said to have been born in the 4th century in Puruṣapura (Peshawar) but, according to Xuan Zang, to have studied and taught further south in the city of Ayodhyā, situated on the banks of the Ganges, see Engle, *The Bodhisattva Path*, xvi. Florin Deleanu dates the work to the latter half of the 3rd century, although admits that the text is the product of multiple authors and that the *Ādhārayogasthāna* section could well stem from a much earlier time. Florin Deleanu, ed., *The Chapter on the Mundane Path (Laukikamārga) in the Śrāvakabhūmi: Introductory Study, Sanskrit Diplomatic Edition, Sanskrit Critical Edition* (International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 2006), 154ff; Cf. McCombs, 'Mahāyāna and the Gift: Theories and Practices', 252ff.

³ Salomon summarises the temporal patterns of reliquary donations, dated to Indic months, which number sixteen. Salomon, 'Gandharan Reliquary Inscriptions', 187. The present analysis includes more recently edited inscriptions dated to Indic months (now numbering nineteen) as well as those inscriptions dated to Macedonian months, which I have translated, as it were, into Indic months on the basis of the table provided in Pingree, 'A Note on the Calendars Used in Early Indian Inscriptions', 355. The table he provides could

offer a date. Predominantly relics were donated in either summer—13 inscriptions are dated to the months of *Caitra*, *Vaiśākha*, *Āṣāḍha*, and *Jyaiṣṭha*—and in monsoon—25 are dated to the months of *Śrāvāṇa*, *Bhādrapada*, and *Kārttika*. Only three were donated in winter, during the months of *Mārgaśīrṣa*, *Pauṣa*, and *Phālguna* (1). Following the monastic calendar, more than half (18) were made during the quadrimestral period of the rain retreat—reckoned from the full moon in *Āṣāḍha*, at the ritual introducing monsoon (*varṣopanāyika*), up until the full-moon of *Kārttika*, at the ritual closing of the monsoon (*pravāraṇā*)—the duration for which monastics were expected to take up permanent residence at a monastery. Patterns of ritual behaviour are also found in respect to the days of the month with 21 falling on or near *upośadha* days. Subsequently, we can conclude that in many cases it was on this ritual occasion that relic donations were made.

Despite monastics not being strictly peripatetic during this period, it is still perhaps not unexpected to find that in the *Varṣāvastu* of the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*, the rule that disallowed monks from going outside the boundary during monsoon was revised, and a series of rules were developed allowing monks to attend such donative activities during monsoon for up to one week:

The Fortunate One observed, ‘My disciples desire the acquisition of robes and material wealth. Suppose I should allow the monks seven days in order that they dwell content and can use the gift-worthy object of the donor. Henceforth I allow that in respect to a matter of obligation, monks may leave [the *sīmā*] and attend for seven days in a matter of obligation.’

be early by one month, however, in respect to ascertaining the results of seasonal ritual behaviour, this does not affect the results in any fashion. See Chapter Eleven: Ritual Rhythms in Donative Inscriptions.

Thus the Fortunate One stipulated that a monk could leave and attend for seven days. But the monks did not know exactly what a matter of obligation is. They explained this matter to the Fortunate One. The Fortunate One said, ‘Male and female lay-practitioners have matters of obligation, as do monks, students as well as male and female novices. What is a male lay-practitioner’s obligation? There is the case that a male lay-practitioner has a home, family, and his own enclosure, and therefore has accumulated a great deal of property in respect to objects and material wealth. He sends a messenger to the monks, ‘Come, noble ones, and eat!’ Monks may go and attend in respect to this matter of obligation towards the lay-practitioner. This is a male lay-practitioner’s matter of obligation. Another instance of a male lay-practitioner’s obligation is that a male lay-practitioner wishes to establish a monastery for the monastic community of the four directions, and therefore has accumulated a great deal of property in respect to robes and material wealth. He sends a message to the monks, “Come, noble ones, and eat!” Monks may go and attend in respect to this matter of obligation towards the lay-practitioner. This is a male lay-practitioner’s matter of obligation...a male lay-practitioner wishes to supplement the *vihāra* with bedding and seating...a male lay-practitioner wishes to arrange long-term alms for the monastery, which are the appropriate sacrifice...a male lay-practitioner wishes to establish a relic stupa of the Tathāgata at the monastery...a male lay-practitioner wishes to supplement the stupa by raising a stick, umbrella, banner, and flag and by thoroughly sprinkling sandalwood and

saffron. He sends a message to the monks, ‘Come, noble ones, be the Dharma-friends.’”¹

¹ *bhagavā[n] saṃlakṣayaty. ākāṃkṣanti bata me śrāvakāḥ vastralābha āmiṣalābhaś ca. yanv ahaṃ bhikṣūṇāṃ sukhasparśavihārārthaṃ datṛṇāṃ ca deyadharmaparibhogārthaṃ saptāham anujānīyāṃ. tasmād anujānāmi saptāham adhiṣṭhāya gantavyaṃ karaṇīyena. uktaṃ bhagavatā saptāham adhiṣṭhāya gantavyaṃ karaṇīyēneti. bhikṣavo na jānate kasya karaṇīyaṃ. etat prakaraṇaṃ bhikṣavo bhagavata ārocayanti. bhagavān āha / upāsakasya karaṇīyena upāsikā<yāḥ> karaṇīyena bhikṣoḥ karaṇīyena bhikṣuṇyāḥ śikṣamāṇāyā śrāmaṇerakasya śrāmaṇerikāyāḥ karaṇīye<na>. kim upāsakasya karaṇīya? yathāpi tad upāsakasya gṛhakaḍatraṃ pratyupasthitaṃ bhavaty ātmano veṣṭanaṃ. tena tatra prabhūto vastralābha āmiṣalābhaś ca samudānītaḥ. sa bhikṣūṇāṃ dūtaṃ anupreṣayati. āgaccha<ṃ>tv āryāḥ paribhokṣyante. gantavyaṃ bhikṣuṇā saptāham adhiṣṭhāya upāsakasya karaṇīyena. idam upāsakasya karaṇīyaṃ. aparam apy upāsakasya karaṇīya<ṃ>. yathāpi tad upāsakaś cāturdiśe bhikṣusaṃghe vihāraṃ pratiṣṭhāp<ay>itukāmo bhavati. tena tatra prabhūto vastralābhaḥ āmiṣalābhaś ca samudānītaḥ. sa bhikṣūṇāṃ dūtaṃ anupreṣayaty. āgaccha[n]tv āryāḥ paribhokṣya<ṃ>te. gantavyaṃ bhikṣuṇā saptāham adhiṣṭhāya upāsakasya karaṇīyena. idam upāsakasya karaṇīyaṃ. aparam apy upāsakasya karaṇīyaṃ. yathāpi tad upāsakas tasminn eva vihāre śayanāsanam anupradātukāmo bhavati. tena tatra prabhūto vastralābhaḥ āmiṣalābhaś ca samudānīto bhavati. sa bhikṣūṇāṃ dūtaṃ anupreṣayati. āgacchantv āryāḥ paribhokṣyante. gantavyaṃ bhikṣuṇā saptāham adhiṣṭhāya upāsakasya karaṇīyena. idam upāsakasya karaṇīyaṃ. aparam apy upāsakasya karaṇīyaṃ. yathāpi tad upāsakas tasminn eva vihāre dhruvabhikṣāṃ prajñāpayitukāmo bhavaty anukūlayajñāṃ. tena tatra prabhūto vastralābhaḥ āmiṣalābhaś ca samudānīto bhavati. sa bhikṣūṇāṃ dūtaṃ anupreṣaya[m]ty. āgaccha[m]tv āryāḥ paribhokṣyante. gantavyaṃ bhikṣuṇā saptāham adhiṣṭhāya upāsakasya karaṇīyena. idam upāsakasya karaṇīyaṃ. aparam apy upāsakasya karaṇīyaṃ. yathāpi tad upāsakas tasminn eva vihāre tathāgatasya śarīraṃ stūpaṃ pratiṣṭhāpayitukāmo bhavati / sa bhikṣū<ṇāṃ> dūtaṃ anupreṣayati. āgacchamt tv āryā dharmasakhāyo bhaviṣyanti. ga[n]tavyaṃ bhikṣuṇā saptāham adhiṣṭhāya upāsakasya karaṇīyena. ida<m u>pāsaka<sya ka>raṇīyaṃ aparam apy upāsakasya karaṇīyaṃ. yathāpi tad upāsakas tasminn eva stūpe yaṣṭyāropanaṃ chatrāropanaṃ dhvajāropanaṃ patākāropanaṃ* / ala<ṃ>sekaṃ candanasekaṃ kuṃkumasekaṃ anupradātukāmo bhavati. sa*

This is an extremely important passage for understanding the nature of relic and stupa establishments in the Northwest. Gregory Schopen, for example, noted that the practice of establishing a relic stupa is only found in the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*¹ and the precise circumstances of the relic-stupa establishment here, that is, along with *yaṣṭi*, are to be found in the Donation of Nagadatta, dated 11 [Kaniṣka II] (238/239 CE).² The passage indicates, in requiring the presence of the Dharma-friend, that monastic institutions had, or at least wished for, some degree of control over the ritual establishment of a stupa and also that non-monastics sought their presence there. Unlike the *Avadāna* accounts of stupa festivals, it also suggests that a broad demographics of wealthy individuals may establish a relic stupa—this is in accord with our epigraphic context, and more specifically with inscriptions of the Kuṣāṇa Period, in which the demographic of donors was also broader, as shown above.

All of these elements of a stupa festival are embodied by the Gold Scroll of Seṇavarman (No. 36). This dedication was made on the eighth day of Śrāvaṇa, during the monsoon retreat, and we can assume therefore that a full congregation was in attendance. Indeed this is confirmed at the beginning of the inscription, where we read:

bhikṣūṇāṃ dūtāṃ anupreṣayaty. āgacchantv āryā dharmasakhāya<ḥ> me bhaviṣyanti. gantavyaṃ bhikṣuṇā upāsakasya karaṇīyena saptāham adhiṣṭhāya. idam upāsakasya karaṇīyaṃ. Var-v. 1.8.4. Shōno, 'A Re-Edited Text of the Varṣāvastu in the Vinayavastu and a Tentative Re-Edited Text of the Vārṣikavastu in the Vinayasūtra'.

¹ The corresponding passage of the *Vassupānāyikakhandhaka* in the Pāli allows monks to break the rain retreat for seven days but only mentions cases when monastics, students, novices, and lay practitioners wish to build a monastery or donate a gift (*dāna*), such as a lotus-pond (*pokkharāṇī*), and to hear the teaching or see a monk, Vin 1. 139; 4. 186. Discussed in Schopen, *Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monks*, 73–77.

² CKI 147.

[1.] *aryagaṇatavagaṇabramacaryagaṇasa ubhayatasamḡhasa saṇivāitasa Priadatasa [ca] thuvavalasa śirasa pada vadati¹ Seṇavarme iṣpare Oḍiraya ṇavhapati viṇaveti...*

With his head, Seṇavarma, the lord, king of Oḍi and the protector of the people honours the feet of the group of Nobles Ones, of the group of ascetics, brahmacāryas, of the assembled two-fold community, and of Priyadatta, the guardian of the stupa and proclaims...

Reading further in the inscription, we glean even more about how the ritual event may have unfolded.² In lines 1–4, Seṇavarma makes a public declaration detailing that he (we must here recall that the inscription is written in the first person) has succeeded his brother Varmaseṇa and has

¹ The phrase G. *śirasa pada vadati* is, in fact, a standard ‘approach formula’ and a ‘form of respect showing’ that corresponds to the exemplar in Skt. *pāḍau sirasā √vand*. Variations of this are seen across both Pali and Sanskrit textual sources of the Buddhist tradition, as well as among non-Buddhist sources. See Allon, *Style and Function*, 382. It is primarily used as part of the approach to the Buddha or a monk and often in specific instances, say when another has commanded someone to approach the Buddha and pay respect as well as in cases where the Buddha’s body is worshipped, including presumably his physical remains. Allon, *Style and Function*, 107; 194. In fact there is an almost direct correspondence of the entire phrase in the *Avadānaśataka: bhagavataḥ pāḍau śirasā vanditvā bhagavantam vijñāpitavatī*, Avś 1. 2, 25, 75. In the same text, the expression *bhagavataḥ pāḍau śirasā √vand* occurs frequently and is situated within a typical narrative structure: first the individual approaches the Buddha and lowers his or her head (‘approach formula’), then the individual offers a gift (*deyadharmā*), receives instruction in the Dharma (*dharmadeśanā*) from the Buddha, and finally ‘having fallen at his feet begins to make an aspiration’ (*pāḍayor nipatya praṇidhiṃ kartum ārabdha*). This latter may be termed a standard ‘about-to-make-an-aspiration’ formula.

² Here I paraphrase heavily and ask you to refer to No. 36 in Appendix One for a full reading of the text.

re-established the Ekaūḍa-stupa. He refers to the previous establishers, his ancestors Utaraseṇa and Vasuseṇa, and declares that he belongs to the Ikṣvāku lineage, the family of the Buddha. In lines 4–7, Seṇavarma declares that he establishes the relics of the Buddha and then lists a long series of the Buddha’s epithets, in a fashion somewhat reminiscent of *buddhānusmṛti* (‘recollection of the Buddhas’),¹ and describes the qualities of the relics. In lines 7–10 he outlines the recipients and beneficiaries of the donation including a host of worthy recipients, members of his ancestry, as well as the Kuṣāṇas Kujula Kadphises and his Sadaṣkaṇa. If we presume that all the individuals he mentioned were present, this was indeed an occasion of some import and it is likely the Kuṣāṇa rulers, who must have recently taken control of Swat,² were present. In lines 10–13, he then expresses the purpose of his donation in the form of an aspiration, wishing that all beings beginning from the great hell of Avīci up until the peak of existence and all in between. Thereafter lines 13–14 detail the process of the construction and the date.

Standing before the congregation, Seṇavarma thus took centre stage in the stupa festival, and made his soteriological aspiration, wishing that all before him and indeed all in existence attain awakening. It is here when the notion of performative causality³ is truly manifest and it is here that Seṇavarma, embodying the merit of his past good-roots which led him to this moment, and specifying his future intention that all being are liberated, that he defines his future states.

¹ On the recollection of the Buddhas qualities at stupa festivals, see Avś 2. 68, 70.

² See Chapter Seven: The Oḍirājas.

³ See Chapter Thirteen: The Scholastic Basis of Avadāna: Performative Causality.

CONCLUSION

To return to the premise with which this study began, it was argued that a social history of Buddhism in the Indic North and Northwest between the 2nd century BCE and 3rd century CE must account for a tension between the accounts of Buddhist narrative discourse, which recall an existential threat to the Dharma and the institutional integrity of Buddhist institutions, and a distinct burgeoning of Buddhism during this period. Scholarship has hitherto sought to evade the tension between decline and success by discarding Buddhist narratives of decline, on the assumption that the ruling bodies to which the decline is attributed were active patrons of Buddhism. However, this study has shown that the narratives can be taken seriously, when the historically biased model of empires, upon which the contradiction is based, is adjusted. Indeed, through a comprehensive study of epigraphic and numismatic data, it was demonstrated that the extent and nature of political patronage can be nuanced significantly at several political and sociological levels.

An absence of donative inscriptions and limited archaeological finds from the Indo-Greek Period demands the conclusion that Buddhism during the 2nd century BCE was a limited institutional force in the regions of the North and Northwest and did not garner the attention of rulers. It is only during the Indo-Scythian Period from the late 1st century BCE that a large number of monastic complexes, stupas and donative inscriptions arise. However, this is not to be attributed to the patronage of Indo-Scythian rulers. The suzerains of the imperial

administration are entirely absent from Buddhist ritual contexts and it is only in the case of a limited number of semi-autonomous Indo-Scythian satraps that political engagement with Buddhism can be discerned. Several of these satraps dedicated relics and constructed monastic complexes and this is to be related to their affirmation of power in certain locales, a possibility, it was argued, that is to be attributed to the decline of the Indo-Scythian Empire.

Foremost, however, the flourishing of Buddhism during this period was shown to be due to individuals related to the Apracarājas and Oḍirājas, who emerge in the historical record at a time of wide sweeping political change in the Northwest. The former were rulers of Dir and Bajaur in Pakistan at the cusp of the Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian periods at the turn of the Common Era, and the latter governed during the period of early Kuṣāṇa invasions in the mid to late 1st century CE. These rulers are widely, and indeed erroneously, characterised as ‘Indo-Scythian’ in scholarship. This study, however, has demonstrated on several grounds that the two groups were quite distinct and in doing so was able to shift the historical narrative from a history of empires to one of kingdoms, demonstrating the influence of local systems of power on the political landscape and how Buddhist practice served as a central medium in this process.

During this formative period of Buddhism in the North and Northwest, Buddhist institutions produced various forms of media to legitimise their presence in the regions. First, a highly localised political propaganda was developed, which narratively portrayed certain Indo-Scythian satraps and figures of the Apracarāja and Oḍirāja families as patrons of Buddhism. The composition of these narratives was shown to correlate with the political picture gleaned from inscriptions, where patronage during this period was primarily enacted by figures at these levels of governance. Second, these narratives were shown to coincide with an unprecedented number of relic dedications and rededications

enacted primarily by these local rulers, which served to mark at once the presence of the Buddha, Buddhist institutions, and their own political power.

Due to the centrality of relics for Buddhism's institutional demarcation, their value grew exponentially during this period, leading to their commodification as items of trade and the concomitant development of regulations in Buddhist legal literature, which prescribed the legal theft, sale, and rededication of relics by monks and laity alike. In particular, these regulations allowing relic theft were transposed into narrative propaganda, primarily within certain Sarvāstivādin witnesses of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* and *Aśokāvadāna*, which gave authority to rulers to steal and rededicate relics in a new location. This model of practice conceivably served as the basis for many rededications enacted by local satraps and individuals related to the Apracarājas and Oḍirājas, whose own inscriptions and literary representations allude to central topoi of these narratives.

The practice of re-establishing relics at a previously unestablished location was also doctrinally sanctioned as means to produce Brahma-merit in both Dharmaguptaka and Sarvāstivādin literature and the inscriptions related to these rulers. This goal, in terms of Buddhist cosmology, was shown to likely be related to the millenarianist view that the Dharma was disappearing and the aeon coming to an end. These same inscriptions also relate that dedicating relics was soteriologically efficacious, a capacity that was shown to be connected to a doctrinal notion, specific to these inscriptions, that relics were somatically imbued with the soteriological qualities of Buddha as a field of merit. These two moves on the part of Buddhists at this time represent radical ideological innovations, which, due to their rarity, indicate that they were specifically developed for the political conditions of that milieu. The Buddhists therefore had made relic dedications a

soteriological practice and enabled powerful individuals in the Northwest to affirm and perform socially their soteriological agency.

Indeed, at a social level, these aspirations reflect the development of the philosophical principle of performative causality, which provided opportunity for individuals to actualise and embody their past action, indicating the amount of merit which they had accrued, whilst also performing their potential future state by directing the causal force of their action through an epigraphic aspiration in the ritual act of donation. The principle of philosophy that states the causal factors of an individual must exist in the past, present and future was a popular element of the Buddhist world-view at this time. This is shown by its narrative portrayal in certain *Avadānas*, localised in the North and Northwest, and we can presume that the monastic pedagogues of this sphere were propagating this principle of causality as an impetus for society to engage in ritual norms. For the performance of meritorious existential states also had overarching consequence in the social field. In examining inscriptions and narrative representations of donative practice, this tenet was shown to be a central informing principle of ritual behaviour in this sphere.

It was therefore during the period of the late 1st century BCE and 2nd century that we first encounter the hallmarks of a flourishing and well-established Buddhist institution. Large monastic complexes across the regions functioned as centres in society for a multitude of ritual occasions, which were enacted on specific days throughout the year. Monasteries thus developed specific administrative roles to manage this general increase in activity, such as those dedicated to managing stupas and the construction of monastic complexes. Monastic institutions also underwent a process of diversification, for this period bears witness to some of the earliest *demonstrable* instances of monastic splintering in the Buddhist community and the first *public* arising of several monastic institutions in donative epigraphy, indicating that a social demand had

arisen for individual institutions to patently differentiate themselves. Several monastic institutions maintained discrete relationships with individual political institutions, and monastic pundits and pedagogues were also in the business of actively cultivating influential political relationships. Yet, this diversification is lamented in Buddhist sources for bringing disunity to the Buddhist community, which was seen as a reflection of a declining Dharma.

During the Kuṣāṇa Period from the 2nd century CE, several political changes occurred which impacted upon patterns of patronage and the nature of Buddhist political propaganda. Notably, certain Kuṣāṇa suzerains appear in inscriptions, indicating that Buddhism had become sufficiently powerful to be metamorphosed into an imperial tool. In particular, during the reign of Kaniṣka I, the Kuṣāṇa Empire secured its hold, for the first time since the Mauryan Period, over the entirety of the North and Northwest. Functioning as central parts of this process, powerful Sarvāstivādin monks and nuns coordinated with the empire during the time of Kaniṣka I's invasion of the Gangetic Plains to establish colossal Bodhisattva statues at key sites. By this time, and no doubt as a product of geo-political unity, the Sarvāstivādins had become an institutional force in the regions of the North and Northwest. As a result, they also developed a form of propaganda which shifted its political discourse from local kingdoms and satrapies to empires, in one stroke portraying such figures as Kaniṣka I as Buddhist devotees and establishing a unified Buddhist institution that embodied the two regions.

The conditions of empire in this case appear to have brought a degree of economic and social stability, for both the number of donations and the diversity of individuals making donation increases during this period. This indicates that wealth had disseminated more widely throughout society and a greater slice of the populace had sufficient expendable capital. Where donative behaviour was formerly characterised as a political activity, now it was characterised

economically. Only a limited number of titles identifying individuals in terms of their social grouping, such as an occupation, arise in inscriptions of this period. But these nonetheless indicate that merchants, tradesmen, and bureaucrats, who had enough wealth, would fund dedications, ranging from elements of art and architecture at monastic complexes to entire monasteries and stupas. Notably, a mercantile presence in inscriptions is distinctly low, which may challenge the long-held association between this group and Buddhism's development.

In addition to re-evaluating the Buddhist social-history of the North and Northwest, the second goal of this study was methodological. Buddhist thought and practice is often discussed as if in a vacuum: devoid of context and without a history. Of course scholarship is ever on the hunt to provide context, with varying degrees of success, but for the most part attempts at contextualisation often result in overgeneralisations and a lack the nuance that is truly required for any form of explication. The primary impetus behind this study was to introduce such nuance and reconstruct, as far as possible, a picture of Buddhism in the Indic North and Northwest that demonstrates the function of Buddhist ideological and behavioural norms within this specific context. I feel that this work has taken some steps in the right direction. I fear too, however, that for reasons of time, material hindrances, ignorance or otherwise, too many important are left unanswered.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE:

CATALOGUE OF SELECT INSCRIPTIONS

No. 1 Reliquary Inscription from Menander's Reign (see No. 11)

Date: c. 155–130 BCE

Provenance: Shinkot, Bajaur District, Pakistan

Present location: Unknown

Object: Steatite Schist Lid

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 176

[Upside of lid, rim] [A.]...minedrasa maharajasa kaṭiasa divasa 4
4 4¹ 1 1 pra[ṇasa]me[na]²...

[Upside of lid, centre] [A¹.] [śa]...(prati)[thavi]ta.³

[Underside of lid] [A².] [p]raṇasame[na]...⁴śakamunisa

[A.]...of Menander, the Great King, day 14 of Kārttika. Equal to
life...

¹ A numeral 4 has been added below, thus changing an initial day from the 8th to the 14th. Both of dates coincide with the *upoṣadha*, a ritual occasion of the monastic and non-monastic calendar practised four times monthly in conjunction with the lunar phases.

² Only the upper section of this *akṣara* is discernible and could either be read as *da*, as previous editors have done, but it could equally be the head of a *na*, having the equivalent form to the same in *minedra*.

³ Stefan Baums reconstructs the section of A and A¹ (excluding the date formula) as follows: [A] pra[ṇasa]me[da] (*śarira bhagavato) [A¹] [śa](*kamunisa prati)[thavi]ta. Baums, 'Catalog', 202. In A, a large space of approximately 20 possible *akṣaras* separates pra[ṇasa]meda from *minedra* and thus from (prati)[thavi]ta in A¹. Subsequently, this reconstruction, constituting twelve *akṣaras*, is questionable.

⁴ [A²] praṇasame[da] (*śarira bhagava)-[to] śakamunisa. Baums, 'Catalog', 202. The –to is not legible in the existing images. Cf. Konow, 'New Traces of the Greeks in India', 647. At least 20 *akṣaras* separate praṇasame[na] from *śakamunisa*. The reconstruction offers only seven *akṣaras*.

[A¹.]...were established.

[A².] Equal to life...of the Fortunate One Śākyamuni.

No. 2 Reliquary Inscription of Theuduta

Date: —¹

Provenance: Swat, Pakistan

Present location: Lahore Museum, G 344

Object: Steatite vase

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 32

The[u]dutena meridarkhena pratiṭhavidā ime śarira śakamunisa
bhagavato bahujaṇa[hi](ta)ye

Relics of Śākyamuni the Fortunate One were established by the
district officer Theuduta, for the benefit of many people.

No. 3 Reliquary Inscription of Unknown Meridarkh

Date: —²

Provenance: Taxila, Punjab, Pakistan

Present location: India Museum

Object: Copper plate

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 33

[1.] ? ? ? + + meri[a]kheṇa sabhayakeṇa thubo pra[ti]stavito
matapitu puyae aghadakṣoṇayae.

A stupa was established by..., the district governor, along with
his wife, for the worship and the highest reward of [their] mother
and father.

¹ Dated palaeographically to the Indo-Greek Period in the late 2nd century BCE, Konow, *Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions: With the Exception of Those of Aśoka*, 2–4.

² Dated palaeographically to the Indo-Scythian Period of the mid 1st century BCE, Konow, *Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions: With the Exception of Those of Aśoka*, 4–5.

No. 4 Inscribed Plate of Saṃghamitra

Date: 9 Azes, 39/38 BCE
 Provenance: Buner, Pakistan
 Present location: Private collection, Dubai
 Object: Bronze plate
 Script: Kharoṣṭhī
 Ref: CKI 459

maharajasa mahatasiya Ayasiya saṃvatsaraasiya 4 4 1 masasiya
 Kaṭiasiya 1 1 mahakṣatravasiya Mahapalasuśpalaputrasiya Vasa-
 Avakaśasiya rajame ime bhagavato Śakamuṇisiya dana
 Sagamitraasiya likhite.

In year 9 of the Great King, the Great Azes, day two of the month
 Kārttika, during the reign of the Great Satrap Vasa-Abdagases,
 son of Mahapala Śuspula. A gift for the Fortunate One,
 Śākyamuni, written by Saṃghamitra

**No. 5 Reliquary Inscription of Unknown Donor from the Reign of
 Namipāla**

Date: 11 Namipala, 37/36 BCE
 Provenance: Buner, Pakistan
 Present location: Aman ur Rahman private collection
 Object: Gilded schist, domed reliquary
 Script: Kharoṣṭhī
 Ref: CKI 827

mahakṣatrpaNamipalasaṃvatsaraye ekadaśa Kaṭivasa masasa
 [di]vasa catora pratiṭhāvide ame śarira bhagavato
 [Śaka](*)mu)[n](*)[sa] Balametra likhi.

Year 11 of the Great Satrap Namipala, day four of the month
 Kārttika. Relics of the Fortunate One Śākyamuni were
 established. Balamitra wrote it.

No. 6 Reliquary Inscription of GomitraDate: 12 [Azes]¹, 36/35 BCE

Provenance: Unknown

Present Location: Hirayama Ikuo Silk Road Museum, Japan, No. 105111.

Object: Stone relic-chamber slab

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 464

[1.] ? + + .[u] ?...[2.][va]ṣe vatamane ya [d]u[va]ḍaya ? ? ? ? [3]
 pra[ta]maheṣiṇa Gomitreṇa ṣamaṇeṇa [4.] dhamakasiḱeṇa ime
 śarira pradi[5.]ṭhaviḍa tasa bhagavadu Śakam[u]ṇisa [6.]
 (*uta)map[u]galasa <*de>[va]didevasa ma[.7.](*haṣamaṇasa)
 [sava]sapahiḍas(*u)[kha](*ya).

In the current year twelve...of... Relics of the Fortunate One Śākyamuni, the highest personage, god among gods, the great monk, were established by the great sage Gomitra, a monk and Dharma-teacher who has attained..., for the welfare and happiness of all beings.

No. 7 Reliquary Inscription of Loṇa

Date: —

Provenance: Uncertain, Charsadda, Pakistan

Present Location: Private collection

Object: Schist reliquary lid

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 247

kumarasa Viṣuvarmasa [a]teuria Loṇa grahavadi[dhita] im[e]
 śarira pratiṭhaveti sarva budha puyaīta atitaṇagatapracupaṇa
 pracegabudha puyaīta bhaga[va]to ṣavaḱa puyaīta Braṃa
 Saha[m]pati puyaīta Śakro de[va]ṇa idro puyaīta catvaro
 ma[ha]raya puyaīta sarva(*sa)tva puyaīta.

¹ Dated palaeographically to a late Indo-Greek or early Indo-Scythian Period, in the mid 1st century BCE, Salomon, 'Observations on the Reliquary Slab Inscription of Gomitra [1 Plate]'.

The lady of the court of Prince Viṣuvarma, Loṇa, establishes relics. All Buddhas are worshipped, past, future, and present Pratyekabuddhas are worshipped, the disciples of the Fortunate One are worshipped, Brahmā Sahamṃpati is worshipped, Śakra lord of the *devas* is worshipped, the four great kings are worshipped, All beings are worshipped.

No. 8 Quoted Inscription of the Oḍirāja Vasuseṇa (see No. 36)

Date: —

Provenance: Uncertain, Swat Pakistan

Present location: Unknown

Object: Gold scroll

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 249

[3] Utaraseṇaputre Vasuseṇe Oḍiraya Iṣmahokulade se imo Ekaüḍo pratīḥaveti

[3] Son of Utaraseṇa, Vasuseṇa the Oḍirāja and descendant of the Ikṣvākus; he establishes this Ekaüḍa-[stupa].

No. 9 Reliquary Inscription of Toda et al

Date: 39 Aves, 9/8 BCE

Provenance: Haḍḍa, Afghanistan

Present location: Unknown

Object: Gold scroll

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 455

[1.] vaṣaye 20 10 4 4 1 Ayasa mase Jeṭhe divasahi aṭhahi [2.] imeṇa cetreṇa thuvo pratīḥaveti sahayarae apra[3.]tīḥaviṭa-pruvami Heḍāīami Gramarammami [4.] savabudhaṇa puyae sa-ṇamumaye¹ sahayaraṇa dhamaso[5.]ṭar[i]a¹kuḥṣiaṇa maśahimadi

¹ Sadakata Akira translates this term as ‘don’ without justification. Sadakata, ‘Inscriptions kharoṣṭhī provenant du marché aux antiquités de Peshawar’, 306–7. Perhaps he had an unusual rendering of *danamuha* in mind? The way in which the gold scroll is creased prohibits a better reading. However, we would expect another term in the dat. to correspond to the following gen. *sahayaraṇa*. I take it in this grammatical sense though leave it untranslated.

Tore Jode ca Papiaputra [6.] Hirmae Mahomavaputre Papiie Jodilaputre Hirmae Soṇa[7.]kṣitaputre Jihōṇie Jodilaputre Hathe- mite Cadaputre [8.] Marmaṇe Uvariṇaputre Marmaṇe Budha- tevaputre Budharakṣi[9.]te Jodilaputre Budhāiri Saghamite ca Budhatevaputra [10.] Mahaparma Upeḍaṇaputre Mahaludha Sa- paḍaputre Maha[11.]jode Mahadeva ca Mahadevaputre Maha- samate [12.] Praseṇaaputre Itrahoti Yonaputre Šara[13.]vaṇe Jodilaputre Ramadite Papiaputre Śive [14.] Zoṇaputre Deva- rakṣite Jihōṇiaputre Sagha[15.]e Śitaputre Naüree kuḡṣiaṇa putraṇa²

In the year 39 of Azes, in the month Jyaiṣṭha, after eight days [in conjunction] with *citrā*. A stupa was established by a collective at a previously unestablished located at Haḍḍa in the village monastery, for the worship of all Buddhas and for the *saṇamuma* of the *dhamasotariakukṣi* companions at Maśahimada: Tore and Jode, Hirmae son of Papiia, Papiie son of Mahomava, Hirmae son of Jodila, Jihōṇia son of Soṇakṣita, Hatthemite son of Jodila, Marmaṇe son of Cada, Marmaṇe son of Uvariṇa, Budharakṣita son of Budhateva, Budhāiri and Saghamita sons of Jodila, Mahaparma son of Budhateva, Mahaludha son of Upeḍaṇa, Mahajode and Mahadeva sons of Sapaḍa, Mahasamate son Mahadeva, Itrahoti son of Praseṇaa, Šaravaṇa son of Yona, Ramadite son of Jodila, Śive son Papiia, Devarakṣite son of Zoṇa, Saghae son of Jihōṇia, Naüree son of Śita—the *kukṣi* sons.³

¹ Translated by Sadakata as ‘frères en dharma’=Skt. *dharmasodarīya*.

² CKI 455.

³ For an alternative translation into French, see Sadakata, ‘Inscriptions kharoṣṭhī provenant du marché aux antiquités de Peshawar’, 306–7.

No. 10 Reliquary Inscription of Naganamda

Date: 50 [Azes], 2/3 BCE

Provenance: Uncertain, Samarbagh, Pakistan

Present location: Private collection

Object: Schist reliquary

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 454

[Inside of lid][1.] vaṣae 20 20 [10] Kartiasa masasa divasae 20 4
Viyamitrasa Ava[2]cara[ja](**sa raja*)[m](**i*) ṇe hasto iśa divasami
[3.] Ṇagaṇaḍa ?

[Outside of lid][1.] iśa divasami Ṇaa[ṇa]ḍa Ta[ra]viasa
meriakha[sa bha]ya [2] thobo paḍiṭhapeti ja[lo] + + + mi mahata
?

[Outside of base][1.] mahatavipraheṇasa śarira paḍiṭhavima [2]
saba budha puyāita Dhamagutina saga [dana]

[Inside of Lid] In year 50, day 24 of the month Kārttika, during
the reign of Vijayamitra, the Apracarāja, [and in conjunction
with] *hasta*. On this day, Ṇagaṇaḍa...

[Outside of lid] On this day, Ṇagaṇaḍa, wife of the district
governor Taravia, establishes a stupa *jalo...mi mahata...*

[Outside of base] ‘We establish the relics of the great departed
one’. All beings are worshipped. A gift for the Dharmaguptaka
community.

No. 11 Reliquary Inscription of Vijayamitra (see No. 1)

Date: 5 Vijayamitra, 3/4 CE

Provenance: Shinkhot, Bajaur District, Pakistan

Present location: Unknown

Object: Steatite Schist Lid

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 176

[Upside of lid, centre] [C¹] vijaya[m](it)[r](e)[ṇa] [C²] pate
pradithavide

[Inside of bowl] [D¹] ime śārīra palugabhuṭao na sakareṭi tasa śariati kalade na śadhro na piṃḍoyake yi pitri grīṇayaṭi tasa ye patre vapomua

[B] viyakamitrāsa apracarājasa

[D²] vaṣaye paṃcamaye 4 1 veśakhasa masasa divasa paṃcaviśaye i[yo] [D³] pratithavite vijayamitreṇa apracarājena bhagavatu śakamuṇisa samasabodhasa śārīra

[Underside of base] [E] viśpalena aṇaṃkayeṇa likhite

[C²] The bowl was established [C¹] by Vijayamitra.

[D¹] This relic became broken, is not worshipped, and so disintegrated over time. Neither *śrāddha* nor *piṇḍa* and water are brought for the ancestors, and so the bowl is not fully covered.

[D²] In the fifth 5 year [B] of Vijayamitra the Apracarāja, [D²] on the twenty-fifth day of the month Vaiśākha, a [D³] relic of the Fortunate One Śākyamuni, the Perfectly Awakened One, was established by the Apracarāja Vijayamitra. [E] Written by [his] advisor Viśpala.

No. 12 Copper Plate Inscription of Patika

Date: 78 Maues, 3/4 CE

Provenance: Taxila, Punjab, Pakistan

Present location: British Museum, London, UK, No. 1967,1018.5

Object: Copper plate

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 46

[1.] [saṃva]tsaraye aṭhasatatimae 20 20 20 10 4 4 maharayasa mahaṃtasa Mogasa Pa[ne]masa masasa divase paṃcame 4 1 etaye purvaye kṣaha[ra]ta[sa] [2.] [Cukhsa]sa ca kṣatrapasa Liako Kusuluko nama tasa [pu]tro Pati[ko] Takhaśilaye nagare utareṇa pracu deśo Kṣema nama atra [3.] (*de)śe Patiko apratiṭhavita bhagavata Śakamuṇisa śariraṃ (*pra)tithaveti [saṃgha]ramaṃ ca sarvabudhana puyae matapitaraṃ puyayaṃt(*o) [4.] [kṣatra]pasa saputradarasa ayubalavardhi[e] bhratara sarva ca [ṇatigabaṃdha]vasa ca puyayaṃto Mahadanapatipatikasa ja uva[ja]e [5.] Rohiṇimitreṇa ya ima[mi] saṃgharame navakamika [Reverse] Patikasa kṣatrapa Liaka

In seventy-eight 78 year of the Great King, the Great Maues, day 5 of the month Panemos. At this previous time, Patika, son of the satrap of Cukhsa named Liako Kusuluko, establishes an unestablished relic of the Fortunate One Śākyamuni in addition to a monastic complex, here at Kṣema, in the northern region of the city Taxila, for the worship of all Buddhas. [His] mother and father are worshipped. For the increasing of the life and strength of the satrap along with [his] sons and daughters. [His] brothers, relatives, kin and family are worshipped. For the teacher of the Master of Donations Patika, along with Rohiṇimitra, the overseer of new construction in this monastic complex.

[Reverse] Patika the satrap and Liaka

No. 13 Reliquary Inscription of Saṃgharakṣita

Date: 60 [Azes], 12/13 CE

Provenance: Uncertain, Peshawar, Pakistan

Present location: Private Collection

Object: Schist reliquary

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 403

saṃ 20 20 20 Khsaṃdikasa 10 4 1 Saṃgharakṣitena
Śirakaputreṇa śarirae pratistavitae savabudhaṇa puyae

Year 60, day 15 of Xandikos. Relics were established by Saṃgharakṣita, son of Śiraka, for the worship of all Buddhas.

No. 14 Reliquary Inscription of Indravarma I

Date: 63 Azes, 15/16 CE

Provenance: Bajaur, Pakistan

Present location: Metropolitan Museum of Art, No. 1987.142.71

Object: Schist reliquary

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 242

[Body] [1.] saṃvatsarae tremṣaṭhimae 20 20 20 1 1 1 maharayasa
ayasa atidasa kartiasa masasa divasae ṣoḍaśae imeṇa cetrike
kṣeṇ[e] idravarma kumare apracarayaputra [2.] ime bhagavato

śakamuṇisa śarira pradīḥaveti ṭhīae gabhīrae apradīḥavitaprave
 [pa]teśe brammaṇi prasavadi sadha maḍuṇa rukhuṇa jiputrae
 apacarayabharyae [3.] sadha maūleṇa ramakeṇa sadha maūlaṇe
 daśakae sadha śpaśadarehi vasavadatae mahav[e]dae ṇīkae ca
 gahiṇae ya utarae [4.] pitue puyae viṣuvarmasa avacarayasa [5.]
 bhrada vaga stratega puyāṭae vijayamītro ya avacaraya
 maḍuśpasa bhaḍdata puyita.

[Upper Lid] ime ca śarira muryakaliṇate thubute kiḍapaḍiharia
 avhiye aheṭhi majimami pradīḥavaṇami pradīḥa[v]i[d]a h

[Lower Lid] vasia paṃcaiśo

[Body] [1] In the sixty-third 63 year of the Great King Azes,
 deceased, on the sixteenth day of the month Kārttika at this
 moment of *citrā*. Prince Indravarma, son of the Apracarāja
 establishes [2] a relic of the Fortunate One Śākyamuni at a
 permanent, deep, previously unestablished location. He produces
 Brahma-merit along with [his] mother Rukhuṇa, who has a living
 son, wife of the Apracarāja [Viṣuvarma], along with [his]
 maternal uncle Ramaka, along with [his] maternal uncle's wife,
 along with his sisters, Vasavadata, Mahaveda, and Nīka, and wife
 Utara. For the worship of [his] father the Apracarāja Viṣuvarma.
 [His] brother General Vaga is honoured as well as the Apracarāja
 Vijayamitra. His maternal aunt Bhaḍdata is honoured.

[Upper Lid] And this relic, having been removed from a
 Mauryan Period stupa, was established in a central location that
 is without danger, without trouble.

[Lower Lid] *vasia* fifty.

No. 15 Silver Scroll of Utara

Date: —

Provenance: Bajaur, Pakistan

Present location: Aman ur Rahman private collection

Object: Schist reliquary

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 265

[1.] [sa]va budha puyāṭa aditaṇagatapracupaṇa [sa]va
 pracegabudha puyāṭa sarvarahaṃta puyāṭa Utara

(*kuma)[2.][ra]bhaya sadha Iṃdravarmeṇa kumarena bhagavato dhatue pratistaveti śilastambho [hi]te a. Sadaḍha Ujīm[da] . . .[3.] Utaṛaūto Pupidrio Uṣaṃveo puyai(*ta) meriakhomata Śreṭha puyāita śpaśuro Viṣu(*varmo) [4.] Apacarayo puyāita jivaputra Rukhunaka puyāita vago [stra]teo puyāita Apacaraya Vi(*jaya)-[5.]mitr[o] puyāita Dhrama[s]eno ṣamano ṇaveamio puyāita.

All Buddhas are worshipped, past present, and future. All Pratyekabuddhas are worshipped. All Arhats are worshipped. Utaṛa, wife of the prince, established the relics of the Fortunate One, along with Prince Indravarma I, and a stone pillar was set up. Up to Sadaḍha, Ujīmda...Utaṛaūto, Pupidrio, and Uṣaṃveo are worshipped. The mother of the District Governor Śreṭha is worshipped. The father-in-law and Apracarāja Viṣuvarma are worshipped. The one who has a living son, Rukhunaka is worshipped. General Vaga is worshipped. The Apracarāja Vijayamitra is worshipped. The monk and overseer of new constructions Dhramsena are worshipped.

No. 16 Silver Scroll of Mahazada et al

Date: —

Provenance: Swat, Pakistan

Present location: Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

Object: Silver scroll

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 327

[1.] Mahazada Kriṇi Śamasabaha a [2.] śari[ra] praethavedi [Tra]manosami śila[3]stabhami.

Mahazada, Kriṇi, and Śamasabaha establish a relic in a stone pillar in the area of Tramaṇa.

No. 17 Reliquary Inscription of Rukhuṇa

Date: 27 Vijayamitra, 73 Azes, 201 Yoṇa, 25/26 CE

Provenance: Bajaur, Pakistan

Present location: Private collection

Object: Schist reliquary

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 405

L.1. vaṣaye sataviśaye 20 4 1 1 1 iśparasa Vijayamitrāsa
 Apracarajasa aṇuśastiye ye vucati Ayasa vaṣaye tresā(*ta)timae 20
 20 20 10 1 1 1 Yoṇaṇa vaṣaye ekaduśatimaye 2 100 1 Śravaṇasa
 masasa divasaye aṭhamaye iśa divasaṃmi pratiṭhavidu thuve
 Rukhuṇaye Apracarajabharyae Vijayamitreṇa Apracarajeṇa
 Iṃdravarmeṇa strategeṇa sabharyarehi sakumarehi.

In the twenty-seventh 27 of the lord and Apracarāja Vijayamitra,
 the seventy-third 73 of [the era] called Azes, year two-hundred-
 and-first 201 year of the Indo-Greeks, day eight of the month
 Śrāvaṇa. On this day a stupa was established by Rukhuṇa, wife of
 the Apracarāja, along with the Apracarāja Vijayamitra, along
 with General Indravarma I, along with [their] wives, along with
 the princes.

No. 18 Reliquary Inscription of Utara

Date: —

Provenance: Unknown

Present location: Hirayama Ikuo Silk Road Museum, Japan, No. 100156

Object: Schist reliquary

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 255

Utara stretegabharya imu thubu pratiṭhaveti
 apratiṭha(*vi)daprovami pradeśami Tramaṇospami sava budha
 puyita atidaaṇagada pracegasabudha puyida rahata puyida.

Utara, wife of the general, establishes a stupa at a previous
 unestablished location in the area of Tramaṇa. All Buddhas are
 worshipped, past present, and future. All Pratyekabuddhas are
 worshipped. All Arhats are worshipped.

No. 19 Reliquary Inscription of Indragivarma

Date: —

Provenance: Unknown

Present location: Hirayama Ikuo Silk Road Museum, Japan, No. 100157

Object: Stone reliquary

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 402

[Inside of lid][1.] Iṃdragivarṃe kumare Vijayamitrāsa
Avacarajasa putre śārīra [2.] pratiṭhaveti Śpadiami
apratīṭhavidaprovami [3.] pradeśa[4.]mi

[Outside of base][1.] Iṃdragivarṃe kumare Vijayamitrāsa
Avacarajasa putre śārira pratiṭhavedi Śpadiami
apratīṭhavidaprovami pradeśami [2.] sava budha pu[j].

[Inside of lid] Prince Indragivarma, son of the Apracarāja Vijayamitra, establishes a relic in Śpadi at a previously unestablished location.

[Outside of base] Indragivarma, the prince and son of the Apracarāja Vijayamitra, establishes relics in Śpadi at a previously unestablished location. For the worship of all Buddhas.

No. 20 Reliquary Inscription of Ramaka

Date: 74 Azes, 26/27 CE

Provenance: Bajaur, Pakistan

Present location: Unknown

Object: Stone reliquary

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 251

L.1. saṃvatsaraya codusatimae 20 20 20 10 4 maharayasa L.2.
mahatasa Ayasa vurtakalasa Aśpai[a]sa L.3. masasa divasammim
1 1 1 Aśpaiṇa nekṣetreṇa aja L.4. sudivase s[u]nakṣetre Ramake
Mahaś[ra]vapatre Kuti-L.5.gramavastave apratistavitapruve
paḍhavipradeśe L.6. pratiṭhaveti bhagavato śariraṃ ka[i]hakami
ka-L.7.laretramim sarvabudhaṇa sarvapracesembudha-L.8.ṇe
puyae matipidu bharyyae putrana Maha-L.9.vermasa
Mahiṃdrasa puyee s[u]kaṇikaśpa[pa]so-L.10. ṇa bharyyae

kṣatra[pa] + + + + muñatrasa kṣatra-L.11vasa Yola + + + + +
 puyae savasa-L.12.tvaṇa puya-L.13.e iya [śa]rirapratīḥavaṇa
 kimatrae bhodu L.14. samudayapra(*ha)ṇae magabhavaṇae
 nir[o]sa(*sa)kṣ[i>(*a)e L.15. dukhadaīae.

In the seventy-fourth 74 year of the Great King, the Great Azes, deceased, day 3 of the month Āśvayuj, [in conjunction] with the constellation *āśvayuj*. On this good day and [under] this good constellation, Ramaka, son of Mahaśrava, and resident of the village Kuti, establishes a relic of the Fortunate One in a previously unestablished location at ka[ī]haka kalaretra, for the worship of all Buddhas and all Pratyekabuddhas, for the worship of [his] mother and father, [his] wife and [his] sons Mahavarma and Mahimdra, for the worship of [his] sister Sukaṇika, wife of the satrap ...-muñatra and the satrap Yola..., for the worship of all beings. Whatever purpose may there be in establishing these relics? [It is] for the abandonment of arising, for the cultivation of the path, for the realisation of cessation, and for the removal of suffering.

No. 21 Reliquary Inscription of Ramaka and Uḍita

Date: —

Provenance: Bajaur, Pakistan

Present location: Metropolitan Museum of Art, No, 1987.142.70

Object: Schist reliquary

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 243

[Inside of lid] Ramakaṣa Mahaśravaputraṣa daṇamukhe

[Outside of base] [1.] Ramakasa Mahaśravaputrasa
 Kaṃtigramava[sta]vasa io śarira Uḍiteṇa ime śarīra [2.]
 pratiḥavida ye sava puyaraha puyaīda.

[Inside of lid] The principal gift of Ramaka, son of Mahaśrava.
 [Outside of base] The relic of Ramaka, son of Mahaśrava, and resident of the village Kamti. This relic was established by Uḍita. All those worthy of worship are worshipped.

No. 22 Reliquary Inscription from Gunyar

Date: 76 Azes, 28/29 CE

Provenance: Gunyar, Malakand, Pakistan

Present location: Ryukoku Museum, Kyoto, Japan

Object: Stone relic-chamber slab

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 544

[1.] saṃvatsaraye śasatadimaye 20 20 20 10 4 /// (*1 1) [2] Ayasa
ka[1]agadasa Teśasa masa[sa] (*di)[3.][[vasa]ye navamaye 4 4 1
iś[a] /// (*divasami) [4.] + + [p](r)[a]diṭhaveti ś[ari]///(*ra . . .).

In the seventy-sixth 76 year of Azes, deceased, day nine 9 of the
month Tiṣya. On this day...establishes relics.

No. 23 Reliquary Inscription of Śatruleka

Date: 77 Azes, 29/30 CE

Provenance: Bajaur, Pakistan

Present location: Museum für asiatische Kunst, Berlin, No. I 5892

Object: Schist reliquary

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 257

[1.] savatsaraye satasa{sa}tatimaye maharajasa Ayasa
vurtakalasa Śavaṇasa masasa divasaye catuviśaye 20 4
Śatrulekeṇa kṣatraveṇa Subhulikaputreṇa Apracarajabhagineyeṇa
[2.] bhagavato Śakamune dhatuve pratiṭhavita
apratīṭhavitapurvaṃmi pradeśaṃmi Aṭhayigramāṃmi
Kaśaviyana bhadaṃtana parigrahaṃmi sarva budha pujayita
sarva pracegasabudharahaṃtaṣavaka pujayita sarve [3.] pujaraha
puyayita ima dhatuvi pratiṭhaviti sadha bharyayi Daviliye putrehi
ca Iṃdraseṇeṇa Menāṃdrena ca matapita pujayita bhrada
Iṃdasene iśparo [4.] Vijayamitro Avacaraṇa <*Iṃ>dravarmo
stra[5.]tego Gaṃdharaśpami pujayidu Rukhuṇaka jiputra sarva
[pu]jarahāṃ pujayi[t]a imi dhatu prakṣalavati Patruleśisara.

In the seventy-seventh year of the Great Ling Azes, deceased,
day twenty-four 24 of the month Śrāvaṇa. Relics of the Fortunate

One Śākyamuni were established by the Satrap Śātruleka, son of Subhuti, and nephew of the Apracarāja, at the previously unestablished location in the village Aṭhayi. In the possession of the Venerable Kāśyapīyas. All Buddhas are worshipped, all Pratyekabuddhas, Arhats, and disciples are worshipped, all those worthy of worship are worshipped. He establishes the relics along with [his] wife Davili and [their] sons Iṃdrasena and Menamdra. [His] mother and father are worshipped. May [his] brother Iṃdrasena, the Lord and Apracarāja Vijayamitra, and General Indravarma I, Lord of Gandhara be worshipped. Rukhuṇaka, who has a living son, and all worthy of worship are worshipped. Patrulaśīsara washes the relics.

No. 24 Reliquary Inscription of Prahodi

Date: 32 Vijayamitra, 30/31 CE

Provenance: Bajaur, Pakistan

Present location: Private collection

Object: Schist reliquary

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 359

[1.] aṃteuriae Prahodia nama ime śarira pratiṭhāvita isparasa Viyidamitrāsa Avacarajasa L.2. vaṣaye duatrisāe 20 10 1 1 thuvanavakaṃmike Śīrile nama tasa samadravana tasa aṃtevasa Aśorakṣide nama se navakaṃmike.

A relic was established by the lady of the court named Prahodi in the thirty-second 32 year of Lord and Apracarāja Vijayamitra. The overseer of new constructions at the stupa is named Śīrila, his samadravana and pupil is the overseer of new constructions named Aśorakṣida.

No. 25 Mathura Lion Capital (see No. 25)

Date: —

Provenance: Mathura, India

Present location: British Museum, London, 1889. 03141.1

Object: Sandstone capital

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 48

[Top and back of pillar][A1.] mahakṣatrovasa Rajulasa [A2.]
 agramaheṣia Yasi [A3.] Kamuia dhitra [A4.] Kharāostasa
 yuvaraṇa [A5.] matra Nadadiakasa ya [A6.] sadha matra
 Abuholaa [A7.] Pitramahipiśpasia bhra[A8.]tra Hayuar<*e>na
 sadha hanacana[A9]. aṇāürena horakapa[A10.]rivarena iṣa
 pradhavipra[te][A11.]ṣe nisime śarira pratēḥaviṭo [A12.]
 bhakavato Śakamuṇisa budhasa [A13.] Śaki{[mu]}rayasa
 śpa[e] Bhusavi[ha][A14.][ra] thuva ca sagharama ca
 caṭ<*u>[A15.]diśasa saghasa Sarva[A16]stivaṭana parigrahe

A relic of the Fortunate One Śākyamuni, the Buddha, in addition to a stupa and and monastic complex at the Buddhavihāra was established at a location outside the boundary by Yasi Kamui, the Principal Queen of the great satrap Rajuvula, daughter of the *yūvarāja* Kharāostes, and mother of Nadadiaka, along with [her] mother Abuhola, [her] father's mother Piśpasi, and brother Hayuara, along with the hanacana-aṇāüra retinue of masters of donations, in the possession of the Sarvāstivādins belonging to the community of the four directions.

No. 26 Mathura Lion Capital (see No. 24)

[Lions][B1.] mahakṣatravasa [B2.] Vajulasa putra [B3] Śuḍase
 kṣatrave [E1+E'.] Kharāosto yuvaraya [E2.] Khalamasa kumara
 [E3.] Maja kaniṭha [E4.] saman<*u>moḍa[E'']ka karita [M1.]
 kṣatrave Śuḍise [M2.] imo padhavi[M3.]prateṣo [I1a.]
 Veyaadirṇa [I2.] namo kadha[I3.]varo [I4.] Viyaa[I1b.]kadhavaro
 Busapa[J1.]rva<*take>{?}na palichina [J2.] niṣimo karita niyatīto
 [KL1.] Ayariasa [KL2.] Budhatevasa [KL3.] uṭaena ayimita [F1.]
 Budhilasa naḥaraasa [F2.] bhikhusa Sarvastivaṭasa [G1.]

mahakṣat[r]avasa Kusulaasa Patikasa Me[na]kisa [G2.] Miyikasa
 kṣatravasa puyae [J3.] Sarvastivaṭana parigrahe
 [Bottom][N1.] ayariasa Budhilasa naḥaraḥasa bhikhu[N2]sa
 Sarvastivaṭasa pagra[N3.]na Mahasaghiana pra[N4]ñavitave [P1.]
 sarvasa Saḥasta[P2.]nasa puyae [O1.] sarvabudhana puya
 dhamasa [O2.] puya saghasa puya
 [Remaining spaces][R1.] Takṣilasa [R2.] Kroninasa [N4b.]
 Khalolasa [Q1.] Khardaasa [Q2.] kṣatravasa [J'1.]
 Khalaśamu[J'2.]śo [C1.] Kaluia [C2.] Varajo [C3.] Kamuka [D.]
 Naaludo
 [Lions' necks][H'.] dhamadana [H.] guhavihare.

[Lions] The Satrap Śoḍasa, son of the Great Satrap Rajuvula, made the *yūvarāja* Kharaostes, Prince Khalamasa and the youngest Maja the authors [i.e. of the dedication]. The Satrap Śoḍasa made and handed over this location on the earth, the designated boundary of the encampment named Veyaadirṇa, the Viya encampment at Buddha-mountain. It was accepted with water by the teacher Budhateva and the citizen and Sarvāstivādin monk Budhila. For the worship of the Great Satrap Kusulaa Patika and the Satrap Menaki Miyaka. In the possession of the Sarvāstivādins.

[Bottom] Being in the possession of the teacher Budhila, the citizen and Sarvāstivāda monk, it is not to be arranged for the Mahāsāṃghika. For the worship of the entirety [of] Sakastan, for the worship of all Buddhas, for the worship of the Dharma, for the worship of the community.

[Remaining spaces] Of Taxila. Of Kronin. Of Khalola. Of Khardaa. Khalaśamuśo. Kaluia. Varajo. Kamuka. Naaludo.

[Lions' necks] The pious donation at the Guhavihāra.

No. 27 Reliquary Inscription of Unknown Donor from Swat

Date: 80 Azes, 32/33 CE

Provenance: Swat, Pakistan

Present location: Pankaj Tandon collection, Boston

Object: Metal reliquary

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 828

Diśāspe Ariṇayarae sa atitie rayasa Ayasa atitasa Katiasa mase di
pra.

In the area of Diaśa, in the city Ari, in the eightieth year of King
Azes, deceased, day one of the month Kārttika.

No. 28 Reliquary Inscription of Dhramila's Son et al (see No. 29)

Date: 83 Azes, 35/36 CE

Provenance: Unknown

Present location: Unknown

Object: Stone reliquary

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 266

[Outside of lid][1.] samvatsarae treāṣiti ma[2.]harajasa Ayasa
vurtakalasa Aṣa[3.]ḍhasa masasa diasaye paṃcamaye 4 1 [4.]
aṭhami[bapa]sariḍhaparida Dhramilapu[5.]tra Sabhaka
Kumukaputre Dasadija[6.]p(*u)[tre] Saareṇa ṇama śarira
pradi[7.]ṭhavedi Aṭhayigramami apradiṭha[8.]vidapruvami
paṭhavi[9]pradeśami.

[Outside of lid] In the eighty-third year of the Great King Azes,
deceased, day 5 of the month Āṣāḍha, on the eighth(?)
[bapa]sariḍhaparida, son of Dhramila, Sabhaka, son of Kumuka,
and the one named Saareṇa, son of Dasadija, establish a relic in
the village Aṭhayi at a previously unestablished location.

No. 29 Rededication of Kopśakasa (see No. 28)

Date: –

Provenance: Unknown

Present location: Unknown

Object: Stone reliquary

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 266

[Underside of Base][1.] bhagavato Śakamuṇ[i]sa [2.] [bosi]veṃto
te dhaduve śilapari[3.]bhavida sama[s]iparibha[vi]da
praña[4.]paribhavida to dhaduve ṇiṣehit[a] [5.] [aho ca]
aparimaṇada du[khato] moi[d>(*o) [6.] logo ce[va t>(*e)ṇa
pra[di]moido [7.] tasa c[e] Ko[pśak]as[e] maha[ra]ja [to] [8.]
dhaduve pratīḥ[a]veti L.9. Tramaṇe.

Relics of the Fortunate One Śākyamuni, which are awakened, pervaded by conduct, pervaded by concentration, and pervaded by understanding, these relics are the reason I am liberated from immeasurable suffering, just the world has been fully liberated by him. The Great King Kopśakasa establishes the relics at Tramaṇa.

No. 30 Reliquary Inscription of Indravarma II¹

Date: –

Provenance: Unknown

Present location: Miho Museum, Shigaraki

Object: Silver vase

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 241

[Outside lip of the cover] Idravarmasa kumarasa sa 20 4 4 dra 1

[Outside lip of the base] Iṃdravarmasa kumarasa sa 20 20 1 1 1

¹ This is a rededicated object, first owned by the Indo-Scythian *yūvarāja* Kharaostes. His inscription reads: [Underside of base] *naṃ* [Outside lip of the cover] mahakṣatrapaputrasa [ya]guraṃña Khara[yosta]sa [śa] 20 4 4 ana 4 ma 2. On the division and periodisation of these inscriptions, see Salomon, ‘An Inscribed Silver Buddhist Reliquary of the Time of King Kharaosta and Prince Indravarman’, 428ff.

[Lower section of the cover][1.] Viśpavarmastrategaputre
 Iṃdravarma kumare sabharyae ime śarira pariṭhaveti taṇukaami
 thubami Viśpavarmo stratego [Śi]śireṇa ya stratega[2.]bharya
 puyāita Iṃdra[vasu] Apacaraja Vasumi[dra] ca jiaputra puyāita
 Iṃdravarmo stratego Utara ya strategabharya puyāita
 Viye[3]mitro Avacarayo sabharyao puyāito sarvañadisagho
 puyāita sarvasatva puyāita savasatva paṇivāito

[Upper section of base][1.] (A)śpavarmasa strategasa putre
 Iṃdravarma kumare sabharyae ime śarira pratithaveti taṇukami
 thubami Viśpava(*r)mo stratego Śiśireṇa ya [2.] strategabharya
 puyāita Iṃdravasū Apacaraja Vasumitra ya jivaputra puyāita[m]
 Iṃdravarmo stratego puyāita Utara [3.] strategabharya puyāita
 Viyemitro Avacarayo sabharyao puyāita sarvañadisagho puyāita
 sarvasatva ya [4.] puyāita sarvasatva paṇivāito.

[Outside lip of the cover] Of Indravarma the prince. 28 staters, 1
 drachma.

[Outside lip of the base] Of Indravarma the prince. 43 staters.

[Lower section of the cover] Son of General Viśpavarma, Prince
 Indravarma II, along with [his] wife, establishes a relic in a
 personal stupa. General Viśpavarma and [his] wife Śiśira are
 worshipped. Apracarāja Indrvasu and Vasumitrā, who has a
 living son, are worshipped. General Indravarma I and [his] wife
 Utara are worshipped. Apracarāja Vijayamitra and [his] wife are
 worshipped. All relatives and the community are worshipped. All
 beings are worshipped. All beings are caused to finally
 extinguish.

[Upper section of base] Son of General Viśpavarma, Prince
 Indravarma, along with [his] wife, establishes a relic in a
 personal stupa. General Viśpavarma and [his] wife Śiśira, are
 worshipped. Apracarāja Indrvasu and Vasumitrā, who has a
 living son, are worshipped. General Indravarma I is worshipped.
 Utara, wife of the general is worshipped. Apracarāja Vijayamitra,
 along with [his] wife is worshipped. All relatives and the
 community are worshipped and all beings are worshipped. All
 beings are caused to finally extinguish.

No. 31 Reliquary Inscription of Ariāśrava et al

Date: 98 Azes, 50/51 CE

Provenance: Dir, Pakistan

Present location: Private collection

Object: Schist reliquary lid

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 358

[Inside of lid] sarva budha puyāita sarva praceasabudha putaīta sarva rahata puyāita sarva aṇagami puyāita sa(*yi)dagami puyāi(*ta) sodavaṇa puyāita śega puyāita sarva śilavata puyāita sarva puyaraha puyāita sarvasapa puyāida Ariāśrava Siasena[vha]ya sadha putrehi Dhramaruyena Dhamaūtena ca śiṭhakehi putrehi sadha dhidue Aruprave Labubhayae śiṭhikehi ca dhitrehi [yo] sa bhakava śilaparibhavi(*to) samasiparibhavito vimutiparibhavito vimutiparibhavit[o] tasa bhagavato dhadu pariṭhavemi eva pariṭhaveataya eva paricaṃtaya ṇivaṇapratī[e] bhotu Siasena puyāida parabha[vi]da vuto

[Inside of base] [1.] maharayasa mahatasa Ayasa saṃvatsaraya aṭhaṇavatimaye 20 20 20 20 10 4 4 Cesa masa diye paṃcadaye 10 4 1 Gupharasa bhratuputrasa Avakaśasa rajami Iṃdravarmaputre statree Aśpavarmame rajami [2] daṇamukho denaṇitharvapaava ? ?.

[Inside of lid] All buddhas are worshipped, all Pratyekabuddhas are worshipped, all Arhats are worshipped, all non-returners are worshipped, all once-returners are worshipped, all stream-enterers are worshipped, all students are worshipped, all in observance of the precepts are worshipped, all worthy of worship are worshipped, and all beings are worshipped. I, Ariśrava, wife of Siasena, along with [my] sons Dhramaruya, Dhamaūta and remaining sons, along with [my] daughters Aruprava, Labubhaya and remaining daughters, establish a relic of the Fortunate One, which is pervaded by conduct, pervaded by concentration, pervaded by liberation, and pervaded by liberation. Thus, by means of establishing and by means of totally relinquishing, may there be the attainment of *nirvāṇa*. Siasena is worshipped; may he conquer. It was Spoken.

[Inside of base] In the ninety-eight 98 year of the Great King Azes, day fifteen 15 of the month Caitra, in the reign of the Gondophares's nephew, Abdagases and in the reign of the son of Indravarma I, General Aśpavarma. The principal denañitharvapuraava...

No. 32 Reliquary Inscription of Śātreā

Date: —

Provenance: Unknown

Present location: Unknown

Object: Schist reliquary

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 326

[Outside of Lid] [1.] [bhagavato dhatue] Śātraeṇa sagharthaṇeṇa pra<*di>ṭhavidī sarvasapaṇa puyae (Inside of Lid) [2.] im<*e>ṇa [ku]śa[lamuleṇa agadakṣiṇa] Śātreasa bharyae Yarae [3.] Yara

Relics of the Fortunate One were established by Śātreā at the request of the community, for the worship of all beings. By means of this good root, [may it be] for the highest reward of Yara, wife of Śātreā. Yara.

No. 33 Reliquary Inscription of Helāūta

Date: 121 Azes, 73/74 CE

Provenance: Rani Doab, Orakzai, Pakistan

Present location: Unknown

Object: Copper sheets

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 564

[Date] [1-1.] maharajasa mahatasa Ayasa vurtakalasa varṣay[e] ekaviśatiśadamaye 1 100 20 1 Gu[1-2.]rpieasa masasa diasammi tridaśamami 10 3 utarehi Proṭhavadehi ṇakṣetrami

[Donation] [1-3.] iśa kṣuṇami Helāūte Demitriaputre arivagi pratiṭhaveti bhagavado rahado sam[1-4.]masabudhasa sugado logapida aṇutaro puruśadhamasaraśiṇa śasta devamaṇuśaṇa Śa[1-5.]kamun[i]sa dhadue taṇuakami thubumi aīriaṇa Dhamaūtakaṇa

śamaṇaṇa pariḡra[1-6.]hami aṇasa hidasuhadaye
 ṇivaṇasabharadae Metreasamosaṇadae śitala[2-1.]kasa
 vadhitapariḡhidae bhagavado rahado saṃmasaṃb(*u)dhasa
 Metreasa saṃmosa[ṇa](*)e [2-2.] tatra pariṇivayaṇae
[Worship] pidu Demetriaṇa arivagisa adhvatiḡakalagadaṇa
 p(*u)yae [2-3.] mada Sudaśaṇae adhvatiḡakalagadaṇa puyae
 bharyaṇa Sumagasae adhvatiḡakalagada[2-4.]e puyae bhaṭarakasa
 Yodavharṇaputrasa Tirasa kṣatrapasa hidasuhadaye Khaṃdilasa
 Gvara[2-5.]zasa ca kṣatrapaputraṇa guśuraṇa hidasuhadaye
 putraṇa taṇuakaṇa Adurasa Arazadasa Adra[2-6.]mitrasa
 Adravharṇasa Demetriaṇa Mahasaṃmadasa ca hidasuhadaye
 dhidaṇa Kaśiaṇa Supraü[da][3-1.]e Sudayaṇae Supraṇae ya
 hidasuhadaye Mahatavaṇa Mahamitraputrasa razipatisa hida[3-2.]
 suhadaye Mahamitrasa Madaṇasa ca Mahatavaputraṇa
 hidasuhadaye Śpasaramadatae hidasuha[3-3.]daye
 bhradaṇaṇapitriaputraṇa madaśpasuputraṇa maülaputraṇa
 piduśpasuputraṇa aṇaṇa ca mi[3-4.]traṇadialohidaṇa ye ca ḡhati
 taṇa hidasuhadaye ye daṇi adhvatiḡakalagada taṇa pu[3-5.]yae
 aṇasatamo madamahayuo pidamahayao upadaye taṇa puyarahada
 puyae sarva[3-6.]budhaṇa puyae sarvapracaṇasambudhaṇa puyae
 rahatanaṇa puyae śekhaṇa puyae caduṇa [4-1.] yaharajaṇa
 saparivaranaṇa puyae aḡhaviśatiṇa yakṣeṇapatiṇa puyae Bramasa
 [4-2.] Sahapatisa puyae Śakrasa devaṇa iṃdrasa puyae Haridi(*)e
 saparivaraṇe puyae dasa [4-3.] kramakaraporuṇaṇa puyae
 sarvasatvaṇa puyae sarvapranaṇa hidasuhadaye
[Aspiration] vutaṃ [4-4.] ca bhagavadarahasamasabudheṇa ye
 apratiḡavidapr(*u)vammi paḡhaviḡradeśami bhaga[4-5.]vado
 dhaduthuvo pratiḡhaveti Bramo puṇo pratiḡhavidoti ti [ta] + + +
 [me kuśalamule][4-6.]ṇa śarirapraditiḡhavaṇeṇa ca bhagavado
 dhadu p(*r)atiḡhavidoti he 1 1 teṇa Demitriaputrena [5-1.]
 arivagiṇa aṇasa hidasuhadaye saputrakasa sadhiduṇasa
 samitraṇadialohida [5-2.] sadasakramakaraporuṇasa
 hidasuhadaye aṇomalekhadaṇe ṇivaṇasambharadaṇe
 kṣipravhiṇada[5-3.]e idam oca bhagavado vuto ye tatra
 aṇumodaṇti viavaca kareti ya na teṇu dakṣiṇa oma te [5-4.] ve
 puṇasa bhaiṇa io ca citravide Budhamitraputrena Vasueṇa
 sarvabudhaṇa puya[5-5.]e sarvasatvaṇa hidasuhadaṇe

[Date] In the one hundred and twenty-first 121 year of the Great King, the Great Azes, deceased, day thirteen 13 of the month Gorpiaos, in [conjunction with] the constellation *uttaraproṣṭhapāda*.

[Donation] At this moment Helaiūta, son of Demetria, the caravan guide establishes relics of the Fortunate One, the Noble One, the Perfectly Awakened One, the Well-Gone, Father of the World, the Highest, the Dharma-Guide for Men, the Teacher of Gods and Men, Śākyamuni, in his personal stupa and in the possession of the Dharmaguptaka teachers and monks, for his own welfare and happiness, preparation for *nirvāṇa*, and a meeting with Maitreya. For the one inflicted by the disease of small-pox(?), for a meeting with the Fortunate One, the Noble One, the Perfectly Awakened One, Maitreya and for complete cessation there.

[Worship] For the worship of [his] father Demetria the caravan leader, who has passed away and whose time has passed. For the worship of [his] mother Sudaśaṇā, who has passed away and whose time has passed. For the worship of [his] wife Sumagā, who has passed away and whose time has passed. For the welfare and happiness of Satrap Tira, son of Lord Yodavharṇa. For the welfare and happiness of the Khamdila and Gvaraza, sons of the satrap and sons of a good family. For the welfare and happiness of his personal sons Adura, Arazada, Adramitra, Aravharṇa, Demtria and Mahasaṃmada. For the welfare and happiness of his daughters Kaśi, Supraūda, Sudayana, Supraṇa. For the welfare and happiness of the *razi*-master Mahatava, son of Mahamitra. For the welfare and happiness Mahamitra and Madana, sons of Mahatava. For the welfare and happiness of [his] sister Ramadata. For the welfare and happiness of my brother's people, sons in my father's line, sons of my mother's sisters, sons of my mother's brother, sons of the sisters of my father and other friends, and relatives and blood relatives who still live. Now, for the worship of those who have passed away and whose time has passed. For the purpose of those who were without a protector, the generation of my maternal grandfather and the generation of my paternal grandfather, for their worship. For the worship of Arhats, for the

worship of all Buddhas, for the worship of all Pratyekasambuddhas, for the worship of Arhats, and for the worships of students, for the worship of the four Mahārājas and their retinue, for the worship of the twenty-eight Yakṣa generals, for the worship of Brahmā Sahāmpati, for the worship of Śakra, Lord of the Gods, for the worship of Hārītī and her retinue, for the worship of the slaves, workers, and servants, for the worship of all beings, and for the welfare and happiness of all breathing.

[**Aspiration**] And it was said by the Fortunate One, the Noble One, Perfectly Awakened One: ‘one who establishes relics of the Fortunate One at a previously unestablished location, has established Brahma-merit.’ By means of the good root that is the establishing of relics, the relics of the Fortunate One are established [along with] two *hemas* of gold by the son of Demetria the caravan leader, for his own welfare and happiness and for the welfare and happiness of [his] sons, daughters, friends, relatives and blood relatives, slaves, workers, and servants, for no less than what was written, for the preparation of *nirvāṇa*, and for a speedy recognition. Thus it was said by the Fortunate One: ‘Those who rejoice here and perform [their] duty have no inferior reward, and enjoy the merit. And this was fashioned by Vasu, son of Budhamitra for the worship of all buddhas and for the welfare and happiness of all beings.

No. 34 Gold Scroll of Ajidasena

Date: 4 Oḍi

Provenance: Mata, Swat, Pakistan

Present location: Hirayama Ikuo Silk Road Museum, No. 101740

Object: Gold scroll

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 334

[1.] rajasa Vijidasena kuṭadhipatisa p(*u)tre Ajidasena
Oḍiraja{sa} ṇavhapati sa saba [2.] budha puyāita
adidaṇagatapracupaṇa save pracegasabudha puyāita
adidaṇagatapracupaṇa [3.] save bhagavato ṣavage puya(*i)ta
madapida puyāita save puyaharaha puyāita ime tasa[4.]gadasa
bhagavado rahado samasabudhasa Śakamuṇisa Śakavirajasa

vijacaraṇasa[5.]paṇasa dhadue pratiṭhaveti apratiṭhavitaprubami paḍhaviṇadeśami Tirae mahathuba[6.]mi dhakṣiṇami bhagami ayam edaṇi sabadukhovachedae nivaṇae sabatadu [7.] vaṣaye caūṭhaye 4 Aṣaḍasa masa(*sa) divasaye daśamaye1 10.

Son of King Vijidasena, overlord of the fortress, the Oḍirāja Ajidasena, protector of the people. All buddhas are worshipped, past, present, and future, all Pratyekabuddhas are worshipped, past, present and future, all disciples of the Fortunate One are worshipped, [his] mother and father are worshipped, all worthy of worship are worshipped. He establishes relics of the Tathāgata, the Fortunate One, the Arhat, the Perfectly Awakened One, Śākyamuni, the highest king of the Śākyas, endowed with knowledge and conduct, at a previously unestablished location at Tira within a great stupa in the southern region. May it here be conducive to the severance of suffering and *nirvāṇa*. In the fourth 4 year, on the tenth 10 day of the month Āṣāḍha.

No. 35 Silver Scroll of Ayadatta

Date: 5 Oḍi

Provenance: Swat, Pakistan

Present location: Hirayama Ikuo Silk Road Museum, No. 101371

Object: Silver sheet

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 401

[1.] vaṣa 4 1 rayasa Varmaseṇasa Oḍiraya[sa] ṇabhapat[i]sa Śravaṇasa di ? ? ? ? [d](*)va[sa]mi Ayadate kumare + + ? ? ? ? + ? [v]. ? [2.] dhodo thubo pradīṭhaveti bhagavado Śakamuṇisa dhadue i[śa] Tiraye atari ṇagarami sarva (*budha) [p]uyita [prac](*)ega[sam]buddha [3.] puyita sarva budhaṣavaka puyita rayo Rvarmas(*e)ṇo puyita Ayaseṇo kumaro puyi(*ta) + ? [lo]yo [Ayida](*)se)ṇo rayo [4.] puyita ṭhaya[te] madara bhadara śpasa dara ya puyaiṭo.

Year 5 of the Oḍirāja Varmaseṇa, protector of the people, day...of Śrāvaṇa. On this day, Prince Ayadata...establishes a relic-stupa and the relics of the Fortunate One Śākyamuni, here

in Tira, within the city. All Buddhas are worshipped, all Pratyekabuddhas are worshipped, all disciples of the Buddha are worshipped, King Varmaseṇa is worshipped, Prince Ayaseṇa is worshipped...King Ajidaseṇa is worshipped, and living mothers, brothers and sisters are worshipped.

No. 36 Gold Scroll of Seṇavarma

Date: 10 Oḍi

Provenance: Uncertain, Swat, Pakistan

Present location: Unknown

Object: Gold scroll

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 249

[Context] [1.] aryagaṇatavagaṇabramacaryagaṇasa ubhayata-saṃghasa saṇivaīṭasa Pria[mi]trasa [ca] thuvavalasa śīrasa pada vadati◊ Seṇavarme iśpare Oḍiraya ṇavhapati viṇaveti io Ekaūḍe thuve yeṇa rayaṇeṇa pratīḥavite tasa dayateṇa me Kadamasa deyasame yava me [bhra]ta Varmaseṇasa ṇama adikramami yada io ekaūḍe dadhe tatra aṃṇa pi [2.] mahia pidarapidamaḥaṇa mahamṭe adura gahathuva dadha te ma[ye] Seṇavarmeṇa kiḍa hovati io ca Ekaūḍe mahamṭeṇa arohapariṇameṇa ṇiṭhite ta same ṇiṭhita parakramami iśa Ekakuḍami vijuvapatitae dahiasa thuvasa vipariṇame kiḍe se me sarve upaḍe vitate mulaśave ukṣivita avaśita tatra pratīḥava[3.]ṇia lihitia Utaraseṇaputre Vasuseṇe Oḍiraya Iṣmahokulade se imo Ekaūḍo pratīḥaveti tedaṇi mulaśale raaṇade bhagavado śarira aho Seṇavarme Ayidaseṇaputre ate ceva Iṣmahorajakulasabhavade Oḍiraja sarva bhaveṇa sarva cedyasa samuṇaharita aṇe vivaveṇa aṃṇe abhip[4]praṇeṇa vivula vestario mulavato kareta

[Relics] te tasa bhagavato abhutapuruṣaṇaravarakuḥarasa mahasarthavahosa savatra dhamehi paramavaśipratiprata-ṇirdhadamalakasa dasaṇegakapaśatasahasakuśalamulasamuda-ṇidasa vadhitavadhidasa hadaragadoṣamohasa [5.] sarvasa zaṇaṇuśaśamalakhilaamṅaṇagratha[v]iprahiṇasa sarvehi kuśalehi dhamehi abhiṇehi jaṇavalavimohasamasisamavatisa-pratipurasa dhatu pra[ti]ḥavemi ye tada tadiśate atmabhavate vayirasaghaṇade aṃdimaśarirate visayuyeṇa pacimaṇeṇa śarireṇa

ñiṣaye [6.] ta aṇṭaravosi apisavudha apisavuḷḷita te dhama tatha driṭha yasa ke añe paṣeati aṇoma aṇasia te dhama apisavuḷḷita savasaṃgharaṇa-kṣaye sarvajatijaramaraṇabhayaviṇavatasa avayidrogatikṣayapayosane kide ñisane sarvajadijaramaraṇasa tasa daṇi aṇuvatae [7.] pariṇivudasa. ima dhadu śilaparibhavita samasipraṇavimutiñāṇadraśa(*ṇa)paribhavita ime śarireṇa tadagadapraṇadiśaṇivaṇadhatugade ta pratiṭhavemi.

[Worship] prasamu ce vata bhagavatahasamasamvudho dhataragadoṣamokha daśavalavalasamuṇagata catvariveśaraya-prata [8.] agrodakṣiṇea puyita praceasavudharahamṭaṣavakaṇa-gamisa(*yi)dagami[so]davaṇisarvaaryapugala puyita matapita dukaracara[a]the Uzamda jivaputra tiṭhata pida ca adhvadida Ayidaseno Oḍiraya puyita Maharajarayatirayakuyulakataph[śp]a-putro Sadaṣkaṇo devaputro [9.] sadha aṇakaṇa Suhasomeṇa aṣmaṇakareṇa sayugasavalavah(*e)ṇa sadha guśurakehi sturakehi ca puyita bhrada adhvatido Varmaseno Oḍiraya tiṭhata ca Ajidavarm[o] Ayaseno ca kumara puyita Bhadasena raya upadae yava pravidamaha me Diśaseno Oḍiraya sarva I(*ṣma)horayakulasabhavo [10.] puyita sarva pari(*va)ro puyita Bramo Saḥampati Śakro devaṇidro catvari maharaya aṭhaviśati yakṣasenaṇapati Hariti saparivara puyita.

[Aspiration] sakṣiteṇa Aviyamahaṇireā payato karita utvareṇa [a] bhavagro atraturo yavada satva uvavaṇa apada va dupada va catupada va vahupada va [11.] ruvi aruvi samñe asaṃñe sarvasatvaṇa hidasuhadae hoto ayam edaṇe devasame aya ca ṣadha ye ca prasade se kimatraye hoto ye teṇa Śakamuṇiṇa rahato samasavudheṇa dhama abhisavudho madanaṇimadaṇo pivasaviṇayo alayasamughaso vatovacheto taṣokṣayo aśeṣo[12.]viragoṇir(*o)so śato praṇito advarasa aṇijo aroga acata(*ṇ)iṭhu acadavramaṇo acatapayosano tatra amudae dhatue ñivatato yatra imasa aṇavatagraṣa sasaraṣa kṣaye payosane hakṣati yatra imaṇa vedaṇdaṇa sarve śidalibhaviśati ye [va]ṇa imo Ekaūdo thuvo ñiṭhidao viṇiṭhi[13.] tao daheati ite udhu deve va maṇuṣe va yakṣe va ṇage va suvaṇi va gadharve va kuvhaḍe va se Aviyamahaṇiraa padeati saśarire ye vaṇa aṇumotiśati teṣu ideī puṇakriāe aṇubhvae sia[t]i

[Colophon] likhita ya śarirapraīṭhavaṇia Saṃghamitreṇa Laliaputreṇa aṇakaeṇa karavita ya Śaḍi[14.]eṇa Sacakaputreṇa meriakheṇa ukede ya Baṭasareṇa Preaputreṇa tirataṇa vaṣaye catudaśaye 10 4 iśparasa Seṇavarmasa varṣasahasā parayamaṇasa Śravanata masasa divase aṭhame 4 4 io ca suṇe solite Valieṇa Makaḍakaputreṇa ga[m]hapatīṇa

[Context] Seṇavarma, Lord, Oḍirāja and protector of the people, honours with his head the feet of the assembled groups of Āryas Acetics and Brahmācārins, the two-fold community and Priamitra, master of the stupa. He announces: ‘This Ekaūḍa stupa was established by one of the royal family, and, being his successor, it is my, as the kadama, gift-worthy object, as I surpass the title of my brother Varmaseṇa. When this Ekaūḍa was burned, there the other great nearby *gaha*-stupas of my father and grandfather were burned. They were (re)-made by me, Seṇavarma and the Ekaūḍa was finished with a significant alteration in height. And having completely finished it, I exert myself further. When the Ekaūḍa was struck by lightning, an alteration to the burnt stupa was made by me. Everything was taken out and spread out. The *mulaśava* was raised up and removed and there was an inscription concerning the establishment: ‘Son of Utaraseṇa, Vasuseṇa, a king of Oḍi of the Ikṣvāku family establishes the Ekaūḍa.’ At that time the relics of the Fortunate One were in the *mulaśava* by order of the king. Subsequently I, Seṇavarma, son of Ajidaseṇa, also being of the Ikṣvāku royal family and Oḍirāja, concentrate with all [my] being and all [my] thought. Partly due to the result [of my action] and partly due to [my] intention, I performed a wide and extensive root observance(?):

[Relics] ‘I establish a relic of the Fortunate One, the most excellent man among men, the best elephant, the great caravan leader, who in all respects has attained the highest control and purified defilements through the *dharmas*, who has assembled good roots over several hundred thousand *kalpas*, has gradually grown, has destroyed passion, hate, and delusion, has completely abandoned inclinations, stains, anger, blemishes and fetters through meditation, who, through all good *dharmas* that can be

known is replete with the meditations, powers, liberations, concentrations, and attainments, who then with the *paścimaśarīra* being distinct from the *antimaśarīra*, the body that is hard like adamantine, completely awakened to the highest awakening and having awakened saw the Dharma, just as any other would see. And having awakened to the Dharma, no less and no more, he attained the destruction of the conditioned states, destruction, and an end to the bad rebirths, all consisting of birth, ageing, death, fear and ruin, and a conclusion to all birth, ageing, and death. And now being without attachment, he has completely ceased. I establish this relic, which are pervaded by moral conduct, pervaded by concentration, understanding, liberation and seeing through knowledge, and which with the body have gone to the sphere of *nirvāṇa* in the *pravādiśa* of the Tathāgatas.

[Worship] First indeed, the Fortunate One, the Noble One, the Perfectly Awakened One, who smote passion, hatred, and delusion, who is endowed with the ten powers, who has attained the four confidences, and who is worthy of the highest gift, is worshipped. Pratyekabuddhas, Arhats, disciples, non-returners, once-returners, stream-enterers, and all Noble Ones are worshipped. [My] mother and father, who have performed a difficult task: Uzamdā who has a living son and is still living, and the Oḍirāja Ajidasena, deceased, are worshipped. Sadaskaṇa, Son of the Gods and son of the Great King, the Supreme King among Kings Kujula Kadphises, along with [my] minister Suhasoma, the master, along with the team of soldiers and oxen, along with the *guśuraka* and *sturaka*, are worshipped. My brother the Oḍirāja Varmasena, deceased, and the living princes Ajidavarma and Ayasena are worshipped. All those born into the Ikṣvāku royal family, from king Bhadasena up to my great grandfather, the Oḍirāja Diśasena, are worshipped. The entire retinue is worshipped. Brahmā Sahāṃpati, Śakra, Lord of the Gods, the four Mahārājas, the twenty-eight Yakṣa generals, and Hārītī along with here retinue, are worshipped.

[Aspiration] In brief, beginning from the great hell Avīci up to the peak of existence, whatever beings have arisen in between, having no feet, two feet, four feet or many feet, having form or

no form, having consciousness or no consciousness, may it be for the welfare and happiness of all beings. For what purpose may this present gift-worthy object, and faith be? The Dharma that was completely awakened to due to Śākyamuni, the Noble One, the Perfectly Awakened One, is the detoxification of intoxication, the quenching of thirst, the removal of attachment, the breaking of the turning of existence, the destruction of thirst; it is without remainder, without passion, it is cessation, is calmed, advanced, without fever, immovable, without disease; it is perfect completion, like a perfect brahmacārin and a perfect end. May they extinguish in the immortal sphere, where there is destruction and an end to the cycle of existence that is without beginning or end, and where sensations are cooled. Further, if one were to burn the completed and perfected Ekaūḍa stupa, [whether] god, man, *yakṣa*, *nāga*, *suparṇin*, *gandharva* or *kumbhāṇḍa*, may they fall into the great hell Avīci, along with their body. Further, those who may rejoice, may it be in accordance with their merit-making.

[Colophon] And that which concerns the relic establishment was written by the minister Saṃghamitra, son of Lalia. And it was constructed by the District Governor Ṣaḍia, son of Sacaka. And it was dug by Baṭasara, son of Prea the overseer. In the fourteenth 14 year of Lord Seṇavarma, enduring a thousand years, the eighth day 8 of the month Śrāvaṇa. And this gold was weighed by the householder Valia, son of Makaḍaka.

No. 38 Reliquary Inscription of Priavaśa

Date: 126 Azes, 78/79 CE

Provenance: Unknown

Present location: Unknown

Object: Stone slab

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 331

[Side A][1] savatsaraye ṣaviśavaṣaśatimae [2] maharayasa mahatasa Ayasa kalagada[3]sa Aṣaḍasa masasa divasami [4] treviśami iśa divasami [5] yaüasa ra[j]ami i [6] maharayasa ṇai[mi]tra[7][bha]jao

[Side B][8] trehaṇia[y]ao puyae [9] yeṇa io vihare
 pratiṭha[10]vide
 [Side C][11] i śarira aḍi pradethavida [12] Priavaśara śamaṇasa
 [13] ime ya śarira pradethavi[14]da i daṇamuhe Priava
 [Side D][18]śasa śamaṇasa [15] madapida puyaīda [16]
 Mahiśadagaṇa aīri[17]aṇa parigrahami

In the one hundred and twenty-sixth year of the Great King, the Great Azes, deceased, on the twenty-third day of Āṣāḍha. On this day in the reign of the Yabgu, the Great King, for the worship of Trehaṇī, wife of Ṇāimitra, by whom the monastery was here established, a relic was established by the monk Priavaśa. The relic was established as the principal donation of the monk Priavaśa. [His] mother and father are honoured. In the possession of the Mahīśāsaka teachers.

No. 39 Reliquary Inscription of Candrabhi

Date: 134 Azes, 86/87 CE

Provenance: Kalawan, near Taxila, Punjab, Pakistan

Present location: National Museum, Delhi, No. 8788

Object: Copper plate

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 172

[1.] saṃvatsaraye 1 100 20 10 4 Ajasa Śravaṇasa masasa divase
 treviśe 20 1 1 1 imeṇa kṣuṇeṇa Caṃdrabhi uasia [2.] Dhraṃmasa
 grahavatisa dhita Bhadravalasa bhaya Chaḍaśilae śarira
 praīstaveti gahathu[3]bami sadha bhraduṇa Ṇaṃdivaḍhaṇeṇa
 grahavatiṇa sadha putrehi Śameṇa Saīteṇa ca dhituṇa ca [4]
 Dhramae sadha ṛuṣaehi Rajae Idrae ya sadha Jivaṇaṃdiṇa
 Śamaputr[e]ṇa ayariṇeṇa ya Sa[rva]sti[5.]vaṇa parigrahe
 raṭhaṇikamo puyaīta sarva[sva]tvaṇa puyae ṇivaṇasa pratiae hotu.

In the year 134 of Azes, day twenty-three 23 of the month Śrāvaṇa. With this moment, Candrabhi the lay-practitioner, daughter of the householder Dhramma, and wife of Bhadravala, establishes a relic in a *gaha*-stupa at Taxila along with [her] brother, the householder Ṇaṃdivaḍhaṇa the householder, along with her sons, Śama and Saīta, and daughter Dhrama, along with

her son's wives Raja and Indra, along with Jivaṇṇḍi, son of Śāma. In the possession of the Sarvāstivāda teachers. The kingdom and town are worshipped. For the worship of all beings. May it be for the attainment of *nirvāṇa*.

No. 40 Silver Scroll of Urasaka

Date: 136 Azes, 88/89 CE

Provenance: Dharmarājika, near Taxila, Punjab, Pakistan

Present location: National Museum, Delhi, No. 8789 Dh'12-65.

Object: Silver scroll

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 60

[1.] sa 1 100 20 10 4 1 1 Ayasa Aṣaḍasa masasa divase 10 4 1 iśa
diva[se pradi]stavita bhagavato dhatu[o] Ura[sa][2.]keṇa
[Iṃ]tavhriaputraṇa Bahaliēṇa Noacae ṇagare vastaveṇa teṇa ime
pradistavita bhagavato dhatuo Dhamara[3.]ie Takṣaśi(*la)e
taṇuvae bosisatvagahami maharajasa rajatirajasa devaputrasa
Khuṣaṇasa arogadakṣiṇae [4.] sarva[bu]dhaṇa puyae
pracagabudhaṇa puyae araha(*ta)ṇa pu[ya]e sarvasa(*tva)ṇa
puyae matapitu puyae mitramacañatisa[5.]lohi(*ta)ṇa [pu]yae
atvaṇo arogadakṣiṇae ṇivaṇae hotu a[ya] desamaparicago

Year 134 of Azes, day 15 of the month Āṣāḍha. On this day, relics of the Fortunate One were established by Urasaka, son of Iṃtavhria, the Bactrian, and citizen of the town Noaca. The relics of the Fortunate One were established by him at Dharmarājikā in Taxila, in his personal bodhisatvagaha. For the reward of health of the Great King, Supreme King among Kings, Son of Gods, the Kuṣāṇa, for the worship of all Buddhas, for the worship of all Pratyekabuddhas, for the worship of all Arhats, for the worship of all beings, for the worship of [his] mother and father, for the worship of friends, companions, relatives, and blood relatives. May the total relinquishing of this gift-worthy object be for the reward of his health and *nirvāṇa*.

No. 41 Reliquary Inscription of Saṭaṣaka (see also No. 44)

Date: 156 Azes, 108/109 CE

Provenance: Unknown

Present location: Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, No. EA 1995.72

Object: Steatite schist reliquary

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 328

[Outside of lid] [1.] hora [2.] samvatsaraye ṣapaṃcaīṣaśadama
maṣe Ire d(*i)asa 20 1 1 1 [S]aṭaṣake Hirmaaputra Muṃji
[S]aṭaṣakaputra thuvaṃ [3.] pratiṭhaveti apratiṭhavitapruve
sarvabudhana pujae matrapidu pujae budhaṇa bhosi pravuṇama
ṇa agho duho.

A gift. In the one hundred and fifty-sixth year, day 23 of the month Ira. Saṭaṣaka, son of Hirmaa, and Muṃji, son of Saṭaṣaka establish a previously unestablished stupa, for the worship of all Buddhas, for the worship of [their] mother and father. May we attain the awakening of the Buddhas, not pain, not suffering.

No. 42 Reliquary Inscription of Utarayā

Date: 157 [Azes], 109/110 CE

Provenance: Unknown

Present location: Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, USA, no. 1999.49.

Object: Schist miniature stupa reliquary

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 226

saṃbatsara satapaṃ(*ca)īśa 1 100 20 20 10 4 1 1 1 mase
Pr(*o)ṭha [1] Utaraya bhikhuṇi pradīṭhava(*ti) bhaghava[dha]tu
Kharavalamahavane raṇe matapitinaṃ puyartha.

In the one hundred and fifty seventh 157 year, day 1 in the month Prauṣṭhapada, the nun Utaray established a relic of the Fortunate One at the Kharavamahavana monastery, for the worship of [her] mother and father.

No. 43 Reliquary Inscription of Khadadata

Date: 157 [Azes], 109/110 CE

Provenance: Unknown

Present location: Private Collection

Object: Schist reliquary lid

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 225

[1.] savatsara satapacāśa<*śa>de1 1 100 20 20 10 4 1 1 1 mase
 Proṭha sastehi sataviśati iśa kṣunami pratiṭhavati Khadadata
 Utaracitathopo [2.] Mahavanami matapitina pujartha
 sarvasatvana puyartha Utarapuya<*rtha>.

In the one hundred and fifty-seventh 157 year, in the month
 Proṭhapada, after twenty-seven days. At this moment,
 Khadadata establishes a stupa raised by Utara at the Mahavana,
 for the worship of [his] mother and father, for the worship of all
 beings, for the worship of Utara.

No. 44 Reliquary Rededication of Aprakhaka (see No. 41)

Date: 172 [Azes], 124/125 CE

Provenance: Unknown

Present location: Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, United Kingdom, no. EA
1995.72

Object: Stone reliquary

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 328

[Inside of lid][4.] ime bhagavato śarira pratiṭhapita savabudhana
 puyae Aprakhakasa Heliuphilaputrasa [5.] duasataṭiśadama
 Gurpiya yaṃbulima maśa saste 4 4
 [Inside of base] [6.] avinavuliehi.

A relic of the Fortunate One was established for the worship of
 all Buddhas. Of Aprakhaha, son of Heliuphila. In the one-
 hundred and seventy-second year, day 8 of Gorpaios Embolios.
 With the *avinavuli*.

No 45 Copied Reliquary Inscription of Macayameṇa

Date: 303 [Yoṇa], 127/128 CE

Provenance: Charsadda, Pakistan

Present location: Peshawar Museum, Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, no. PM 3218

Object: Schist reliquary

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 178

[Outside rim of base] [1.] sabatsa 1 1 1 100 1 1 1 [Śravaṇasa]
m[asasa] d[ivase 4 4 Macayemaṇa bha]gav[ato] śar[ir]a
[ta]ṇ[uvae] thuba[e] sagharamu pradiṭhaveti [Underside of base]
[2.] Avaśāūrami madapidupuya⟨*e⟩ sarvabudhaṇa puyae
sa[3.]rvapraca⟨*ga⟩budhaṇa puyae sarvarahataṇa puya⟨*e⟩ [4.]
putradarasa puyae mitrañadisalohidaṇa puya⟨*e⟩ maharayasa
gramas[v]amisa Avakhazadasa puyae kṣatravasa

Year 305 [Yoṇa], day 8 of the month Śrāvaṇa. Macayemaṇa establishes a relic of the Fortunate One in a personal stupa in addition to a monastic complex in Avaśapura, for the worship of [his] mother and father, for the worship of all Buddhas, for the worship of all Pratyekabuddhas, for the worships of all Arhats, for the worship of [his] son and wife, for the worship of friends, relatives, and kin, for the worship of the Great king, Lord of the Village, and Satrap Avakhazada.

No. 46. Bodhisattva Statue of Amohāāsī

Date: —¹

Provenance: Katra Mound, Mathura, India

Present location: Mathura Musuem

Object: Sandstone Bodhisattva

Script: Brāhmī

Ref: § 1

[1.] budharakhitasa mātare amohāāsīye bodhisaco patiṭhāpito [2.]
sāhā mātāpitihi sake vihāre [3.] savasatvānā[m] hitasukhāye.

¹ Dated palaeographically to the Indo-Scythian Period, Lüders, *Mathurā Inscriptions*, 30–31.

A Bodhisattva was established by Amohāāsī, mother of Buddharakhita, along with [her] mother and father, at her own monastery, for the welfare and happiness of all beings.

No. 47 Bodhisattva Statue of Nandā

Date: —¹

Provenance: Katra Mound, Mathura, India

Present location: Mathura Museum

Object: Sandstone Bodhisattva

Script: Brāhmī

Ref: § 2

[1.] ...kaye Naṃdāye kṣatrapa[sa]... [2.] ...(Bo)dhisat[v]a
visa..t[a].e (..)... [3.] savasatānaṃ hitasu(khā)[4.]rtha(m) [5]
Śāvasthidiyānaṃ [6] pariṅhe.

A Bodhisattva was established by Naṃdā,...of the satrap..., for the welfare and happiness of all beings. In the possession of the Sarvāstivādins.

No. 48 Bodhisattva of Buddhamitrā

Date: 3 Kaniṣka I, 129/130 CE

Provenance: Kauśāmbī, India

Present location: Municipal Museum, Allahabad (AC2948)

Object: Sandstone Bodhisattva

Script: Brāhmī

Ref: Sk 17²

[1.] [ma]h[ā]rājasya kan[i]ṣkasa saṃva[tsa]r[e] 3 h[e] 2 di 8
bodhisatvo pra[ti[2.]ṣṭhā]payati bhikhuṇi buddhamitrā trepiṭ[i]kā
bhagavato buddhasa ca[m]kame

In year 3 of the Great King Kaniṣka, month 2 of winter [Pauṣa],
day 8, the nun Buddhamitrā, Bearer of the Three Baskets,

¹ Dated palaeographically to the Indo-Scythian Period, Lüders, *Mathurā Inscriptions*, 31–32.

² Two other inscriptions recording Bodhisattva dedications of Buddhamitrā can be dated to this year, see Sk 18–19.

establishes a Bodhisattva on the walkway of the Fortunate One, the Buddha.

No. 49 Parasol Shaft and Bodhisattva of Bala

Date: 3 Kaniška I, 129/130 CE

Provenance: Sarnath, India

Present location: Sarnath Museum, A3

Object: Sandstone Bodhisattva

Script: Brāhmī

Ref: Sk 20

[Parasol shaft][1.] mahārajasya kaṇiṣkasya saṃ 3 he 3 di 20 2 [2.] etāye purvaye bhikṣusya puṣyavuddhisya saddhyevi[3.]hārisya bhikṣusya balasya treṭṭakasya [4.] bodhisatvo chatra-yaṣṭi [ca] pratiṣṭhāpito [5.] bārānasiye bhagavato ca[m]kame sahā māt[ā][6.] pitihi sahā upaddhyāyācaryehi saddhyevihāri[7.]hi antevāsikehi ca sahā buddhamitraye treṭṭika[8.]ye sahā kṣatrapena vanasparena kharapallā[9.] nena ca sahā ca ca[tu]hi pariśāhi sarvasatvanam [10.] hitasukārttha[m]

[Bodhisattva front][1.] bhikṣusya balasya treṭṭakasya bodhisatvo prat[i]ṣṭhāpito [2.] mahākṣatrapena kharapallānena sahā kṣatrapena vanasparena

[Bodhisattva back][1.] mahārajasya kaṇi[ṣkasya] saṃ 3 he 3 di 20 [2] [2.] etaye purvaye bhikṣusya balasya treṭṭa(kasya) [3.] bodhisatvo chhatra-yaṣṭi ca [prati](ṣṭhāpito)

[Parasol shaft] Year 3 of the Great King Kaniška, month 3 of winter [Māgha], day 22. At this previous time, a Bodhisattva of the monk Puṣyavuddhi's co-resident, the monk Bala, Bearer of the Three Baskets, in addition to a parasol and shaft, was established in Varanasi on the walkway of the Fortunate One, along with [his] mother and father, along with preceptors and teachers, co-residents and pupils, along with Buddhamitrā, Bearer of the Three Baskets, along with Satrap Vanaspara and Kharapallāna, along with the four assemblies, for the welfare and happiness of all beings.

[Bodhisattva front] A Bodhisattva of the monk Bala, Bearer of the Three Baskets, was established, along with Great Satrap Kharapallāna, along with Satrap Vanaspara.

[Bodhisattva back] Year 3 of the Great King Kaniška, month 3 of winter, day 22. At this previous time a Bodhisattva of the monk Bala, Bearer of the Three Baskets, in addition to a parasol and shaft, was established.

No. 50 Bodhisattva Statue of Bala

Date: —

Provenance: Śrāvastī, India

Present location: Indian Museum, Calcutta

Object: Sandstone Bodhisattva

Script: Brāhmī

Ref: Sk 21¹

[Bodhisattva][1.] /// + + + + + + + + + + + + + + 10 9 etaye
 pu[r]vay[e] bhikṣusya puṣya[vu][2.][ddhis]ya saddhy[e]vihārisya
 bhikṣusya balasya treṭṭakasya d[ā]naṃ b[o]dhisatvo chātraṃ
 dāṇḍāś=ca śāvastīya bhagavato caṃkame [3.] koṣāmbakuṭīye
 acaryyānāṃ [sarvastivād]inaṃ parigahe

[Bodhisattva]...day 19. At this previous time, a Bodhisattva, the gift of Puṣyavuddhi's co-resident, the monk Bala, Bearer of the Three Baskets, in addition to a parasol and shaft, at Śrāvastī, on the walkway of the Fortunate One, in the Kauśāmbī residence, into the possession of the Sarvastivādin teachers.

No. 51 Bodhisattva of Dharmanandi

Date: 4 Kaniṣka I, 130/131

Provenance: —

Present location: Kimbell Art Museum

Object: Sandstone Bodhisattva

Script: Brāhmī

Ref: Sk 25

[1.] mahārājasya kāniṣkasya saṃ 4 varṣā 3 di 20 6 bhikṣusya
 bodhisenasya sadhyevihārisya bhadattasya dharmanadisya [2]
 boshisa[tv.] pratisthāpito svakāyaṃ cetiyākuṭīyaṃ sahā
 mātāpitahi sahā pītasikāye bhadrāye [3] sahā sa[rva]satvehi

Year 4 of the Great King Kaniṣka, month 3 of monsoon [Āśvayuj], day 26. A Bodhisattva of Bodhisena's co-resident, the venerable Dharmanandi, was established in his own residence for worship, along with [his] mother and father, along with his paternal aunt Bhadrā, along with all beings.

¹ An inscribed parasol base belonging to this base is also located in the Lucknow Museum. The inscription is identical to the above, see Sk 21.

No. 52 Bodhisattva of Bh[...]

Date: 4 Kaniṣka I, 130/131 or Kaniṣka II, 230/231 CE

Provenance: —

Present location: Government Museum, Mathurā, no. 57.4329

Object: Sandstone Bodhisattva

Script: Brāhmī

Ref: Sk 154

[1.] [siddham] mah[ā]rājasya kaṇ[iṣkas]ya saṃ 4 he 2 d[i] 1
etasyaṃ purrvāyaṃ bhikṣor=dha[r]mma[nand[is]ya dha[r]mma-
[kathi]kasya sādhyavihārisya [bh.] /// [2.] pratiṣṭhāpayati
mahādaṇḍan[ā]yakahummiyakavedyāṃ <sa>kkavihāre anenaṃ
deyadharmma-parityāgena māta-pitṛināṃ āca ///

Success! Year 4 of the Great King Kaniṣka, month 2 of winter [Pauṣa], day 1. At this previous time, the monk and Dharma-teacher Dharmmandi's co-resident, Bh[...] establishes on the platform of the Great General Hummiyaka in the Sakkavihāra. By means of this total relinquishing of a gift-worthy object...of [his] mother and father, teacher...

No. 53 Bodhisattva of Buddharakṣita

Date: 8 Kaniṣka I, 134/135 CE

Provenance: —

Present location: —

Object: Sandstone Bodhisattva

Script: Brāhmī

Ref: Math 133

[1.] [maha]rajasya Kānikṣasya savācharā 8 etaye purvaya
bhikhasa Sihakasa sajhivi[hā][2.]renā [B]udharakhutāna
bhagavato Śakamunisya āsāne bo[3.]dhisāto patithapito saha
matāpitehi [4.] saha upajhavena [L5] saha sarvasatehi saha
sabamacarehi ājariyāna Mahasa[ghikā]na parigahe.

Year 8 of the Great King Kaniṣka. At this previous time a Bodhisattva was established on the seat of the Fortunate One Śākyamuni by the monk Sikaha's co-resident, Budharakhuta, along with [his] mother and father, along with [his] preceptor,

along with all beings, along with all Brahmācārins, into the possession of the Mahāsāṃghika teachers.

No. 54 Reliquary Inscription of Lala

Date: 18 Kanīṣka I, 144/145 CE

Provenance: Mankyala, Pakistan

Present location: Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, France

Object: Stone relic chamber slab

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 149

[1.] saṃ 10 4 4 [Kartiyasa maze divase 20] e[tra] purvae
maharajasa Kaṇe[2.]ṣkasa Guṣaṇavaśasaṃvardhaka Lala [3.]
daḍaṇayago Veśpaśisa kṣatrapasa [4.] horamurt[o] sa tasa
apanage vihāra [5.] horamurto etra ṇaṇabhagavabudhaz[a]va [6.]
p[r]atistavayati saha tae[na] Veśpaśieṇa Khudacie[na] [7.]
Buriteṇa ca viharakara[vha]eṇa [8.] sa[m]veṇa ca parivareṇa
sadha eteṇa ku[9.]śalamulena budhehi ca ṣa[va]ehi [ca] [10.]
samaṃ sada bhavatu [11.] Bhratarasvarabudhisa agrapa[ḍi]aśae
[12.] sadha Budhileṇa navakarmigeṇa.

Year 18, day 20 of the month Kārttika. At this previous time, General Lala, forwarded of the Kuṣāṇa lineage of the Great King Kanīṣka, and master of donations for Satrap Veśpaśi. Establishes various relics of the Buddha in his own monastery, along with Veśpaśi, Kudhaci, and Burita, the builder of the monastery, along with the whole retinue. By means of this good-root and through all Buddhas, may [it] be for constant peace, for the highest share of [his] brother Svarabudhi, along with Budhila, the overseer of construction.

No. 55 Reliquary Inscription of Śveḍvarma

Date: 20 Kaniṣka I, 146/147 CE

Provenance: Kurram, Pakistan

Present location: —

Object: Copper stupa reliquary

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 149

[1.] [saṃ 20 masa]sa Avadunakasa di 20 iś[e] kṣuṇaṃmi
 Śveḍavarma Yaśaputra tanu[v]akaṃmi raṃñāṃmi
 (*Navaviha)raṃmi acaryana Sarvastivadana pari[grahaṃ]mi
 thubaṃmi bhagavatasa Śākyamunisa [2.] śarira pradithavedi
 yatha uta bhagavada avijapracaga saṃkara[ṃ] saṃkarapracaga
 viñana [vi]ñanapracaga namaruva namaruvapracaga
 ṣaḍa[ya]dana ṣaḍayadanapracaga phaṣa [ph]aṣapracaga [3.]
 vedana vedanapracaga taṣa taṣapracaga uvadana uvadanapracaga
 bhava bhavapracaga jadi jadipraca[ga] jaramaranaśoga-
 paridevadukhadormanastaüvagasa [evam asa] kevalasa
 dukhakaṃdhasa saṃmudae bhavadi [4.] sarvasatvana puyae aya
 ca praticasaṃmupate likhida Mahiphatiena sarvasatvana puyae.

Year 20, day 20 of the month Audunaios. At this moment, Śveḍavarma establishes a relic of the Fortunate One Śākyamuni in a stupa, into the possession of the Sarvāstivādins at the Navavihāra, in his own monastery. As it was said by the Fortunate One: ‘Because of ignorance, there is conditioned (mental states), because of conditioned mental states there is consciousness, because of consciousness there are name and form, because of name and form there are the six sensory spheres, because of the six sensory spheres there is sensory contact, because of sensory contact there is feeling, because of feeling there is thirst, because of thirst there is clinging, because of clinging there is becoming, because of becoming there is birth, because of birth there is ageing, death, grief, sorrow, suffering, depression and mental disturbance. Thus, this is the origin of the entire mass of suffering.’ For the worship of all beings, dependent origination was written by Mahaphati, for the worship of all beings.

No. 56 Bodhisattva Statue of Aśvadatta

Date: 20 Kaniṣka I, 146/147 CE

Provenance: Mathura, India

Present location: —

Object: Sandstone Bodhisattva

Script: Brāhmī

Ref: Sk 39

[1.]—maharajasya devaputrasya kāṇiṣkasya saṃvatsare 20 varṣāmāse 2 divase 20 6 etasya pūrvāye bhikh(u)[2.]sya aśvadatasya dānaṃ tathāgatapratimā mahākṣatrapavardhamāne acariyānaṃ mahāsamghiyānaṃ [3.] (par)i(gra)he sarvasatvanaṃ anutarasya budhajñānasya prātipuriye bhavatu.¹

Year twenty of the great king, the son of gods, Kaniṣka, month 2 of monsoon, day 26. At this previous time, a gift of Aśvadatta, a statue of the Tathāgata, in the area of the great satrap, for the acceptance of the Mahāsamghika teachers. May it be for all beings' fulfilment of the highest Buddha-knowledge.

No. 57 Reliquary Inscription of Mahasena and Saṃgharakṣita

Date: —

Provenance: Shah-ji-ki-Dheri, Peshawar, Pakistan

Present location: Peshawar Museum, Pakistan, No. 2848.

Object: Bronze casket

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 145

[1.] Kaniṣ[kapu]re ṇagare [a]yaṃ gaṃdha[ka]raṃḍe + t. (*mahara)jasa Kaṇi[2.]ṣkasa vihare Mahasenasa Saṃgharakṣitasa aḡiśalanavakarmiana [3.] deyadharme sarvasatvana hitasuhartha bhavatu [4.] acaryana Sarvastivatina pratigrahe.

In the city Kaniṣkapura, this perfume box... in the Kaniṣkavihāra. The gift-worthy object of the overseers of construction on the kitchen Mahasena and Saṃgharakṣita. May [it] be for the welfare

¹ Cf. *anena kuśalamūlenānuttarāṇāṃ buddhadharmāṇāṃ paripūriri bhavatu.* PSP 5. 35. See 4.2.6.

and happiness of beings. Into the possession of the Sarvāstivādin teachers.

No. 58 Amitābha Buddha of Nāgarakṣita

Date: 26 Kanīṣka I, 153/154 CE

Provenance: Govindnagar, Mathura, India

Present location: Huntingdon Collection

Object: Sandstone Bodhisattva

Script: Brāhmī

Ref: Sk 49

[1.] mah(ā)rajasya _____ huveṣkas[y]a (sam) 20 6 va 2 _____ di
20 6 [2.] etaye purvay. satcakasya satthavaha[s]ya p[au]t[r.]ṇa
balakattasya śreṣṭh[i]sya nāttikeṇa [3.] buddhapāleṇa putrena
nāgarakṣitena bhagavato buddhasya amitābhasya pratimā
pratiṣṭh[ā]pi[tā] [4.] (sa)[rva]buddha-pujāye im[e]na k[u]śala-
m[ū]leṇa sa(rva)[satv]ā anut[t]ara[m] bud[dha]j[ñ]ānaṃ
prā(pnva)ṃ(tu)...

Year 26 of the Great King Huviṣka, month 2 of monsoon, day 26.
At this previous time, a statue of the Fortunate One, Buddha
Amitābha, was established by Nāgarakṣita, grandson of the
caravan leader Satcaka, and the relation of the guildsman
Balakatta, for the worship of all Buddhas. By means of this good-
root, may all beings attain the highest Buddha-knowledge.

No. 59 Reliquary Inscription of Saṃghamitra

Date: 28 [Huviṣka], 154/155 CE

Provenance: Haḍḍa, Afghanistan

Present location:—

Object: Earthenware container

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 155

[1.] saṃbatsarae aṭhaviṃśatihi 20 4 4 mase Apelaē sastehi daśahi
10 iśa kṣunaṃmi pratisthapita śarira Ramaraṃṇami thubami
Saṃghamitreṇa navakarmi(*e)na [2.] edena k(*u)śalamule(*na)
eteṣa dharmana labhi bhavima y(*e)ṣa dharmaṇaṃ eta vo syet(*i)

śarira sarvasatvana nirvanasaṃbharae bhavatu Ramasa
agripracaya.

In the twenty-eighth 28 year, day ten 10 of the month Appelaioṣ.
At this moment, a relic as established in a stupa at the Ramāraṇya
by the overseer of new constructions Saṃghamitra. By means of
this good root, may we attain those good qualities, the good
qualities that the relic may have; may it be for preparation of all
beings' *nirvāṇa*. For the highest share of Rama.

No. 60 Bodhisattva of Dhanavatī

Date: 33 Huviṣka, 159/160 CE

Provenance: Caubara Mound, Mathura, India

Present location: Lucknow Provincial Museum (B2).

Object: Sandstone Bodhisattva

Script: Brāhmī

Ref: Sk 57

[1.] mahārajasya devaputrasya huviṣkasya saṃ 30 3 gr 1 di 8
bhikṣusya balasya treṭṭakasya antevāsin[ī]ye [bhi]kṣun[ī]ye
tre(*piṭi)[kā]ye buddha[mi]trāy[e] [2.] bhāgineyīye bhikṣiṇīye
dhanava[t]īye bodhisatvo p(r)atīhāpi(to) [ma]dh(u)ravaṇake sahā
mātāpitihi + + + + ha + + + +

Year 33 of the Great King, Son of Gods, Huviṣka, month 1 of
summer, day 8. A Bodhisattva was established by the nun
Dhanavatī, the pupil of the monk Bala, Bearer of the Three
Baskets, and niece of the nun Buddhamitrā, Bearer of the Three
Baskets, in the Mathuravana, along with [her] mother and
father...

No, 61 Pillar Bases of Buddharakṣita and Dharmarakṣita

Date: 33 Huviṣka, 159/160 CE

Provenance: Vasana, near Mathura, India

Present location: Government Museum, Mathurā (89.64).

Object: Pillar base

Script: Brāhmī

Ref: Sk 58–59

[1.] maharajasya devapūtrasya huveṣkasya saṃvatsare 30 3
hemaṃtamāse 1 divase 2 etasya pūrvayaṃ upāsakanam
buddharakṣitaddharmarakṣitanam bhratṛnam somaputraṇam
brahmaṇanām opavañasagoṭraṇam takhaśīlakanam dānam
kubhakaṃ svake vihare toyīyaṃ ācaryyanam sarvastivādīnam
parigrahe [2.] ā[tma] ārogadaḥṣiṇaya m[ā]tapitṛṇam pūjarttham
darakanam darikanam ca dīrghāyūkataya sarvasatvan[ā]ṃ
hitasūkhartham¹

Year 33 of the Great King, Son of Gods, Huviṣka, month 1 of winter, day 2. At this previous time, the gift, a pillar, of the lay-practitioners Buddharakṣita and Dharmarakṣita, brothers, son of Soma, Brahmins of the Opavaña lineage, and Taxilans, in their own monastery at Toyī, into the possession of the Sarvāstivādin teachers, for their own reward of health, for the worship of their mother and father, for the longevity of their sons and daughters, for the welfare and happiness of all beings.

¹ This text is repeated near verbatim upon another pillar base, Sk 59.

No. 62 Reliquary Inscription of Vagamarega

Date: 51 Huviṣka, 177/178 CE

Provenance: Wardak, Afghanistan

Present location: British Museum, London, United Kingdom, No. 1880.93

Object: Bronze reliquary

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 159

[1.] saṃ 20 20 10 1 maṣa Arthamisiya sastehi¹ 10 4 1 imeṇa gaḍigeṇa Kamagulyaputra Vagamarega sa iśa Khavadami Kadalayigavagamaregaviharammi thu[ba]mmi bhagavada Śākyamuṇe śarira pariṭhaveti [2.] imeṇa kuśalamuleṇa Maharajarajatirajahuveṣkaṣa agrabhagae bhavatu madapidara me puyae bhavatu bhradara me Haṣṭhunamaregaṣa puyae bhavatu yo ca me bhuya ṇatigamitrasaṃbhatigaṇa puyae bhavatu mahiya ca Vagamaregaṣa agrabhagapaḍiyamaṣae [3.] bhavatu sarvasatvaṇa arogadakṣiṇae bhavatu Aviyaṇaragaparyata yava bhavagra yo atra aṃtara a[m]ḍajo jalayuga śasvetiga arupyata sarviṇa puyae bhavatu mahiya ca rohaṇa sada sarviṇa avaṣatrigaṇa saporivara ca agrabhagapaḍiyamaṣae bhavatu mithyagaṣa ca agrabhaga bhavatu [4.] eṣa vihara acaryaṇa Mahasaṃghigaṇa parigraha.

Year 51, after 15 days of the month Artemesios. With this moment, Vagamarega, son of Kamagulya, establishes a relic of the Fortunate One Śākyamuni within a stupa at the Kadalagayigavagamaregavihāra in Khavada. By means of this good-root may [it] be for the highest share of the Great King, Supreme King among Kings, Huviṣka; may it be for the worship of my mother and father; may it be for the worship of my brother Haṣṭhunamarega; may it be for the worship of my other relatives, friends and associates; may it be for the highest share and portion of myself Vagamarega; may it be for the reward of health of all beings; may it be for the worship of all beings, as far as Avīci

¹ Ir. *sasta* (day).

hell up to the top of existence and here in between, who are egg-born, womb-born, moisture-born or without form; may it be for the highest share and portion of my riders and all umbrella bearers along with their retinue; may it be for the highest share of those at fault. This monastery is in the possession of the Mahāsāṃghika teachers.

No. 63 Reliquary Inscription of Vagamarega's Daughter

Date: 51 Huviṣka, 177/178 CE

Provenance: Wardak, Afghanistan

Present location: Private Collection

Object: Bronze reliquary

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 509

[1.] saṃ 20 20 10 1 maṣe Arthamisiya sastehi 10 4 1 iśa
 Khavadami Kamagulyaputravagamaregavihara[thu]ba kadalyage
 viha<ra>mi śamaṇaṇa Mahasaṃgigaṇa parigraha khoḍadhida
 dhidae <thu>bae pratīhaviti [2.] igagamigami bhagavada
 Śākyamuṇaṣa śarira pariṭhida imeṇa kuśalamuleṇa madapiteṇa
 puyaye bhavadu Haṣṭhuṇaḥmaregaṣa puyaye bhavatu
 Vagamariḡaṣa agrabhagadae bhavadu maheya ca dhidae
 arogadakṣiṇae bhavatu agrabhaga sarvasatvaṇa ca L.3.
 <a>[gra]bhagadae bhavatu ṇ<i>rvanaparayana ca
 Aviyāniragaparyata yava bhavagra yo atra aṃtara aḍaja jalayuga
 śaśv<e>tiga aru[v]i ova<va>tiga saha sarviṇaṇa ṇirvaṇaeda
 nirvaṇadae naye bhavatu mahiya ca rohaṇa agrabhagadae
 bhavatu bahulamithyagaṣa ca agrabhagadae bhavatu.

Year 51, after 15 days of the month Artemesios. Here in Khavada, at the Kadalyagavihāra, in the stupa in the Kamagulyaputra-vagamaregavihāra, in the possession of the Mahāsāṃghika teachers, the young daughter establishes the daughter-stupas. In each, a relic of the Fortunate One Śākyamuni was established. By means of this good-root may [it] be for the worship of [her] mother and father; may it be for the worship of Haṣṭhuṇamarega; may it be for the highest share of Vagamarega; may it be for the reward of the health of my daughters; may it be for the highest

share of all beings and conducive to [their] *nirvāṇa*; may it lead all as far as Avīci hell, up to the top of existence and here in between, who are egg-born, womb-born, moisture-born, without form or arise spontaneously; may it be for the highest share of my riders; and may it be for the highest share of the many at fault.

No. 64 Stone Bowl of Vaira

Date: 51 [Huviṣka], 177/178 CE

Provenance: Charsadda, Pakistan

Present location: —

Object: Blue-green schist bowl

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 367

saṃ 20 20 10 1 Kartaasa masasa divasaṃmi 10 1 1 1 iṣe
kṣuṇaṃmi saṃghe caūdiśami kridañakae puyakaviharami
acaryaṇa Kaśaviana pariGRAHAMMI Vairasa daṇamukhe ṣaveasa
Uvajayasa arogadaKṣiṇe sarva(*sa)tvaṇa puyae.

Year 51, day 13 of the month Kārttika. At this moment, a donation of of Vaira into the possession of the Kāśyapīya teachers at the community of the four directions at the Puyakavihāra in Kridañaka; for the reward of Uvajaya's health and the worship of all beings.

No. 65 Bodhisattva of Buddhavarman

Date: 51 Huviṣka, 177/178 CE

Provenance: Jamalpur, Mathura, India

Present location: Lucknow Museum (B3)

Object: Sandstone Bodhisattva

Script: Brāhmī

Ref: Sk 77

[1.] mahārājasya devaputrasya huveṣkasya savatsare 50 1
hemantamāse 1 d[i]va[s.] + + [a]sya [p]u[rva]yā [bhi]kṣu[ṇā]
[b]uddh[a]varmaṇā [bhagava]taḥ [śāk]y[am]u(ni) [2.] pratimā
pratiṣṭhāpita sarva[b]uddhapūjārt[th]a[m] anena d[e]yadharmā-
parityāgen[a] upadhy[ā]yasya saghadāsasya [n]irvā[n]ā[vā]p-
taye=[s]t[u] mātāp[it.] + + + + + + + [3.] buddha[a]varmas[y]a

sarvad(u)khopaśamāya sarvasatva-hitasukh[ā]r[th]a mahārāja-
d[e](v)a(putrav)ihāre

Year 51 of the Great King, Son of Gods Huviṣka, month 1 of winter [Mārgaśīrṣa], day.... At this previous time, a statue of Śākyamuni was established by the monk Buddhavarman for the worship of all Buddhas. By means of the total relinquishing of this gift-worthy object, may it be for the instructor Saghadasa's attainment of *nirvāṇa*; for the welfare and happiness of all being. At the Mahārājadevaputravihāra.

No. 66 Bodhisattva of Dharmapriya

Date: —Huviṣka

Provenance: Vasana Mathura, India

Present location: Senior Collection

Object: Sandstone slab

Script: Brāhmī

Ref: Sk 46

[1.] s(i)ddam maharājasya rajātirajasya deva[pu](tra)sya
huv(e)ṣkasya sa(m)vatsa.....etāye pūrvvāye [2.] bhikṣusya
śramaṇasya saddhyeviharisya bhi(kṣu)[s]ya dharmapriyasya
dānaṃ b(o)dhi <*sattvaṃ ayo **deyadharmapari**->[3.]tyago¹ sahā
upaddhyayāca(r)yyehi sahā (ā)[cār]yyeṇa dharmmadattena sahā
.....[4.] hi sahā im(e) kuśalamūlena sarvvasa(t)[va
a]nuttarasya nirantarasya j(ñā)-<*nāvāptaye >

Success! In the year...of the Great King, King of Kings, Son of Gods, Huviṣka. At this previous time, a Bodhisattva, the gift of monk Śramaṇa's co-resident Dharmapriya. [May this total] renouncing [of a gift-worthy object] [be for] the...along with the instructors, the teacher Dharmadatta and...By means of this good root may [it] be for the attainment of the highest and uninterrupted knowledge of all beings.

¹ Falk reconstructed *sattvaḥ samyakpari*. Falk, 'Two New Inscriptions from the Time of Huviṣka', 34.

No. 67 Pot of Yolamira

Date: —Huviṣka

Provenance: Dabar Kot, Balochistan, Pakistan

Present location: —

Object: Potsherds

Script: Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī

Ref: CKI 165

ṣahi Yolamiraṣa viharasvamiṣa deyadharmoyam prapa [svakiya Yolamiraṣahivihare] sa[m]ghe caturdiṣe acaryanam Sarvasthivadinam pratigrahe ito (de)ṣamaparityagato ¹ agre (*ma)ta-pitrinam (*pratiyam)ṣo sarvasatvanam agre pratiyamṣo dharmapatiṣa ca dirghayu(*ta bhavatu).

A water pot, the gift-worthy object, of Ṣāhi Yolamira, the owner of a monastery, in his own Yolamiravihāra, into the possession of the Sarvāstivādins of the community of the four directions. From this total relinquishing of a gift-worthy object, may [it] be for the highest share of [his] mother and father, for the highest share of all beings and for the longevity of the [his] wife.

No. 68 Slab of Valāna

Date: 74 Vāsudeva, 201/202 CE

Provenance: Jamalpur, Mathura, India

Present location: —

Object: Stone slab

Script: Brāhmī

Ref: § 130

[1.] mahārajāsyā rā(*///(*jatirāja)[2.] sya devaputrasya vāsu(*///(*deva) [3.] [sa]vatsara 70 4 varṣam.[4.]se prathame divase [5.] tri[ṣe] 30 asya purvvayam [6.] talakiy[e] mahādānda

¹ The occurrence of the term in these inscriptions is not entirely clear. Konow for example does not find and Tsukamoto reads *sra..parityagato*. Cf. Konow, *Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions: With the Exception of Those of Aśoka*, 173–76.; ToDh 1, Tsukamoto, *A Comprehensive Study of The Indian Buddhist Inscriptions Part I: Text, Notes and Japanese Translation*. I would suggest this is a scribal error for *desamaparityagato*.

[7.] ? ? nayakasya va [8.] lānas[y]a k[ṣ]aṇḍamihi(*ra) [9.] + + + +
+ + + + + [10.] + + + + + [mahādaṇḍa]

Year 74 of the Great King, Supreme King among Kings, Son of Gods, Vāsudeva, month 1 of monsoon, day 30. At this previous time, at Talakiya...of the Great General Valāna and the Great General Kṣaṇḍamīhira.

No. 69 Buddha of Nandika

Date: 74 [Vāsudeva], 201/202 CE

Provenance: Kaman, Mathura

Present location: —

Object: Sandstone Buddha

Script: Brāhmī

Ref: Sk 93

[1.] siddhaṃ ə saṃ 70 4 gr 1 di 10 5 asmi kṣuṇe bhikṣusya
naṃndikasya dānaṃ bhagavato śākyamuninā pratimā mihira-
vihāre ac[ār]yyaṇāṃ sarvvastivādīnāṃ parigrahe mātāpitṛnāṃ sa-
[2.] rivasat[v]anā ca hitasukhārtthā

Success! Year 74, month 1 of summer, day 15. At this moment, a gift, an image of the Fortunate One Śākyamuni, of the monk Nandika, into the possession of the Sarvāstivādin teachers in the Mihiravihāra, for sake of the welfare and happiness of [his] mother and father and all beings.

No. 70 Buddha of Saṃghilā

Date: 14 [Kaniṣka II] (241/242 CE)

Provenance: Mohalla, Mathura, India

Present location: —

Object: Stone Buddha

Script: Brāhmī

Ref: § 81

[1.] mahārājadevaputrasya kaniṣkasya saṃvatsare 10 4
pauṣamāse divase 10 asmiṃ divase pravārika hā[s]th(is)y(a) [2.]
bharyyā saṃghilā bhagavāto pitāmahāsya saṃmyasaṃbuddhasya

svamatasya devasya pūjārtham pratimaṃ pratiṣṭhā[3.]payati
sarvvādukkhaphrahānārtham

Year 14 of the Great King, Son of Gods, Kaniṣka, day 10 of the month Pauṣa. On this day, Saṃghilā, wife of the cloakmaker Hāsthi, establishes an image for the worship of the Fortunate One, Paternal Grandfather, Perfectly Awakened One, Self-thought, the God, for the sake of the abandonment of all suffering.

No. 71 Buddha Image of Madhurikā

Date: 28 Vāsiṣka, 255/256 CE

Provenance: Sāñcī, Madhya Pradesh, India

Present location: Archaeological Museum, Sāñcī (A 82).

Object: Stone Buddha

Script: Brāhmī

Ref: Sk 186

[1.] (*mahārāja)//sya r[ā]jāt[i]rājasya (deva)putrasya ṣ[ā]h[i]
vās(i)ṣkasya saṃ 20 (+) 8 hā 1 [di 5] (e)tasyā[m] purvv(āyām)
bhagava(to) [2.] (*śakyamuni)//sya jambuchāyāśailagr[ho]
śrīdharmadevavihāre pratiṣṭāpito kharasya dhitare
madhurik(āye) [3.] (*ane)//na deyadharmapāri(tyāgena) ///

Year 28 of the [Great King], Supreme King among Kings, Son of Gods, Ṣāhi, Vāsiṣka, month 1 of winter, day 5. At this previous time, a stone shrine of the Fortunate One Śākyamuni sitting in the shade of the Jambu Tree was established at the Dharmadevavihāra by Madhurakā, daughter of Khara. By means of the total relinquishing of this gift-worthy object...

No. 72 Buddha Image of Ariṣṭikā

Date: —

Provenance: Sāñcī, Madhya Pradesh, India

Present location: Hirayama Collection

Object: Sandstone Buddha

Script: Brāhmī

Ref: Sk 211

[1.] siddham mahā(ra)[ja-rājātirājasya deva] [putra] /// /// (sya)
 [pratimā p]ratiṣṭāpitā dharmmadevavihāre urāṇaphvar[da](ra)
 [2.] <bhāgi>ṇ[ī]ye ari(ṣ)ṭikāye bhikṣuṃ dharmmadevaṃ
 kalyāṇamitraṃ dharmmasahāyaṃ punya + + ka?tva? imena
 deyadha(r)mmaparity(ā)gena ariṣṭikāye urāṇaphvardarasya
 dharmmadevasya ca dukhākṣaya [3.] <bhava>t(u)
 sarvvasatvānāñca hitasukhārta -

Success! Year...of the Great King, Supreme King Among Kings,
 Son of Gods...an image was established at the
 Dharmmadevavihāra by Ariṣṭikā, sister of Urāṇaphvardara,
 having made the good friend and Dharma-companion,
 Dharmmadeva...merit. By means of the total-relinquishing of
 this gift-worthy object, may there be a destruction Ariṣṭikā,
 Urāṇaphvardara and Dharmmadeva's suffering; for the welfare
 and happiness of all beings.

No. 73 Avalokiteśvara of Dharmamitra

Date: —

Provenance: —

Present location: John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, MF 94.8.5.

Object: Schist Avalokiteśvara

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 222

Dha(*ma)mitrasa Oloiṣpare danamukhe Budhamitrasa amridae ///
 (*madapidarana ca puyae bhavatu)

The principal gift, an Avalokiteśvara, of Dhamamitra. May it be
 for the immortality of Budhamitra and the worship of all [his]
 mother and father.

No. 74 Buddha Statue of Momadatta

Date: —

Provenance: —

Present location: Hirayama Ikuo Silk Road Museum, Hokuto, Japan, No. 100083

Object: Stone Buddha statue

Script: Kharoṣṭhī

Ref: CKI 256

[1.] [Tra]matithaṇaṇagaraṃmi Dhamaṛāiaṃmi Aśoraya-
praistavidami Momadatae Balasomabha[2.]yae suaṇakarabhayae
daṇamukhe imiṇa kuśalamuleṇa [3.] śarvaṣatva1 «para»ṇivaīti

In the capital city Trama, at the Dharmarājikā established by Aśoka, the principal gift of Momadata, wife of Balasoma the goldsmith. By means of this good-root may all beings completely extinguish.

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