# NEW BIOGRAPHIES OF THE BUDDHA IN GĀNDHĀRĪ (STUDIES IN GĀNDHĀRĪ MANUSCRIPTS 3)[1]

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ABSTRACT

Recent discoveries of Gāndhārī manuscripts include two texts concerning the biography of the Buddha. The first, the "Many-Buddhas Sūtra" (**Bahubudhagasutra*), held in the Library of Congress, compares in a topical format Śākyamuni Buddha's career with those of his thirteen predecessors and his predicted follower Maitreya. The second manuscript, in a private collection, contains fragments of a long narrative biography of Śākyamuni in verse. While the first biography resembles materials in the Sanskrit *Bahubuddhakasūtra* incorporated into the *Mahāvastu*, no parallel for the second has been identified. The article presents annotated samples and translations from both new texts.

## 1. Introduction: New Buddha biographies in Gāndhārī

Among the many recent discoveries of Buddhist texts on birch bark scrolls in the Gāndhārī language and Kharoṣṭhī script[2] are two previously

[1] The persons who over the last several years contributed in various ways to the material presented in this article are too many to list here completely. Particularly important were the contributions of Mark Allon, Timothy Lenz, and Lin Qian. Among the many other contributors are Stefan Baums, Michael Butcher, Shayne Clarke, Collett Cox, Chanida Jantrasrisalai, Yasmeen Khan (Library of Congress), Jonathan Loar (Library of Congress), Gudrun Melzer, Andrea Schlosser, Anna Schnell, Blair Silverlock, Vincent Tournier, and Fei Zhao. Two sharp-eyed anonymous reviewers for this journal also provided a large number of helpful suggestions and corrections.

[2] These manuscripts have been principally presented in the six volumes of the Gandhāran Buddhist Texts series (Salomon 2000a, Allon 2001, Lenz 2003, Glass 2007, Salomon 2008, Lenz 2010); in two general studies, one preliminary (Salomon 1999), the other summarizing findings to date (Salomon 2018); in four articles in Harrison and Hartmann 2014 (Allon 2014, Cox 2014, Falk and Strauch 2014, Salomon 2014); in a series of articles by Harry Falk and his collaborators (Falk 2011, Falk 2015, Falk and Karashima 2012, Falk and Karashima 2013, Falk and Steinbrückner 2020); in the volumes of *Buddhist Manuscripts in the Schøyen Collection* (Allon and Salomon 2000; Allon, Salomon, Jacobsen, and Zoppi 2006; Jantrasrisalai, Lenz, Lin, and Salomon 2016; Baums, Glass, and Matsuda

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unknown texts dealing in different ways with the biography of the Buddha. Both texts are datable on paleographic grounds and by radiocarbon dating to the first century CE or thereabouts, and both seem to have originally been part of the so-called "Split collection," a large assemblage of Gandharan manuscripts of uncertain provenance, apparently comprising materials from different original sources (Falk 2011; Salomon 2020: 178–179).

The first one, the **Bahubudhagasutra* (= Skt *Bahubuddhakasūtra*), is recorded on a scroll that was acquired by the Library of Congress, Washington DC in 2003, and hence is known as the Library of Congress scroll. This manuscript has already been introduced and presented in translation in Salomon 2018: 265–293, but the text itself has not yet been published.[3] The manuscript and its general character and significance were presented in Library of Congress blog posts in 2019 (Loar 2019, Tucker 2019), and images and descriptions are available in the Library's on-line Gallery (https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.asian/asianscd.2018305008). It has also been discussed in Salomon and Baums 2007 in connection with the word *iṣmaho*, the Gāndhārī equivalent of the name Ikṣvāku, occurring in it. The **Bahubudhagasutra* was briefly but expertly described in Tournier 2017: 131–132 and mentioned sporadically elsewhere (e.g., pp. 142, 156, 158, 162–163), particularly with reference to the section on the *carias*/*caryā*s of the bodhisattva.[4] A comprehensive edition to be published in the Gandhāran Buddhist Texts series is currently in progress.

Although the **Bahubudhagasutra* has no direct parallel in other Buddhist languages, it does have genre-wise parallels in several texts. In general, biographies of the Buddha can be divided into two types: (1) Sequential or "Buddhological" biographies, in which the life of "the Buddha" – that is, of Śākyamuni/Siddhārtha/Gautama – is presented in the context of an ongoing lineage of buddhas of the past, present, and future; (2) Historical biographies describing the life, or (more often) some portion thereof, of Śākyamuni alone, as told by the Buddha himself or by an anonymous

2016; Baums, Braarvig, Lenz, Liland, Matsuda, and Salomon 2016; Harrison, Lenz, Lin, and Salomon 2016; Salomon 2016); and in the two previous articles in this series (Harrison, Lenz, and Salomon 2018; Allon 2019).

[3] Some aspects of this text are also discussed in Salomon forthcoming.

[4] Pp. 196–200; see the index on p. 585, s.v. **Bahubudhagasutra*, for further references.

third-person narrator. The **Bahubudhagasutra* belongs to the first type, and since biographical texts of this type typically follow similar patterns, it has fairly close similarities to analogous texts such as the *Bahubuddhakasūtra* incorporated into the *Mahāvastu*, as will be discussed in the following section.

The second text, held in a large private collection of Gandharan scrolls which apparently is part of the original "Split collection," consists of the badly fragmented remnants of a biography of the historical type, describing the major events in the life of Śākyamuni Buddha. The text has no known parallels and has not been previously mentioned in print.[5] As far as it has been possible so far to determine its contents from the surviving fragments, the text covers the major events of the Buddha's life at least from the "Great Departure" until the enlightenment. It gives the impression of being an original Gāndhārī composition in verses of the *mātrāchandas* type. This text will be described in some detail in the third section of this article.

## 2. A topical life of the Buddha(s): The **Bahubudhagasutra* (Library of Congress scroll)

The surviving portion of the Library of Congress scroll (fig. 1) preserves the majority, probably around three-quarters, of the original text. The title of the text is not recorded in the surviving fragments, but I propose the title **Bahubudhagasutra* = Skt **Bahubuddhakasūtra* (hereafter BBS-G) on the basis of its resemblance to the similar text embedded in the *Mahāvastu* entitled *Bahubuddhakasūtra*.[6]

As usual with Gandhāran scrolls, the top of the scroll, which was on the outside when it was rolled up, is completely lost, and the surviving

[5] It was introduced orally by the author in a presentation entitled "A Previously Unknown Biography of the Buddha in Gāndhārī" at the 17th World Sanskrit Conference in Vancouver, BC, July 12, 2018.

[6] As noted by Tournier (2017: 127, n. 9), the name of the corresponding subsection of the *Mahāvastu* was edited by Senart as *bahubuddhasūtra*, but the preferred manuscript Sa reads *bahubuddhakaṃ sūtraṃ*. Moreover, as also noted by Tournier (pp. 156–157), one of the alternative titles listed at the end of the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīkasūtra* (Yamada 1968: 417.3) is *bahubuddhakam*.



Figure 1: The Library of Congress scroll (**Bahubudhagasutra*) before unrolling (The loose piece at the top was the uppermost/outermost surviving strip of the scroll, which became separated from the main roll.)
*Photograph courtesy of Library of Congress*

upper portion is very fragmentary. But enough survives (ninety lines in all) to show that the scribes had written the entire text on both sides of a single scroll, first from the top down on the recto side and then, after turning the scroll over, continuing on the verso from the bottom towards the top. The loss of the top of the scroll means that, as usual, we are missing both the opening (*nidāna*) of the text on the recto and the colophon, if there ever was one, at the top of the verso. The writing on the two sides is clearly in different hands, but the text itself is continuous; apparently the task of writing out or copying the *sūtra* was shared between two scribes or students.

The manuscript has been subjected to radiocarbon dating twice, with somewhat different results. The first test, carried out in 2007, gave a probable range (97.5%) of 206 BCE to 59 CE, while the second test in 2010 indicated a date between 39 BCE and 133 CE. The Library of Congress staff thought that the discrepancy was probably caused by contamination of the first sample by its packing material, so that the range indicated by the second test is probably the more accurate one. This date range, that is, in or around the first century CE, is consistent with the scroll's paleographic and linguistic features as well as with radiocarbon dates established for similar birch bark manuscripts, including the other one discussed in this article.

The language and script are both characteristic of the middle period, or what might be called "classical Gāndhārī," that is, manuscripts and inscriptions from about the first century BCE to the mid-second century CE. This material is distinguished from early Gāndhārī, that is, Gāndhārī of the third and second centuries BCE, mostly attested in the inscriptions of Aśoka, by phonological developments such as the extensive voicing or fricativization of single intervocalic consonants, and from later Gāndhārī of the latter second and the third or fourth century by the absence of Sanskritizing features in orthography and morphology that are typical of late documents.[7] As in most Gāndhārī manuscripts, the orthography and morphology are loose and inconsistent.

The **Bahubudhagasutra* is framed as a discourse by Śākyamuni to Ānanda structured around a series of eight topic headings, each of which is specified for each of fifteen buddhas, beginning with Dīpaṅkara and running through to Śākyamuni and then on to the future Buddha Maitreya. The topic headings are:

1. Verses describing the encounters that Śākyamuni as a bodhisattva had with the other buddhas, and their prediction of his future buddhahood.[8]
2. The courses of training (*caria* = Skt *caryā*) which Śākyamuni followed under the other buddhas (including under Maitreya when he was still a bodhisattva).
3. The life-spans of the fourteen past and present buddhas.
4. The eons (*kapa* = *kalpa*) in which the buddhas lived.
5. The eons, restated in verse form.
6. The social class (*kula*, i.e., brahman or *kṣatriya*) of each buddha.
7. The number and size of the assemblies (*mahasaṇivada* = *mahāsaṃnipāta*) of the buddhas' disciples.
8. The duration of survival of the buddhas' dharma.

Each of the sections except the first is concluded with a single verse summarizing its contents, as in the concluding verse (16) to section 5, cited below in text sample A.

[7] On sanskritized Gāndhārī, see Salomon 2001 and 2002: 127–128.

[8] Only these verses are sequentially numbered in the manuscript; neither the other set of verses (in topic section 5) nor the other divisions of the text are numbered. The reason for the difference is not clear.

Because of the damage to the upper part of the scroll, topics 1 (on the recto) and 8 (verso) are largely incomplete. The other six topic sets are mostly intact, although no single line is complete because the right edge of the scroll is damaged throughout its length, especially on the upper lines. There may have been an additional topic section at the top of the recto of which nothing survives, which would have described Śākyamuni's offerings to the prior buddhas in prose, which were then restated in verse in the surviving first topic section (just as the eons topic is stated first in prose in section 4 and then restated in verse in section 5). If there was no such additional section, the percentage of the text which survives would be around 80%; if an additional section was lost at the top of the scroll, the surviving portion would have constituted roughly 70% of the whole. In either case, the proportion of the text which survives is relatively large compared to Gandhāran manuscripts in general, in which the surviving portion is often half or less of the original text.[9]

As noted above, the BBS-G belongs to a genre of Buddhist literature which could be called Buddhological *sūtra*s, that is, texts which list and describe in various respects the lineages and characteristics of the buddhas. Presumably the earliest and most influential text of this class is the *Mahāpadānasutta* in the Pali *Dīghanikāya* and its Sanskrit counterpart, the *Mahāvadānasūtra* of the Sarvāstivādin *Dīrghāgama*, in which the Buddha narrates the life story of his sixth predecessor, the buddha Vipaśyin/Vipassin, as a model for the lives of the other buddhas who succeeded him. In this as in the other texts of the same genre, the experiences of all of the buddhas are essentially the same, differing only in details. It is the enumeration of these varying details – for example, whether each buddha is born as a brahman or a *kṣatriya* – that takes up the bulk of the BBS-G and similar texts.

A more expansive and presumably later lineage of Buddhas is presented in the Pali *Buddhavaṃsa*, a text belonging to the Theravādin *Khuddakanikāya*, which lists and describes twenty-five buddhas from

[9] This estimate is based on part on my interpretation (Salomon 2018: 81–82, 107–108, 209–210) of British Library scrolls 1 and 16 + 25 as the first, and possibly only, scrolls of their respective texts. However, this interpretation has been questioned in Baums 2014: 190, nn. 11, 206, suggesting that they may have rather been the second scrolls of a multivolume text. If this is correct, the average portion of scrolls which survives may be somewhat higher than the above estimate.

Dīpaṅkara to Gotama. Texts of this class may also look to the future as well as to the past and (narrative) present. The BBS-G presented here includes the next buddha, Maitreya, while the Mahāyāna *Bhadrakalpikasūtra* (remnants of a Gāndhārī version of which have recently been discovered and published in Baums, Glass, and Matsuda 2016) lists no fewer than 1000 future buddhas who, along with Śākyamuni and his three predecessors, will make up the 1004 buddhas of the present Fortunate (Bhadra) eon, whence the title of the *sūtra*.

Although the buddha lineage is theoretically infinite in the past and future, the portion between Dīpaṅkara and Śākyamuni is of particular interest in this class of literature because it was during the time of Dīpaṅkara that the bodhisattva who was destined to become "our" Buddha Śākyamuni first formed the aspiration to become a buddha, and because it was then that Dīpaṅkara predicted his ultimate success. This is therefore the particularly important slice of buddhological history that the BBS-G, like the *Buddhavaṃsa* and other similar texts, chooses to recount. In this respect the BBS-G is particularly closely related to two other texts of the genre, namely the aforementioned *Bahubuddhakasūtra* embedded in the *Mahāvastu*[10] (BBS-Mvu),[11] and a similar portion of the 佛本行集經 *Fó běnxíng jí jīng* (T vol. 3, no. 190, pp. 669a1–672a11; hereafter FBXJJ), which is preserved only in Chinese. Both of these long compilatory Buddha biographies include passages that summarize the list of seventeen buddhas from Dīpaṅkara to Maitreya (including two, Arthadarśin and Puṣya, who are absent from the corresponding list of fifteen buddhas in the BBS-G)[12] in terms of topic headings that are quite similar to those in BBS-G, as shown in table 1:

[10] References to the *Mahāvastu* in this article will be given both to Senart's edition (1882–1897) and to the new edition by Marciniak for volumes II (2020) and III (2019). (As of this writing, the first volume of Marciniak's edition is not available.) Senart's readings are given with volume, page, and line number; Marciniak's with volume and page only, as the lines are not numbered.

[11] I refer here specifically to the second sutra of this name that is incorporated into the *Mahāvastu* (Marciniak III.279–320 = Senart III.224.10–250.8), which is particularly similar to the BBS-G.

[12] The significance of this omission from the BBS-G is discussed in Salomon forthcoming.

| BBS-G | BBS-Mvu | FBXJJ |
|---|---|---|
| 1. encounters with previous buddhas | 1. eon | 1. encounters with previous buddhas |
| 2. courses of practice (*caria*) | 2. lifespan | 2. eon |
| 3. lifespan | 3. origin of name | 3. class |
| 4. eon | 4. assemblies of disciples | 4. lifespan |
| 5. class (brahman or *kṣatriya*) | 5. class (brahman or *kṣatriya*) | 5. assemblies of disciples + duration of dharma[13] |
| 6. assemblies of disciples | 6. encounters with previous buddhas | |
| 7. duration of dharma | | |

Table 1: Topic headings in three buddha-lineage texts

From this table it will be clear that the topic headings (as well as the information contained under them) are generally the same in all three texts, although their order varies – but with one important difference: only BBS-G has a topic heading for courses of practice (*caria* = Skt *caryā*), and that in the prominent second position. This section enumerates the four courses which Śākyamuni as a bodhisattva practiced under the other buddhas: the names of the *caria* are *pragidi* (= Skt *prakṛti*) "natural character," **praṇiṣi* or *praṇiṣaṇa*[14] (*praṇidhi*/*praṇidhāna*) "resolution," *vivaṭaṇa* (*vivartana*) "development" (?), and *śukra* (*śukra*) "purity." Although the parallel texts to the BBS-G do not have a corresponding section for the courses of bodhisattva practice, similar lists do appear in other sections of the long compendia in which they are incorporated. In fact, a description of a set of four *caryā*s comes at the very beginning – the first sentence after the initial *namaskāra* – of the

[13] These two topics are presented together in FBXJJ.

[14] The name of the second *caria* does not actually appear in the manuscript of BBS-G due to damage to the relevant portions, but it can be fairly securely posited on the basis of the parallel texts.

*Mahāvastu*[15] as well as in an earlier part of the FBXJJ (pp. 656c17–18), as shown in table 2:

| BBS-G r-13–24 | Mvu<br>Tournier 2017: 406.3–4 =<br>Senart I.1.3 | FBXJJ 656c17–18 |
|---|---|---|
| *pragidi-caria*<br>"course of natural character" | *prakṛti-caryā*<br>"course of natural character" | 自性行 *zì xìng xíng* = *prakṛti-caryā*<br>"course of natural character" |
| **praṇiṣi/*praṇiṣaṇa-caria*<br>"course of resolution" | *praṇidhāna-caryā*<br>"course of resolution" | 願性行 *yuàn xìng xíng* = *praṇidhāna-caryā*<br>"course of resolution" |
| *vivaṭana-caria*<br>"course of development" (?) | *anuloma-caryā*<br>"course of conformation" | 順性行 *shùn xìng xíng* = *anuloma-caryā*<br>"course of conformation" |
| *śukra-caria*<br>"course of purity" | Senart: *anivartana-caryā*<br>Tournier: *avivarttana-caryā*<br>"course of non-retrogression" | 轉性行 *zhuǎn xìng xíng* = **vivartana-caryā*?<br>"course of reversal" |

Table 2: The *carias*/*caryās*/行 in three texts

The exact meaning of these terms and relationships between them is a complex issue which will be addressed in the complete edition of BBS-G. Here it will only be noted that the first two *caryā*s are apparently consistent across the three texts, while the second two differ in all three. Moreover, both the exact sense of the third *caria* in BBS-G, *vivaṭana-caria* "course of development" and its relationship to the fourth one in *Mahāvastu* and FBXJJ are somewhat problematic. The matter becomes even more complicated upon closer examination of the *Mahāvastu* data, for as shown by Tournier (2017: 213), the fourth *caryā* is mentioned in various places in the text in several variant forms: *vivarttana-*, *vivartta-*, *avivartta-*, *avivarttana-*, and *nivartana-*. He argues (2017: 213–216) that the original form was the positive *vivartta-*, for which the negative form

[15] The readings presented for this section of the *Mahāvastu* are from Tournier's partial edition (2017: 406) based on the archetype manuscript Sa, which supersedes Senart's old edition, but Senart's reading is also shown for comparison. As noted above (n. 10), the first volume of Marciniak's new edition of *Mahāvastu* is not presently available.

was substituted for doctrinal reasons. In this case, the fourth *caryā* of the *Mahāvastu* would have corresponded to that of FBXJJ (轉性 *zhuǎn xìng*), which Tournier translates as "phase du renversement" (2017: 215), noting (2017: 215, n. 299) that the verb *vi-√vr̥t* which apparently underlies the Chinese term can refer to "la soustraction, ou plus littéralement le 'renversement' d'un certain nombre de facteurs qui constituent un obstacle à la voie de l'Éveil" ("the subtraction, or more literally the 'reversal' of a certain number of factors which constitute an obstacle to the way to enlightenment"). However, the BBS-G's term for the fourth *caryā*, *śukra*, remains unique among all three texts.[16]

Another important distinction between the BBS-G and its parallels in the *Mahāvastu* and FBXJJ concerns its textual status. In the latter two texts, the BBS has been embedded into much larger compilatory texts. In the case of the *Mahāvastu* in particular, the text unit which we are concerned with here (Marciniak III.304–320 = Senart III.240.1–250.8) is doubly embedded, first at the end of a much larger *Bahubuddhakasūtra* (Marciniak III.279–320 = Senart III.224.10–250.8) recording some 789 buddhas, which itself is then embedded in the *Mahāvastu* as a whole. A similar development must have taken place in FBXJJ; this is shown by the closing *uddāna* verses in p. 672a8–11, which summarize the portion of the preceding text beginning at p. 663b13, suggesting that this section was originally a separate integral unit. In the case of the BBS-G scroll, on the other hand, all indications are that this short (fifteen-Buddha) version was circulating as an independent short *sūtra*. Although we cannot be absolutely sure of this since the beginning and end of the text are lost with the top of the scroll, the layout of the manuscript strongly suggests that it originally contained this and only this short *sūtra*. Among the indications of this is the circumstance that the text at the bottom of the recto, namely the end of the first eons section, falls slightly past the middle of the BBS-G, suggesting that the scroll originally contained the BBS-G itself and nothing but it. This scenario would be in keeping with what has been observed among other Gandhāran manuscripts, where we

[16] On the four *caryā*s and the related system of ten *bhūmi*s, see Eimer 2006 and especially Tournier 2017: 195–224 (§2.2.1, "Systèmes des *caryā* dans le Mahāvastu" and §2.2.2, "*caryā* et *bhūmi*").

find texts such as the "Rhinoceros Sūtra" and the *Anavataptagāthā*, which are known in later Buddhist literature as incorporations into super-compilations such as the *Suttanipāta* and *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya*, in their presumably original independent form.[17]

## Text sample A:
## *Bahubudhagasutra*, section 5:
## The eons in which the buddhas lived (verse restatement)

The passage presented here[18] restates and elaborates in verse, in the typical fashion of Buddhist literature in Sanskrit, the information which had been provided in prose in the previous section, specifying the *kalpa*s in which each of the fifteen buddhas lived. For example, verse 5 (line v-4), reporting that the buddha Yaśottara lived in the five-hundredth eon before the present (*pacamasvi kapaśade*), repeats the corresponding statement in the preceding prose (lines r-42–43), "Lord Yaśottara, O Ānanda,

[17] See Salomon 2018: 273–274 and Salomon 2021 (section 2).

[18] Here and in sample text B, the text is presented according to the conventions used for other editions of Gāndhārī texts:

[ ] incomplete or uncertain syllable(s)

(*) syllable(s) or portions of syllable(s) missing from the actual text but securely reconstructed

. illegible consonantal or vocalic portion of partially legible syllable (e.g., *c*. represents the consonant *c* whose vowel diacritic is lost or illegible)

? visible or partially visible but illegible syllable

+ missing and unreconstructable syllable in a lost or wholly obscured part of the manuscript

⟪⟫ syllable(s) secondarily inserted by the scribe interlinearly

/// beginning or end of an incompletely preserved line

= a graphic syllable that bridges a word division as in, e.g., *evam=eva* written syllabically (*e-va-me-va*) as is normally done in Sanskrit but only occasionally in Gāndhārī (usually in connection with words ending in *m* before a following word beginning with a vowel).

In both sample texts a Sanskrit *chāyā* is provided as well as an English translation. In the translation of sample A, points which significantly differ from the previous translation in Salomon 2018 are noted in italics. The *chāyā*s are composed in Buddhist Sanskrit rather than the standard classical language, for example in using *pūre* instead of *pūrṇe* (sample A, verse 6), **ānupūrvikam* (A-16), and *purimā* (B-3). No attempt has been made to preserve or adjust the meter in the *chāyā*s.

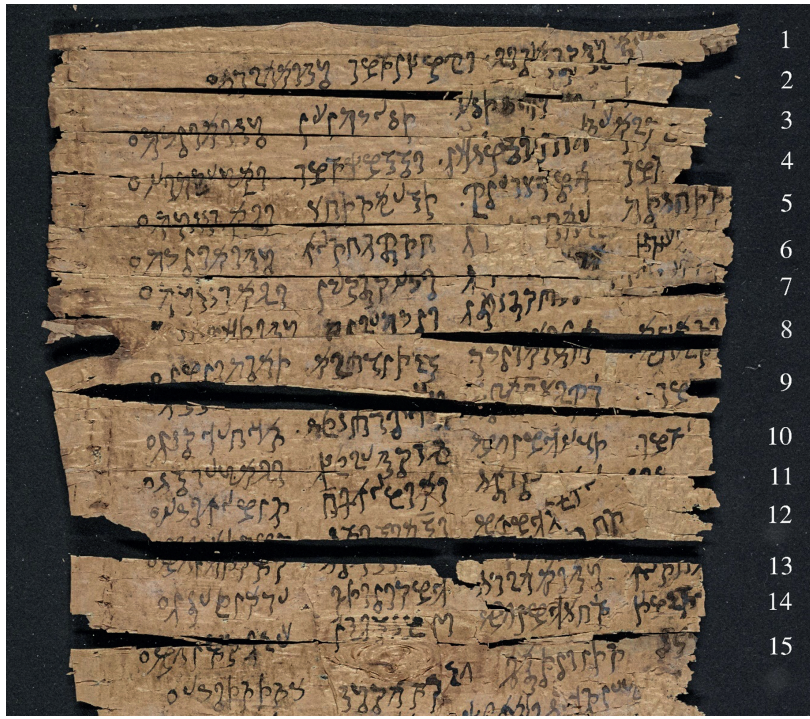


Figure 2: Library of Congress scroll, upper portion of verso:
Lines v-1 to v-15 = eon verses 2–16
*Photograph courtesy of Library of Congress*

lived a full five hundred eons before this Bhadra eon."[19] The verses also add some description of the qualities of each buddha, and in several cases the description states or implies an explanation of the Buddhas' names, as for example in verse 3 where Padumutara (Padmottara) is likened to an unsullied lotus (*alito padumo = aliptaṃ padmam*).[20]

[19] *Iti aṇada bhadraga*[*pe*] (**pari*)[*pura*] *pacahi kapa*[*śa*]*dehi yaśutaro bhagava asi*. In many cases the numbers of the eons or the names of the buddhas are lost or fragmentary due to damage in one or the other section, but the repetition makes it possible to reconstruction the missing information in nearly all such cases.

[20] The *Bahubuddhakasūtra* in the *Mahāvastu* has a distinct separate section (as shown in table 1 above; Marciniak III.313–316 = Senart III.244.12–246.16) consisting of verses

This passage begins at the end of the penultimate line (47) of the recto with the introduction (*tatreda iti vucadi*, "Concerning this it is said thus:") of the verse repetition. The first buddha, Divakara (Dīpaṅkara), is introduced in the last line (48) of the recto, but the verse is mostly obscured by a fold in the bark. The verses then continue on through to Maitreya in the first fourteen lines of the verso, concluding with a summary *śloka* on line 15.

The verses, in *anuṣṭubh* meter, are laid out one per line, with spaces between the *pāda*s which are inconsistently punctuated with a dot (transcribed as ·). The ends of the verses are regularly punctuated with a small circle (◦). The right side of the scroll is damaged so that a varying amount of the first *pāda* of each verse is lost, and the surface is further disturbed to varying degrees in the first half of the verses. The image provided here (fig. 2) shows the unreconstructed scroll on which this sample edition is based; a complete reconstruction with the numerous displaced pieces restored to their correct position will be presented in the final edition of the manuscript, and will undoubtedly provide some improved readings.

| Transcription (line r-47) | *chāyā* |
|---|---|
| tatreda iti vucadi | tatredam ity ucyate |

Concerning this [i.e., the eras in which the various Buddhas lived], it is said thus:

Verse 1 (line r-48)

| | |
|---|---|
| + + + + + + + + | … |
| + + + + + + + + | … |
| + + + + [c]. + + (+) | … |
| [b](*u)[dh](*o) asi parayano | buddha āsīt parāyaṇaḥ |

… was the Buddha [Divakara (Dīpaṅkara)], *the ultimate*.

which explain the origins of the names of each of the buddhas. The FBXJJ is more like BBS-G in this respect, as it incorporates explanations of only some of the names of the buddhas into a section which is primarily dedicated to a different topic, namely the encounters with previous buddhas (pp. 669a1–670c12). However, the specific explanations of each name are inconsistent across the three texts.

Dīpaṅkara's epithet *parayano* (= Skt *parāyaṇa* or *pārāyaṇa*-) ("goal, ideal, ultimate," etc.) probably refers to the bodhisattva's (i.e., the future Śākyamuni's) resorting to him in his quest for ultimate illumination.

| | 2 (v-1) |
|---|---|
| /// ? ? + + ? ? spi · | … |
| budho sarvavivhu ah[o] · | buddhaḥ sarvābhibhūr abhūt / |
| aṣagañaṇa bhagava | asaṅgajñāno bhagavān |
| budho asi viharato ◦ | buddha āsīd viharan // |

In … there was the Buddha Sarvavivhu (Sarvābhibhu). The Lord Buddha was dwelling *with unattached cognition*.

*Aṣagañaṇa* is elsewhere attested in Gāndhārī in the Mahāyāna *sūtra* in the Bajaur collection[21] as *aṣ̱agañaṇo* (section 6.2, line 602) and *aṣ̱agañaṇi* (5.4, line 554, verse 5.12). The Sanskrit equivalent is *asaṅgajñāna*-;[22] *ṣaga* = Skt *saṅga* is well attested in Gāndhārī.[23] The Sanskrit term is well attested in various Mahāyāna *sūtra*s, for example *Lalitavistara* (ed. Lefmann 1902) p. 3.13 and *Samādhirājasūtra* (Vaidya 1961) §§15.12, 24.59, 38.57, as well as in the *Ajitasenavyākaraṇa*, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, etc. It is somewhat surprising to find here his term, which is more typically associated with Mahāyāna texts, nor is it obvious why it is applied here to Sarvābhibhū in particular.

*Viharato* (also in verse 14b) is the nominative singular of an extended, thematized stem **viharanta*- corresponding to Sanskrit *viharant*-. For other examples in Gāndhārī of thematization of originally consonantal stems, see the note on *sarvadarśiṇo* in verse 8b and compare, for example, *bhayavadu* = Skt *bhagavān* (Allon 2001: 113, §6.1.4.5).

| | 3 (v-2) |
|---|---|
| (*śadasahasime ka)[p](*e) | śatasāhasre kalpe |
| + + alito padumo · | … aliptaṃ padmam / |
| padumutaro ṇameṇa | padmottaro nāmnā |
| bu[dh]o asi aṇutaro ◦ | buddha āsīd anuttaraḥ // |

[21] Personal communication from Andrea Schlosser and Ingo Strauch.

[22] The term was translated in Salomon 2018: 289 as "who knew the mental inclinations [of others]," taking *aṣagañaṇa* as equivalent to Skt *āśrayajñāna*, but this is now clearly incorrect in light of the parallels cited here.

[23] As discussed in Brough 1962: 101, §50.

In the (*one hundred-thousandth) eon [ago] there was the unsurpassed Buddha named Padumutara (Padmottara), who was (*like) an unsullied lotus.

4 (v-3)

| | |
|---|---|
| (*e)///[g](*a)sahasime ka[p](*e) | ekasāhasre kalpe |
| ya[śo]acugado jiṇo · | yaśo'tyudgato jinaḥ / |
| acucagami bhagava · | atyuccagāmī bhagavān |
| aṣi bramasvaroamo ◦ | āsīd brahmasvaropamaḥ // |

In the one-thousandth eon [ago] there was the Conqueror Lord Acucagami (Atyuccagāmin), who reached extremely high in glory, who[se voice] was like the Brahma-voice.

*ya*[*śo*]*acugado*, the epithet intended to explain Atyuccagāmin/Acucagami's name, seems to be an unusually formed nominal compound (although the reading of the first member is uncertain). More expected would be a *bahuvrīhi*, **acugada-yaśo* = Skt *atyudgatayaśāḥ*; compare other apparent cases of compounds with abnormal internal ordering in this text, as discussed in the next note and in the notes on verses 5 and 9. Such formations are seen sporadically in Old and Middle Indian languages, but they are particularly frequent in this poem and seem to be an idiosyncrasy of its composer. On compounds with abnormal word order in Prakrit, see Pischel 1900: 407 (§603), "In der Composition … [folgen] die einzelnen Glieder nicht immer in der streng logischen Reihenfolge auf einander" ("In compounding the individual members do not always follow one another in strictly logical sequence"), citing, for example, Ardhamāgadhī *pacchannapalāsa* corresponding to a Skt **palāśapracchanna* (*tr̥tīyā-tatpuruṣa*). On compounds with reversed order in Sanskrit, compare *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 2.2.37 and the *gaṇa āhitāgnyādayaḥ*, and Whitney [1889] 1964: 514 (§1314d). An apparent example in Pali is *onītapattapāṇi-*, described in PED (s.v.) as "a phrase causing constructional difficulties," which seems to come instead of the standard order **patta-onīta-pāṇi* (cf. CPD s.v. *oṇīta-patta-pāṇi*).

For the general expression, compare *Apadāna* II.56.6.81,[24] *sabbatha pūjito homi yaso accuggato mama*, "Everywhere I am honored, my glory has risen extremely high."

[24] This section of the *Apadāna* (*Uttaratherāpadāna*, no. 6 in *vagga* 56, Yasa) is not included in the Pali Text Society edition. It is cited here according to the *Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana* edition.

*bramasvaroamo*: The third syllable was corrected from a previous reading, but it is not clear what that original syllable was. *Brahmasvara* (Skt)/ *brahmassara* (Pali) is well attested as one of the *lakṣaṇa*s (number 28; BHSD p. 459b) of a buddha (PED s.v., "a divine voice, a beautiful and deep voice"), but the suffix *-oama*, which is frequently attested in Gāndhārī as the equivalent of Skt *-upama*, "like," is unexpected. Most likely, the compound is to be understood as another example (see the previous note) of a compound with abnormal ordering, that is, *bramasvaroamo* = Skt **brahmasvaropamaḥ* instead of normal *brahmopamasvaraḥ*, or perhaps rather *brahmasvaropamasvaraḥ*; compare *vāṇiṃ brahmasvaropamāṃ*, twice describing the Buddha's voice in *Mahāvastu* (Marciniak III.493 = Senart III.385.3, 5).

5 (v-4)

| | |
|---|---|
| (*yaśutaro) + [bha]gava | (*yaśottaraḥ) + bhagavān |
| vighuṭhadevamaṇuṣa · | vighuṣṭadevamānuṣaḥ / |
| pacamasvi kapaśade | pañcame kalpaśate |
| ahosi vadada baro ◦ | 'bhūd vadatāṃ varaḥ // |

In the five-hundredth eon [ago] there was the Lord *Yaśutara (Yaśottara), *famed among gods and humans*, the finest of speakers.

*Vighuṭhadevamaṇuṣa* is apparently not a bahuvrihi ("by whom gods and men were called out to"), but rather a (*tr̥tiyā*) tatpuruṣa compound with abnormal word order; the normal form would be **deva-maṇuṣa-vighuṭha*. This becomes clear on the basis of the frequent use of Skt *vighuṣṭa* in the *Lalitavistara* and *Mahāvastu*, where it consistently means "proclaimed, renowned, widely famed," as in *Lalitavistara* p. 24.11, *daśadigvighuṣṭaśabdam*,[25] "whose fame is proclaimed in the ten directions;" compare *diśaviśru*[*d*]*o* in verse 10b of this text.

This epithet presumably alludes to the buddha's name Yaśutara (Skt Yaśottara), "Supreme in fame."

6 (v-5)

| | |
|---|---|
| (*ek)[o] kapaśado puro | ekasmin kalpaśate pūre |
| dvastriśa[v](*a)[r](*a)l(*a)[kṣa]ṇo | dvātriṃśadvaralakṣaṇaḥ / |

[25] The combination *vighuṣṭaśabda* is particularly common in the texts concerned here; that *śabda* in this phrase means "fame, glory" is confirmed by the gloss *vighuṣṭakīrtir* in the *Mahāvastu*, as shown in Marciniak 2019: 482, n. 19.

| | |
|---|---|
| śakarṣavo śakamuṇi · | śākyarṣabhaḥ śākyamunir |
| budho asi aṇutaro ◦ | buddha āsīd anuttaraḥ // |

A *full* one hundred eons [ago] there was the unsurpassed Buddha Śakamuṇi (Śākyamuni [I]), the bull of the Śākyas, who bore the thirty-two auspicious marks.

In the *chāyā*, *puro* is glossed by Buddhist Skt *pūre* "full" (BHSD s.v. *pūra*) rather than by *puraḥ* "ago" on the grounds of a comparison with *parivuro* "complete" in the following verse 9d as well as with *paripu*[*ra*] in the corresponding sentence in the preceding section of the BBS-G (r-42–43) which describes the eons in prose: *iti aṇada bhadragape paripu*[*ra*] [*k*](**a*)*paśade* ·. For the same reason the other possible option of taking *puro* as "complete" with reference to the thirty-two marks has been rejected as less likely, though perhaps not impossible.

The *s* in the second syllable of *dvastriśa-* "thirty-two" is unetymological, presumably derived by anticipatory assimilation to a hypothetical Gāndhārī **trayastriśa* "thirty-three," although this form is not directly attested.[26] On other cases of anticipatory assimilation in number words, see the notes on verse 9 below. The word for "thirty-two" occurs in the dating formula of the reliquary inscription of Prahodia (CKI 359) as *duatriśaa*, but without the intrusive sibilant, which may be a dialect variant.

7 (v-6)

| | |
|---|---|
| (*pacaṇava)[di]me kape | pañcanavate kalpe |
| [ti](*śo) + + ? ? [j](*i)[ṇ]o | tiṣyaḥ … jinaḥ / |
| utamo sarvasatvaṇa | uttamaḥ sarvasattvānām |
| ahosi vadada baro ◦ | abhūd vadatāṃ varaḥ // |

In the ninety-(*fifth) eon [ago] there was Tiśa (Tiṣya) …, the Conqueror, greatest of all beings, the finest of speakers.

[*ti*](**śo*): Only the very top of the *akṣara ti* is visible; the rest of it is covered by a detached strip of bark which has been displaced upwards

[26] The word for thirty-three appears, partly reconstructed, in Senior scroll 12, where it is read and reconstructed in Silverlock 2015: 383, line 73 as (**trae*)*t*(**ri*)*śa*, which would seem not to reflect the hypothetical form proposed above. But the syllable read as *t*(**ri*) is not visible in the reconstructed image (Silverlock 2015: pl. 12, p. 140), so that it is unclear what the reconstructed reading is based on.

from its proper place at the beginning of the second *pāda* of verse 7 (line v-8) and which contains most of the word *vivaśi* there.

The epithet *utamo sarvasatvaṇa* "greatest of all beings" may hint at an etymology for the name of Tiṣya/Tiśa, alluding to a fancied connection with *atiśaya* "preeminence." However, the lacuna in the second *pāda* leaves this uncertain.

8 (v-7)

| | |
|---|---|
| ? ? ? ? ? ? [k](*a)[p](*e) | (*ekanavate) kalpe |
| vivaśi sarvadarśiṇo | vipaśyī sarvadarśī / |
| aṇutaro mahaṇa[ro] | anuttaro mahānaro |
| b(*u)dho [u]paji [ñ](*a)[ṇ](*a)[v](*a) [◦] | buddha udapādi jñānavān // |

In (*the ninety-first) eon [ago] was born Vivaśi (Vipaśyin), all-seeing, the unsurpassed great man, the wise Buddha.

? ? ? ? ? ?: The remnants of these *akṣara*s are too fragmentary to be read, but they can be reconstructed with reasonable certainty as **ekaṇavadime* on the basis of the eon given for Vipaśyin as *pariputre* [sic] *e*[*k*](**a*)*ṇava-dime kape* in the preceding prose section (line r-44).

*vivaśi*: Most of this word is on a misplaced piece of bark; see the note on [*ti*](**śo*) in the previous verse.

*sarvadarśiṇo* refers to the Buddha's name Vipaśyin, "He who sees deeply" (cf. *vipaśyanā*/*vipassanā*, etc.). For the extended stem formation (*sarva-darśiṇa-*), compare the note on *viharato* in verse 2d.

9 (v-8)

| | |
|---|---|
| + + ? [e]katriśasvi | … ekatriṃśe |
| śikhi asi aṇutara · | śikhy āsīd anuttaraḥ / |
| cadrapaṇaḍaśihasi · | candrapañcadaśīhāsī |
| parivuro aṇagano ◦ | paripūro 'naṅganaḥ // |

In the thirty-first (*eon) [ago] there was the unsurpassed Śikhi (Śikhin), gleaming [like] the [full] moon on the fifteenth day, complete, faultless.

The third *pāda* is difficult. *Cadra* is certainly = Skt *candra*, and the following *paṇaḍaśi* is the equivalent of Skt *pañcadaśī* "fifteenth [day of the month];" for the second syllable, compare Pali and Prakrit *pannarasa*,

*paṇṇarasa*,[27] and for the retroflexion of the third syllable,[28] Aśokan Prakrit *paṃnaḍasā-* and *paṃnaḷasā-* in all five versions of pillar edict 5.[29] The full moon on the fifteenth day is mentioned several times in the *Mahāvastu* as a symbol of pure light, for example in *cittaṃ va te viśuddhaṃ yathā candro pañcadaśarātre*, "Your mind is truly as clear as the moon on the night of the fifteenth (day)" (Marciniak III.401 = Senart III.315.15; similarly also Marciniak III.1, 140, 217, 465). *Hasi* is presumably = Skt *hāsī*,[30] literally "laughing," and by association (since laughter in Sanskrit is always conceived as white) "bright, shining."[31]

However, some uncertainties about this line remain. First, the order of the words in the compound *cadra-paṇaḍaśi-hasi* is unusual, as we would expect **paṇaḍaśi-cadra-hasi*, this being yet another case of irregular compound formation in this poem (cf. the notes on verses 4 and 5).[32] Second, the penultimate syllable *ha* was written over a different original letter which cannot be clearly identified. One may wonder whether this alteration conceals an original reference or allusion to the legend, mentioned in the *Mahāvastu*, that the buddha Śikhin got his name from a tuft of his hair (*śikhā*) that shone like a flame from the moment of his birth.[33] For example, could the sequence *-śihasi* have been intended to, or conceived by a scribe to somehow refer to or suggest Śikhin's *śikhā*? Alternatively, could the original (but not necessarily correct) reading have been *-śirasi*?

[27] For details see Norman 1992: 211.

[28] This change was presumably conditioned by anticipation of the following number sixteen (Skt *ṣoḍaśa* etc.); compare von Hinüber 2001: 267 (§§400–401) and Baums 2006: 36 on the retroflexion of *d* in words for "twelve" and "thirteen."

[29] Sentences H and J according to Hultzsch's edition (1925: 225–226).

[30] One of the anonymous reviewers of this article suggests instead equating *-hasi* with Skt *-bhāsī* and translating "illuminating the fifteenth [night] of the moon."

[31] Compare MW s.v. *hāsin*, "laughing, smiling at …; dazzlingly white."

[32] In this case and in *vigḥuṭhadevamaṇuṣa* in verse 5b the irregular order might be attributed to metrical convenience, but this is not the case for the two other irregularly ordered compounds in verse 4.

[33] Marciniak III.315 = Senart III.246.5–6: *yasyutpādā loke hutāśane va prajvalite samārutasmi / ati-r-iva śikhī pradīpyate tena śikhīti abhu samajñā*, translated by Marciniak (2019: 315, n. 12) as "Since his birth in the world, the tuft of his hair shone / gleamed extremely like a flame (*śikhī* = *śikhā*) of a blazing fire fanned by the wind. Therefore he came to be called Śikhin."

10 (v-9)

| | |
|---|---|
| + + + (*kape) [bh](*a)gava · | + + + (*kalpe) bhagavān |
| veṣaho diśaviśru[d]o (*·) | viśvabhūr diśāviśrutaḥ / |
| baleṣu vaśidaprato · | baleṣu vaśitāprāptaḥ |
| kileśamalasudaṇo ◦ | kleśamalasūdaṇaḥ // |

In (*the same eon) [was] Lord Veṣaho (Viśvabhū), famed in [all] directions, who had attained mastery over the [ten] powers, the destroyer of the impurities that are the *kleśa*s.

*Diśaviśrudo* is presumably a quasi-etymological reference to the name Viśvabhū, "Omnipresent."

11 (v-10)

| | |
|---|---|
| (*+ + + ka)[p](*e) bhagava · | … (*ka)lpe bhagavān |
| paḍamo logaṇayago | prathamo lokanāyakaḥ / |
| kro[va]sudho mahapraño | krakucchando mahāprajño |
| ahosi bramavacudo ◦ | 'bhūd brahma-?? // |

Lord Krovasudha (Krakucchanda) was the first leader of the world in (*this) eon, great in wisdom, ?? of Brahma.

*Bramavacudo* is obscure. One may think of a connection with *brahmavarcas-* (cf., e.g., Pali *brahmavaccasin-*), but the suffix element *-udo* is unexplained. The expression seems to refer somehow to the name of Krovasudha, but the intended connection eludes me. The name of this buddha shows an unusual number of variant forms in Gāndhārī as well as abnormal patterns of correspondence between the various languages (Skt Krakucchanda/Krakutsanda, Pali Kakusandha, Gāndhārī Krovasudho, Kosuda,[34] inscriptional Prakrit Kosadha,[35] etc.), and its etymology remains obscure.

Krakucchanda was "the first leader of the world" in the sense that he was the first buddha in the Bhadrakalpa.

12 (v-11)

| | |
|---|---|
| + + + + + + ? [g]. | … |
| mu[ṇ]ihi [stud.] varṇido | munibhiḥ stuto varṇitaḥ / |

[34] In line r-10 of BBS-G.

[35] In Kanaganahalli inscription II.7,4 (Nakanishi and von Hinüber 2014: 78). The Gāndhārī forms attested here show that, *pace* von Hinüber, this form is not a "mistake."

| | |
|---|---|
| asi agramuṇi iśa | āsīd agramunir iha |
| koṇagamuṇi utamo ◦ | kanakamunir uttamaḥ // |

… there was here [in the Bhadrakalpa] the supreme Koṇagamuṇi (Kanakamuni), praised [and] extolled by the sages, [himself] greatest of sages.

[*stud*.]: The surface is badly disturbed here and several small chips are misplaced so that the reading is uncertain, but the sequence [*stud*.] *varṇido* is supported by a verse in the second Buddha biography discussed in this article, which reads *studo vanido viñupraśasto* in a passage[36] in which, apparently, the gods are describing the Buddha.

The epithet *agramuṇi* may be meant as an etymological comment on the name *koṇagamuṇi*, with the latter portion of the name (segmented as *koṇ-agamuṇi*) being understood as corresponding to *agra-muni*. If this is correct, the pun would seem to have originated in a Middle Indo-Aryan dialect other than Gāndhārī, in which post-consonantal *r* is normally not assimilated.

13 (v-12)

| | |
|---|---|
| + + + + + + + + (*·) | … |
| kaśavo loga[ṇaya]go · | kāśyapo lokanāyakaḥ / |
| ācaria ca abhudo | āścaryaś cādbhutaḥ |
| saghasa pariṇayago ◦ | saṅghasya pariṇāyakaḥ // |

… Kaśava (Kāśyapa), the leader of the world, wondrous and miraculous, the guide of the saṅgha.

14 (v-13)

| | |
|---|---|
| + + + [.o] śakamuṇi [·] | … śākyamunir |
| budho a[s]i[37] viharato [·] | buddha āsīd [*or* buddho 'smi?] viharan / |

[36] Strip f (provisional designation), line 2.

[37] The consonant of the second syllable of *a*[*s*]*i* is written like a normal *s* but with the addition of an upward bend to the left at the bottom () which distinctly contrasts with the other *s*-s in this manuscript, which end merely with the vertical stroke coming to a point at the bottom. This, plus the context – presumably first person present, spoken by Śākyamuni about himself as opposed to third person preterite *asi* or *ahosi* (or future *bheśadi* for Maitreya in the following verse) for the other verbs in this section – suggests that a different reading could have been intended here, and what would be expected is *asmi*, "I am." However, this character differs from the ligature for *sm* as attested in other Gāndhārī documents, which typically consists of *s* with an upward-facing semi-circle attached to the bottom tip and curving back toward the right (), rather than to the left as in the syllable in question here. Moreover, *asmi* as the first person singular of √*as* is

| | |
|---|---|
| logasa aṇuapae [·] | lokasyānukampayā |
| maraseṇapramardaṇo ◦ | mārasenāpramardanaḥ // |

(*Here) [in the Bhadrakalpa] (*I), Śakamuṇi (Śākyamuni [II]) have dwelt [/ am dwelling?] [as] the Buddha out of compassion for the world, the crusher of Māra's army.

+ + + [.*o*]: This might be conjecturally reconstructed as (**iśe ah*)*o*, "Here I …"

The epithet *maraseṇapramardaṇo* may be an oblique reference to the name element *śaka-*, interpreted as meaning "powerful" (cf. Skt *śakta-*, *śakya-*, etc.).

15 (v-14)

| | |
|---|---|
| + + + ? bhadragape | … bhadrakalpe |
| bheśadi logaṇayago | bhaviṣyati lokanāyakaḥ / |
| aṇagada ca adhvaṇe | anāgate cādhvani |
| metrao saghaṇayago ◦ | maitreyaḥ saṅghanāyakaḥ // |

… and in the Bhodrakalpa, in time to come, Metraa (Maitreya) will be the leader of the world, the leader of the saṅgha.

16 (v-15)

| | |
|---|---|
| + + + + + ? khada | … khyātaṃ |
| kapaṇa aṇupurvio | kalpānām *ānupūrvikam / |
| yatra sabhavisu budh[a] | yatra samabhūvan buddhās |
| te kapa kapa-utama ◦ | te kalpāḥ kalpottamāḥ // |

[Summary verse:] … the sequence of the eons has been [re]counted. Those [eons] in which Buddhas came into being are the greatest of eons.

+ ? *khada* is possibly to be reconstructed as (**via*)*khada* = Skt *vyākhyāta-* (compare *Suttanipāta* 1000, *vyākhyātā … anupubbaso*) or (**sama*)*khada*

not well attested in middle-period or "classical" Gāndhārī, where the usual forms are *śpi* (Salomon 2008: 151, §II.4.5.1) or *mi* (Allon 2001: 116, §6.3.1). The form (*a*)*smi* is attested in later Gāndhārī documents, especially in the Bamiyan manuscripts (many examples in Salomon 2016: 379) and in Central Asian Gāndhārī, most often as a suffixal element attached to a past participle to form a periphrastic preterite (e.g. *praviṭha smi* = Skt *praviṣṭo 'smi*; cf. Salomon 2008: 159, §II.4.5.5.9). Therefore there is not sufficient evidence to justify reading *asmi* by taking the second syllable as an otherwise unattested variant of the consonantal conjunct *sm*, but in view of its contextual suitability this option should not be entirely ruled out.

= *samākhyāta-*. The entire pāda might even be reconstructed as, for example, (**eva mae via*)*khada*, "Thus has been recounted by me …"

Judging by the context, *aṇupurvio* would seem to be a noun corresponding to Pali *ānupubbī* (fem.) "succession," although the evident masculine or neuter gender of this word, marked by the ending in *-o*, does not agree with the apparently feminine ending of the corresponding verb + ? *khada*; but such incongruities are by no means unheard of in Gāndhārī. Alternatively, *aṇupurvio* could be intended an adverb, "successively."

In *budh*[*a*], the *dha* has a very short additional stroke that looks like an aborted or partially erased *o* diacritic. Perhaps the scribe had gotten used to writing singular *budho* in the preceding verses, but then realized that the context was different here and corrected the word to the contextually appropriate plural form *budha*.

## 3. A continuous life of the Buddha

This text is part of a large and diverse private collection of Gandhāran scrolls, only two of which have been published so far (Harrison, Lenz, and Salomon 2018, Allon 2019). These scrolls seem to have originally been part of the large "Split collection" (Falk 2011), whose origin has been variously reported. Falk (p. 13) says that "According to usually reliable informants the collection of birch-barks was found in a stone case in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border area, comprising the Mohmand Agency and Bajaur." But it has also been described as coming from an "old collection" in Kabul, or as having been found at Bamiyan. It is not at all certain that this large group, which may have originally contained some seventy-five or more scrolls, came from the same original site; it seems rather to have been assembled, by persons and at places unknown, from various finds. But the true story of the origin of this important collection unfortunately remains unknown and probably unknowable.

The text presented here has been provisionally catalogued as "Frame 11" in the collection in question. It consists of the remnants of a long scroll which, as usually happens with old birch bark scrolls, has broken up into horizontal strips, in this case about thirty larger strips as well as many smaller fragments. The strips each contain two to four lines of

text, so that the number of surviving lines is about 115, all more or less incomplete. The length of the surviving section is roughly 80 cm = 31.5 in., making it one of the longest surviving Gandhāran scrolls. Unfortunately, the unrolling of the scroll was carried out unprofessionally so that the strips as laid out on the frame are largely out of order. At least part of the scroll was originally inscribed on both sides, but the component layers of the bark of the individual strips have become delaminated so that they all appear to have had text on only one side. Because the separate and delaminated strips were extremely fragile, the breaks between the strips were not clean, so that in most cases it has proven difficult to determine their original sequence, as well as to ascertain which pieces were originally the two sides of the same delaminated strip. To a large extent, their correct order has to be determined or at least postulated on textual rather than physical grounds, that is, by arranging them according to the sequence of the events of the Buddha's life as known from other sources. Inevitably, many uncertainties remain. In the case of the sample text provided here, it has proven possible to determine securely the sequence of four strips on the basis of a combination of textual and physical factors, and it is to be hoped that more such determinations will become possible in the course of ongoing detailed study of the manuscript.

As in the case of the Library of Congress scroll, the language and script of this manuscript are more or less typical of middle period or "classical" Gāndhārī and show no signs of later Sanskritization. The scroll has been radiocarbon-dated twice, with reasonably consistent results. The first test yielded a range of 91 BCE – 70 BCE with a probability of 3.1% and 60 BCE – 72 CE with 92.3% probability, while a second test yielded a single date range of 50 BCE – 60 CE. Thus it can be safely assumed that the manuscript (or, strictly speaking, the birch bark on which it is written) dates from some time between the second half of the first century BCE and the third quarter of the first century CE; that is, in historical terms, from the Śaka or early Kuṣāṇa eras.

The text is composed entirely in verse, laid out with one verse per line and spaces between the *pāda*s in most cases, as in the Library of Congress scroll. The left edge of the scroll is damaged throughout, while the right edge is in some places intact enough to preserve the beginning of

the verses. The b and c *pāda*s are often completely or almost completely preserved, but only one verse is wholly intact, although a few others (such as verses 3 to 5 in the text sample presented below) are nearly so. The meters are of the *mātrāchandas* type, apparently with the *vegavatī* variety predominating, although due to the difficulty of scanning meter in Gāndhārī (as summarized in Falk and Steinbrückner 2020: 11) considerable uncertainty remains about the metrical features of this text; the issue will be addressed in subsequent publications.

Where well preserved the text is generally legible, as the scribe's hand is clear and distinct, but the overall level of comprehension of the manuscript as it stands is handicapped by its fragmentary and jumbled state as well as by the absence of a direct parallel text in any other language. Some of the verses and sequences of verses are reasonably similar to passages in previously known texts (see, for example, the parallels cited for verse 4 in the sample text), but in other cases no parallels have yet been identified. Overall, our current level of comprehension of this text is much less than that of the Library of Congress BBS-G presented above, where the closer parallels and the repetitive structures make possible a comprehension level of 90% or more.

The text shows no characteristics of Gāndhārī "translationese" (Salomon 2002: 122–124) and there is no reason to doubt that it was an original Gāndhārī composition. This raises the question of whether it belonged to some established literary tradition in Gandhāra (or sub-region thereof), or whether it was rather a "one-off" composition of which we happen to have a unique manuscript, conceivably even the composer's original autograph copy.[38] Here there are no grounds to make a meaningful judgement, at least at the current state of our understanding of the text, but the odds of our finding a unique autograph seem *a priori* somewhat remote. More likely the poem existed at some point in multiple copies, of which

[38] Compare the discussion of this issue with regard to the Śrāvastī miracle text in Falk and Steinbrückner 2020: 5–6, where it is argued that that manuscript is an author's autograph. The argument, however, is not entirely convincing, as it attributes certain anomalous paleographic features of a single verse (B15) to an "exemplar consulted by our author" with reference to that verse alone, while asserting that the rest of the text was composed originally, without an archetype. This seems rather an unlikely scenario. (On this text, see also the appendix.)

this one happened to survive. Perhaps it was even an authoritative, widely-known biography in its time and sphere, but was later forgotten.

The text consists of a sequential narration of the principal episodes of the life of the Buddha. The episodes that can be clearly identified include the meditation under the jambu tree (perhaps being recollected later in life), the great departure and subsequent dialogue with the groom Chandaka (presented at some length), the encounter with the teachers Ārāḍa and Udraka, the meeting with the grass-cutter, the praises and predictions by the *nāga* king Kāḍa (presented here in the text sample), the experience of the four *dhyāna*s, and the realization of the noble truths. Although we cannot determine the full scope of the biography since the beginning of the scroll is presumably lost, it may have also included the birth and early life of the bodhisattva. Canonical and post-canonical biographies of the Buddha vary widely in terms of the portions of the Buddha's lifetime(s) which they cover, as summarized in Lamotte 1988: 651–662, but one of the patterns noted there (p. 654) involves "Lives ending with the setting in motion of the Wheel of the Law," as in the *Lalitavistara* and its Chinese counterparts, and this pattern could apply to the scope of our text or at least the surviving portions of it. It also fits well with Lamotte's characterization (1947–1948: 57–58) of such texts: "[E]lles enrichissent la légende du Buddha de details … [L]e récit s'agrémente de détails nouveaux et inédits qui lui donnent un aspect plus dramatique" ("They enrich the legend of the Buddha with details … The story is adorned with new and original details which give it a more dramatic aspect.") But it is also possible that we have only part of a longer narrative which originally included, for example, events from the post-enlightenment phase of the Buddha's life; or even, conceivably, that it is part of a complete biography of the sort described in Lamotte 1947–1948: 62, although these are relatively rare. For the time being, we can only hope that further study of the manuscript will provide clues to clarify the issue.

It is at least clear that the biographical presentation is of the continuous historical type, that is, it focuses only on the final lifetime of the Buddha, as opposed to connecting it with his previous lives through the citation of *jātaka*s and *avadāna*s. In this too it resembles texts like the *Lalitavistara* and contrasts with ones like the *Mahāvastu* that are liberally interspersed with karmic explanations. In terms of its style, however, the new

text is much more restrained than either the *Lalitavistara* and *Mahāvastu*, not sharing their lavishly verbose *vipula* style. But there are still some relatively extended descriptive passages, for example in the dialogue between the bodhisattva and Chandaka about the vanity of worldly pleasures, which is somewhat reminiscent of the corresponding passage in the *Lalitavistara* (pp. 211–216). On the other hand, the new biography does not match the polish and stylistic sophistication of Aśvaghoṣa's *Buddhacarita*, which is unequalled in the biographical literature. It does resemble the *Buddhacarita* insofar as it is composed entirely in verse, as opposed to the prose or mixed prose and verse of most of the other comparable texts. But it also differs from the *Buddhacarita* in including repeated refrain verses such as *budhavaro na bhaviśaṣi* in verses 3ff. of the text sample below, which are common in *Lalitavistara* and *Mahāvastu* but which the *Buddhacarita* avoids, following the strict avoidance of repetition characteristic of the high classical style.

It will be clear from the parallel passages cited in connection with the verses of the sample text below – especially verse 4 – that this new Buddha biography had a great deal in common with better-known specimens of the genre such as the *Mahāvastu*, *Lalitavistara*, and *Fó běnxíng jí jīng*. All of them share a common overall conception, a similar (though not identical) plot line, and familiar sets of images, all of which they freely adapt to their various purposes. In at least one case we find in the new text a verse which is clearly modeled on a proverbial and canonically attested expression. This is the line[39] *uaśuśado lohido maso aṭhi tvaya avaśuśado sarvo*, "Let my blood, my flesh, my bones and skin dry up, let my entire (body) wither," spoken by the soon-to-be Buddha as he settles down for his final meditation. This is clearly an echo of the line appearing in the *Mahāvastu* (Marciniak II.299 = Senart II.239.3–4) as *<śoṇite upaśuṣyante> śarīraṃ upaśuṣyatu / pittaṃ śleṣmañ ca mānsāni .. .. .. avajīryatu* ("When my blood has dried up,[40] let my body dry up; let my bile and phlegm and flesh … waste away"), and in the *Lalitavistara* (p. 289.19) as *ihāsane suṣyatu me śarīraṃ tvagasthimāṃsaṃ pralayaṃ ca yātu* ("Here

[39] Strip I, line 4 (not included in the sample text presented here).

[40] On this translation, see Marciniak 2020: 299, n. 11. See also notes 10, 12, and 13 there on the several variants between Senart's and Marciniak's texts.

in this seat let my body dry up, and let my skin, bones, and flesh waste away''), as well as in several places in the Pali canon, for example *Majjhimanikāya* (I.481), *kāmaṃ taco ca nhāru ca aṭṭhī ca avasissatu*, *sarīre upasussatu maṃsalohitaṃ* (''Let [only] my skin and sinews and bones remain, let the flesh and blood in my body dry up'').

On the other hand, this new text contains some surprising contrasts to the standard biographies; see, for example, the notes on *budho niṣano* in verse 1, where the bodhisattva is unconventionally referred to as ''the Buddha'' before the enlightenment, and on *budhavaro na bha*(**viśaṣi*) in verse 3, where a familiar prediction is phrased in an unusual and somewhat surprising manner. Another unusual variation on a familiar theme is the presentation of the four noble truths that appears near the end of the text,[41] or at least of the surviving part of it. This reads [*a*]*ya dukha aya duha-hedo* / *aya puna mago duhakṣayagami* / *aya dukhaneroṣao mago* /, *ta* ? *ta va* ///, ''This is suffering; this is the cause of suffering; and this is the path that leads to the cessation of suffering; this is the path that eliminates suffering…'' This formulation of the four truths seems strangely aberrant in several respects when compared to the standard summary formulation as presented, for example, in *Lalitavistara* p. 350.5–6: *idaṃ duḥkhaṃ ayaṃ duḥkhasamudayo 'yaṃ duḥkhanirodha iyaṃ duḥkhanirodhagāminī pratipad iti*. Here we find *hedo* (= Skt *hetuḥ*) instead of the normal *samudaya* in the second truth[42] and *kṣaya* instead of *nirodha* in the third. Moreover, in *aya puna mago duhakṣayagami* / *aya dukhaneroṣao mago*, the third and fourth truths seem to be peculiarly conflated with *mago* (= *mārgaḥ*) appearing in both, or seemingly even reversed.[43]

The four truths are attested in normal form in some other Gāndhārī manuscripts, for instance in Senior scroll 20 (lines 20–21), *dukha-aria-ṣaja … dukha-ṣamuḍeo-aria-ṣaja … dukha-ṇiroṣo dukha-ṇiroṣa-ḳamiṇa*

[41] Strip F, line 1 + strip j, line 1.

[42] *Hetu* does appear instead of *samudaya* in the famous *Pratītyasamutpādagāthā* (the so-called Buddhist creed), which, in Lamotte's words (1988: 495), ''summarizes the four noble truths so well:'' *ye dharmā hetuprabhavā hetuṃ teṣāṃ tathāgato hy avadat*, etc. But I am unaware of any other place other than the passage in question where *hetu* is used in a direct statement of the four truths.

[43] This odd situation may have been clarified in the missing remainder of the fourth *pāda* of the verse, or in the preceding and following verses, but these have not yet been located.

*paḍivaḍa* (Marino 2017: 155). There is however a concluding passage in one Gāndhārī inscription (the relic chamber slab of Ramaka, CKI 251) which "appears to be a loosely formulated summary, albeit in a non-standard order and wording, of the four noble truths."[44] This aberrant presentation may be attributed to the nonstandard, sometimes even semi-literate presentation of canonical or doctrinal passages which are sometimes seen in Gandhāran inscriptions, the most famous example being the reliquary inscription of Senavarma, which was described by G. Fussman (1982: 37) as "un florilège de citations plus ou moins fidèles, non pas extraites de tel ou tel ouvrage, mais que le rédacteur du texte, à force de les entendre, de les lire, ou de les utiliser, avait faites siennes" ("an anthology of quotations, more or less accurate, not extracted from this or that work, but which the compiler of the text, by virtue of hearing them, reading them, or using them, had made his own"). But the abnormal presentation in our poem can hardly be so casually dismissed, in view of its more formal and literary character. Rather, it seems to represent another instance of its composer's liberal treatment of traditional themes and images, sometimes in ways that are quite surprising in comparison to what we are used to reading in other Buddhist literatures.

Therefore it would seem, as far as it is possible to judge on the basis of the still very preliminary study of this manuscript, that its author was on the one hand familiar with the Buddha biographies known to us, or at least with texts similar to them, while on the other hand he either knew of other sources containing elements that we have not previously seen, or felt free to introduce his own innovations while retaining the framework of the standard narrative. All in all, this new biography may be provisionally characterized as a semi-independent reimagining of the Buddha's life story. It is unlikely that it will ever be possible to draw clear and direct lines of descent between the new text and the other representatives of this genre – as recent experiences with other specimens of Gandhāran literature teach us[45] – and the place of this new text within the broader scope of Buddhist hagiographical literature will have to be worked out gradually

[44] Salomon 2000b [2003]: 65; see Baums 2012: 213–215 for further details and discussion.

[45] See, for example, Salomon 2018: 57 and 168–172.

as it is further studied and published. But in any case, the discovery of this text suggests that there existed at various points in time and space more, perhaps many more biographies of the Buddha than the relatively few that have come down to us. As usual, we only get to see the tip of the iceberg, if we get to see anything at all.

Text sample B:
A verse biography of the Buddha:
The *nāga* Kaḍa recognizes the Buddha-to-be
and predicts his imminent success




Fig. 3: The new Buddha biography
Fragments e, c, D, and t reconstructed to their original position[46]
(Provisional strip number at left; line numbers at right)

The sample text is contained on strips e, c, D, and t,[47] which were separated when the scroll was unrolled but which can be shown on physical and textual grounds to have originally been contiguous, as shown in fig. 3 with the four strips digitally restored to their original relationship. The text recounts in nine verses the well-known episode in which the ancient

[46] This figure was prepared with the assistance of Anna Schnell and Timothy Lenz.
[47] Here and elsewhere the strip numbers are assigned only provisionally, due to the very large number of fragments and the problems involved in determining their correct positions.

*nāga* king Kaḍa (= Skt *kāla*, *kālika*),[48] who had also witnessed the three previous buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa on their way to the *bodhimaṇḍa* at Gayā, rises up from his subterranean abode to greet the bodhisattva and affirm that he would soon attain buddhahood.

The first two lines record the beginning of the incident, describing the *nāga* seeing the buddha-to-be and rising up to greet him (verses 1 and 2). At the upper edge of fragment e some illegible traces of the bottoms of the letters of the first *pāda* of the previous line are preserved, but the strip which preceded strip e has not yet been located, so that it is not clear whether the remnants of the line at the top of strip e belonged to a verse which initially introduced the *nāga* or rather belonged to the concluding verse of the preceding episode. In the latter case, the name of the *nāga*, which elsewhere occurs only in the concluding verse (9) of the episode, must have been introduced in the illegible parts of verse 1.

In the main section of the episode the *nāga* describes in six verses (3–8), each beginning with *yaṣa* (Skt *yathā*), the favorable omens which indicate that the bodhisattva will succeed in becoming a buddha. The *nāga*'s prediction resembles in general and in some details (for example the mention of *cāṣa* birds in verse 4; see the notes there) the corresponding passages in other biographical texts such as the *Mahāvastu*, *Lalitavistara*, the *Saṅghabhedavastu* of the *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya*, and the *Buddhacarita*; representative examples of these parallels are given in the notes on the individual verses.

The *nāga* episode concludes in verse 9, where the bodhisattva, having been "praised by the excellent *nāga*," sets off to the seat of enlightenment. The following verse 10, on the third line of fragment t, begins the next episode in which the bodhisattva begins his final meditation, entering into the first *dhyāna* (*savitrakaviara sapr*[*id*](**i*) ///).

| Transcription: verse 1 | *chāyā* |
|---|---|
| *e-2*aṣa adaśi budho niṣano | athādrākṣīd buddhaṃ niṣaṇṇam |
| iśparap(*u)yido ca ? ? + [n]. | īśvarapūjitaṃ … / |
| ta hi sa [c]. [r]. ga pr. [ni] .r. ? | … |
| [pr]. [s]. [h]. ? ? ? + + ? /// | … |

Then he [Kaḍa *nāga*] saw the Buddha seated, worshipped by the gods …

[48] See the note on verse 1 regarding the variant forms of the name.

[Kaḍa *nāga*]: The name appears in this form in the concluding verse of the episode (verse 9b, *kaḍanaga-*). Kharoṣṭhī *kaḍa* presumably represents *kāḍa*, corresponding to Kāla, the name given to the ancient *nāga* in the *Mahāvastu* and *Buddhacarita*; intervocalic *ḍ* and *l* alternate "very commonly" in Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit (BHSG §2.46) and other Buddhist MIA languages (von Hinüber 2001: 166–168, §§198–200). Elsewhere in Sanskrit (*Lalitavistara*, *Saṅghabhedavastu*) the *nāga* is called Kālika.[49]

*budho niṣano iśparap*(**u*)*yido*: The context dictates that these *-o* endings be understood as accusative masculine, as is common in some Gāndhārī texts; see Salomon 2008: 136–137. (Similarly for *satvavaro* in the following verse.)

*budho niṣano*: Here and elsewhere in this text, the bodhisattva is proleptically referred to as "Buddha," or by honorific titles such as Sugada (Skt *sugata*); for example, a verse from the scene of Chandaka's departure[50] reads *hayam=adia abharana ca prakrami chano yaṣagami maga* / ***sugado*** *vanani d*[*ro*]*ma va* ///,[51] "Taking the horse and the ornaments, Chana (Chandaka) set forth on the way by which he had come; the Sugata [proceeded?] to the forests and trees …" This is quite abnormal, if not unique, in Buddhist literature. Also unusual is the description of him here as "seated" (*niṣano*). In most if not all of the parallel texts,[52] Kāla(ka)/Kāḍa encounters the bodhisattva as he is walking on his way to the seat of enlightenment, as in the *Saṅghabhedavastu* (ed. Gnoli 1977–1978: 1.112), where the *nāga* seems him "approaching" along the river Nairañjanā

[49] The Gāndhārī form seems to be reflected in FBXJJ, p. 774a7, where 迦荼 *jiā tú* = MC *kae du* is given as a variant for *jiā chá* 迦荼 = MC *kae thae*; but on p. 800a4 the name is rendered as 迦羅 *jiā luó* = MC *kae la*, corresponding to the Sanskrit form.

[50] Strip a, line 1.

[51] = Skt *hayam ādāyābharaṇāni ca prākrāmīc chano yathāgaman mārge* / *sugato vanāni drumam* ….

[52] The *Buddhacarita* is somewhat ambiguous on this point. In XII.115c, *so 'śvatthamūlaṃ prayayau*, the bodhisattva seems to have already arrived at the bodhi-tree when the *nāga* is awakened by his footsteps in the following verse (*tatas tadānīṃ … padasvanenānupamena bodhitaḥ … jagāda kālako* …, "Then, at that time … awakened by the incomparable sound of his footsteps … Kālaka spoke …"). But presumably we are to understand *so 'śvatthamūlaṃ prayayau* as "He headed toward the base of the *aśvattha*" rather than "he arrived at …" Johnston 1936: 186 translates "proceeded to the root of a *pipal* tree;" Olivelle 2008: 369, "repaired to the foot of a bo-tree."

(*adrākṣīd uragaśreṣṭho nāgarājo mahardhikaḥ* / *nairañjanāyās tīreṇa* ***āyāntaṃ*** *lokanāyakam*, "The greatest of serpents, the mighty *nāga* king, saw the leader of the world **approaching** along the bank of the Nairañjanā"), and in the *Mahāvastu* (Marciniak II.479 = Senart II.399.7–400.4), where he is repeatedly described as "striding" (*vikramantaṃ*).[53] The bodhisattva then proceeds to the place of enlightenment only after the nāga speaks his praises, as in, for example, FBXJJ (p. 774c22), 爾時菩薩聞是偈已安庠而行向菩提樹, "Then, having heard these *gāthā*s, the bodhisattva calmly proceeded toward the bodhi tree." This anomalous feature is repeated in verse 3b, where Kaḍa declares that he also saw the previous buddhas "firmly seated" at the bodhi seat (*boṣivarag*[*r*]*agada suniṣana*). These unusual features are particularly representative of the idiosyncratic character of this biography.

*ta hi sa* [*c*]. [*r*]. *ga pr*. [*ni*] *.r*. ?, etc. : Except for the first three *akṣara*s, only the bottoms remain, and no convincing reading and interpretation can be offered.

v. 2

| | |
|---|---|
| [e-3]aṣa ugami so bhavana[do] | athodagamat sa bhavanān |
| nagavaro pra[mu](*didaci)[t](*e)na | nāgavaraḥ pramuditacittena / |
| so abhistavi prajalikitva | so 'bhyastāvīt prāñjalīkṛtvā |
| satvavaro prava[r](*a)man(*uśo) | satvavaraṃ pravaramanuṣyam // |

Then he rose up out of his dwelling, that excellent *nāga*, with a de(*lighted) heart. Making an *añjali*, he praised the excellent being, the finest hu(*man).

Parallel texts

Mvu, Marciniak II.379 = Senart II.308.6–7
**añjaliṃ pragrahetvāna** daśapūrṇāṃgulī tathā /
**abhistave** buddhavīraṃ bodhimaṇḍaṃ vrajantakaṃ //

*Saṅghabhedavastu* (1.112)
sahadarśanāc ca bodhisattvaṃ gāthābhir gītena c**ābhiṣṭotum** ārabdhaḥ

*pra*[*mu*](**didaci*)[*t*](**e*)*na*: The reconstruction is based on the description of Kālika *nāga* in the *Saṅghabhedavastu* (1.112) as *praḥṛṣṭacittaḥ sumanā*[*ḥ*]

[53] See also Mvu, Marciniak II.379 = Senart II.308.6–7, *buddhavīraṃ bodhimaṇḍaṃ vrajantakaṃ*, quoted in the parallels to the following verse.

*satvavaro prava*[*r*](**a*)*man*(**uśo*): Like other post-canonical Buddhist Sanskrit writers, the author uses *vara*, *pravara* and similar superlatives promiscuously as verse fillers; compare *boṣi**vara**g*[*r*]*a-* in the following verse and *naga**varena*** and *-naga**pravarena*** in verse 9. More complex examples occur in the *Mahāvastu*, as in ***vara**buddhi**pravaraṃ varaṃ*** (Marciniak II.182 = Senart II.142.7), and in the *Saṅghabhedavastu*, ***avara**buddha**varo*** (Gnoli 1977–1978: 1.112). The composer of the verses in the **Bahubudhagasutra* introduced in text sample A uses the same device (*vara-*/*bara-*, *aṇutara-*, etc.), for example in verses 5–7. Compare also the negative *-avara* in the refrain line of the following four verses.

v. 3

| | |
|---|---|
| [c-1]ya [e-3+c-1]ṣa me [purima jina] ? [driṭha] | yathā me purimā jinā dṛṣṭā |
| boṣivarag[r]agada suni[e-3]ṣana | bodhivarāgragatāḥ suniṣaṇṇāḥ / |
| bhavaṣi jinu sadiśo teṣa | bhavasi jina sadṛśas teṣāṃ |
| budhavaro na bha(*viśaṣi) | buddhāvaro na bha(*viṣyasi) // |

As the previous Conquerors were seen by me, firmly seated, arrived at the foremost [place of] enlightenment, you, O Conqueror, are equal to them. You will be no less a Buddha.

*boṣivarag*[*r*]*agada*: The exact sense of the compound is not certain; the proposed translation is based on the presumed Sanskrit equivalent given in the *chāyā*.

*jinu*: This is translated as vocative, but it could also be nominative: "You are a Conqueror equal to them."

*budhavaro na bha*(**viśaṣi*): The end of the line is securely reconstructed on the basis of the same refrain in the three succeeding verses. Despite the ambiguity created by the non-notation of vowel length in Kharoṣṭhī script, it is clear that here *budhavaro* is to be understood as equivalent to Skt *buddhāvaraḥ* by comparison with the expression *na batāvaro buddho bhaviṣyati*, "Aha, he will be no less a Buddha," that occurs no less than seven times in the *Saṅghabhedavastu*[54] as well as twice in the *Śayanāsanavastu*.[55] In those texts this expression is always followed by *nāvaraṃ*

[54] Gnoli 1977–1978: 1.123, 146, 147, 169, 172, 229; 2.23–24.
[55] Gnoli 1978: 16, 20.

*dharmākhyānam*, "[His will be] no lesser declaration of the Dharma," and then by a statement of the speaker's reason for saying so, for example in *Śayanāsanavastu* (p. 16), *yatredānīṃ devatā api autsukyam āpadyante tasya bhagavato darśanāya*, "… in that now even the gods are eager to see this Master." The gist of the expression thus seems to be "This must be a *true* Buddha," and the expression takes on particular poignance in our text in that it is spoken by the *nāga* Kaḍa who, unlike the various persons who uttered the corresponding phrase in the several *vinaya* passages, had personally witnessed the previous Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa.

The passage in question was translated by Schopen (2000: 114) in his translation of the *Śayanāsanavastu* as "This Buddha surely must be of no little importance," following the Tibetan translation's rendering of *nāvara* as *mchog ma yin pa ma yin zhing* which he cites in a note (p. 166, n. VI,24). The Tibetan translation of the *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya* is consistent in the rendering of the several other occurrences of the phrase in question, but the Chinese translation is free and quite inconsistent, perhaps indicating some uncertainty as to the meaning of the expression; for example, 如來甚大威德, "The Tathāgata is extremely powerful and virtuous" (T 24, no. 1450, p. 129c18 = *Saṅghabhedavastu* 1.146; the four brothers of Yaśas); 佛者超出異生不同餘聖, "The Buddha surpasses worldlings (*pṛthagjana*-); [he is] not like other sages" (T 1450, p. 139a15–16 = *Saṅghabhedavastu* 1.169; Anāthapiṇḍada); 定是最勝無上大師 "Surely this is the supreme conqueror, the unsurpassed great Teacher" (T 1450, p. 157b4 = *Saṅghabhedavastu* 2.23–24; Uttaramāṇava).

v. 4

| | |
|---|---|
| [c-2]yaṣa ya ime caṣasahasa | yathā cemāni cāṣasahasrāṇi |
| dahinado śaüna pravadati | dakṣiṇataḥ śakunāḥ prapatanti / |
| na ido rae [c-2+e-4] provanimite | ??? pūrvanimitte |
| bu[dh](*a)[v](*a)[ro] n(*a) [bh](*a)[v](*iśaṣi) | buddhāvaro na bhavi(*ṣyasi) // |

And as these thousands of blue jays fly around [you] to the right, auspicious omens, it is not other than [?] the previous sign. You will be no less a Buddha.

Parallel texts

*Buddhacarita* XII.118

yathā bhramantyo divi **cāṣapaṅktayaḥ**
**pradakṣiṇaṃ** tvāṃ kamalākṣa kurvate /

yathā ca saumya divi vānti vāyavas
tvam adya **buddho** niyataṃ **bhaviṣyasi** //

*Saṅghabhedavastu* (1.112)
nabhasi **cāṣaśataiḥ** kriyate yathā
**paripatadbhir** idaṃ **paridakṣiṇam** /
tava śarīram udārodārakṛtīty
**avarabuddhavaro** 'dya **bhaviṣyasi** //

Mvu, Marciniak II.335 = Senart II.265.5–6
yathā ca ime pūrvotpadā yathā ca **pūrvanimittā** avyāhatam anuttarāṃ samyaksambodhim abhisaṃbudhyiṣyaṃ

LV p. 268.2–4
yādṛśānī**māni pūrvanimittāni** saṃdṛśyante niḥsaṃśayam idaṃ bhojanaṃ bhuktvā bodhisattvo 'nuttarāṃ samyaksaṃbodhiṃ prāpsyati

LV p. 282.19–20
**yatha me dṛṣṭa nimitta** pūrvaṛṣiṇāṃ paśyāmi tān eva te
**adya** tvaṃ vinihatya māra balavān iṣṭaṃ padaṃ lapsyase //

*dahinado*: The stem *dāhiṇa-* = Skt *dakṣinā-*, though not previously recorded in Gāndhārī, is well attested in MIA generally (but not in Pali; Pischel 1900: 60–61, §65 and 222, §323).

*na ido rae provanimite*: The sense of *na ido rae* here and in the following verse is unclear, and the proposed word division is little more than a guess. The context and parallels cited above lead us to expect something like "it is not other than [what was indicated by] the previous signs," but *ṇa ido* can hardly be the equivalent of, for example, Sanskrit *na itara-*, and in any case this would leave *rae* unexplained. Something along these general lines seems to be vaguely suggested in *Saṅghabhedavastu* 1.112, *pūrvakā hi mayā dṛṣṭās te 'pi buddhā mahardhikāḥ / teṣāṃ tava ca paśyāmi **na nānākaraṇaṃ** mune* //, but no direct parallel has been detected.

v. 5

| | |
|---|---|
| [c-3]yaṣa ya ⟪i⟫me rukṣasahasa | yathā cemāni vṛkṣasahasrāṇi |
| yena jino pranada abhimatro | yena jinaḥ praṇatāny abhimātram / |
| ṇa ido rae provanimite | ??? pūrvanimitte |
| b[u]dhavara ṇa bhaviśa(*ṣi) | buddhāvaro na bhaviṣya(*si) // |

And as these thousands of trees bow deeply toward (*yena*) the Conqueror, it is not other than [?] the previous sign. You will be no less a Buddha.

Parallel texts:

*Saṅghabhedavastu* 1.112
na [!] **taravaḥ pracalanty** anileritāḥ
**avarabuddhavaro** 'dya **bhaviṣyasi //**

Mvu, Marciniak II.478 = Senart II.398.16 (and similarly at Marciniak II.481–482 = Senart II.402.2–3, 402.7–21)
**vṛkṣā ca praṇatā** sarve adya **buddho bhaviṣyasi //**

LV p. 283.3
**yadvad vṛkṣa** sapatrapuṣpa saphalā bodhidrumaṃ **saṃnatāḥ**

*abhimatro*: Compare Skt *adhimātra* "above measure, excessive" (MW s.v.) and Pali *adhimatta-* "extreme"/*adhimattaṃ* "excessively, very much" (DP s.v.). Lexical alternations between *abhi-* and *adhi-* are well attested in Gāndhārī and Pali (Glass 2007: 117, 167–168).

*ṇa*: This syllable with its straight vertical looks more like the character conventionally transliterated as *ṇa*, as opposed to the usual form of the nasal in this scribe's hand, which is closer to the typical shape of *na* with a semi-circular head open to the right. This variant also occurs in *p*(**r*)*aya*[*h*]*itviṇa* in v. 10, but the difference between the two forms is trivial. The form transliterated here as *ṇa* is probably merely a word-final allomorph of *na* rather than a distinct phoneme, as the phonetic distinction between *ṇ* and *n* has been lost in middle period Gāndhārī.

v. 6

| | |
|---|---|
| [D-1]yaṣa ya ime devakumara | yathā ceme devakumārā |
| abarapuraga puṣpa grahit(*va) | ambarapūrakāḥ puṣpāṇi gṛhītvā / |
| [c-4]vigi[rat]i jino [k]. + + ? | vikiranti jinaṃ … |
| budha⟪va⟫ro na bhaviśa[ṣ]i | buddhāvaro na bhaviṣyasi // |

And as these young gods filling the sky take flowers and scatter them upon the Conqueror … You will be no less a Buddha.

Parallel texts:

Mvu, Marciniak II.478 = Senart II.398.15
yathā ca **puṣpā** varṣeṃti **devā** kṣepenti **ambarā /**

LV p. 282.15–16
nāgākanya udagra hṛṣṭamanasaḥ kurvanti pūjāṃ muneḥ
**puṣpaṃ** gandhavilepanā ca **kṣipiṣus** tūryāṇi nirnādayan //

*Samādhirajasūtra* (ed. Vaidya 1961) 14.81cd
**deva**gaṇā nabhi **puṣpa kṣipanti** ca
divyu pravāyati gandhu manoramu //

v. 7

| | |
|---|---|
| D-2yaṣa ya calad[i] ca namadi ca | yathā ca calati ca namati ca |
| bhudadhara sasamudra saśela /// | bhūtadharā sasamudrā saśailā / |
| … | … |

And as the earth with its oceans and mountains both shakes and bows…

Parallel texts:

*Saṅghabhedavastu* 1.112
raṇantīṃ **pṛthivīṃ** śrutva nadī<ṃ> ghoṣasamākulām /
bhavanād udgato nāgo diśas samavalokayan //

Mvu, Marciniak II.477–478 = Senart II.398.3–4
yatheyaṃ raṇate **pṛthivī** kāṃsapātrīva tāḍitā /
niḥsaṃśayaṃ mahāvīra adya buddho bhaviṣyasi //

*Buddhacarita* XII.117ab
yathā mune tvaccaraṇāvapīḍitā
muhur muhur niṣṭanatīva **medinī** /

*Samādhirajasūtra* 14.81ab
bhūtadharā sasamudraparvata
sarvi **mahī** ṣaḍvikāra prakampitā /

v. 8

| | |
|---|---|
| t-1yaṣa ya ime turiasahasa | yathā cemāni tūryasahasrāṇi / |
| t-1+D3saprabhani t-1 mat-1+D3rut-1da gragana /// | saṃprābhāṇiṣuḥ marutaḥ gagaṇe // … |

And as these gods in heaven have sounded thousands of horns …

*saprabhani*: Compare BHSD *saṃprabhaṇati* "sounds (trans., musical instruments; as if caus., lit. *makes to speak forth*)," citing … *turiyā* … [*saṃpra*]*bhaṇīṣu*, *Lalitavistara* p. 167.10.

*gragana*: Although the phonetic correspondence is irregular, this word occurs (as *graga̱ṇa*) four times in the Bajaur Mahāyāna Sūtra in contexts that make it clear that it corresponds to Skt *gagana*; for example *taṣovamo cito tuhi aṇavilo · yaṣatalikṣo graga̱ṇo*, "similar to that your

mind is clear, (*just) like the air (*or) sky" (section 5.4, line 556, verse 5.14).[56]

| | v. 9 |
|---|---|
| t-2so abhistudo nagavarena | so 'bhiṣṭuto nāgavareṇa |
| kaḍanagapravarena na[red]ro | kāḍanāgapravareṇa narendraḥ / |
| sumana tada pradi /// | sumanās tadā prati … |

[Thus] praised by the excellent *nāga*, the foremost *nāga* Kaḍa, that master of men, pleased, then [set forth?] …

| | v. 10 |
|---|---|
| t-3p(*r)aya[h]itviṇa kamanivadha | prahāya karmanibandhān |
| akuśala ca vivarjaï dhama | akuśalāṃś ca vivarjya dharmān / |
| savitrakaviara sapr[id](*i) /// | savitarkavicāraṃ saprīti … |

Having discarded the bonds of karma and shunned unwholesome dharmas, [*he entered the first *dhyāna*,] with thought and examination, with joy…

[This verse is no longer part of the *nāga* Kaḍa episode, but rather the beginning of the description of the Buddha's final meditations, describing the first *dhyāna*; but it is included here as it appears on the same strip (t).]

*p*(**r*)*aya*[*h*]*itviṇa*: This is a gerund comparable to BHS **prajahitvāna* = Skt *prahāya*; compare *vijahitvāna* (= Skt *vihāya*) cited in BHSD p. 238 (s.v. √*hā*). The reconstruction of the subscript *r* at the missing bottom of the first syllable is probable, both on the basis of the context and on the grounds that the surviving part of the lower portion of the stem bends slightly toward the right, anticipating the subscript which would have come at the lower right of the *akṣara*. The reconstruction of the third syllable as [*h*]*i* is also secure; although with its base missing the remaining portion of the *akṣara* in question could be either *i* or *hi*, the context clearly calls for the latter. The unusual suffix *-tviṇa* is presumably a variant of the common MIA gerund in *-tvāna*, perhaps involving an anomalous archaic survival of the gerund in *-tvī*, frequent in the *Ṛgveda* but rare later (although apparently implied by the gerund *upajiti* in Khotan Gāndhārī *Dharmapada* 181c; von Hinüber 2001: 316, § 498). Whitney

[56] Personal communication from Andrea Schlosser and Ingo Strauch.

(1889 [1964]: 359, §993c) refers to gerunds in *-tvīnam* which are "mentioned by grammarians as of Vedic use, but they have nowhere been found to occur;" surprisingly, this is apparently what we have here.

*kamanivadha* could correspond to Skt *karmanibandha-*/P *kammanibandha-* or to Skt/P *kāmanibandha-*. Neither term seems to be well attested, but the former seems more likely; compare *Suttanipāta* 654c, *kammanibandhanā sattā*, "beings are bound to karma."

## Appendix

Another Gāndhārī text which has been tentatively considered as a sort of Buddha biography was recently published by H. Falk and E. Steinbrückner (2020) under the title "A Metrical Version from Gandhāra of the 'Miracle at Śrāvastī' (Texts from the Split Collection 4)." According to Falk and Strauch (2014: 68) "It seems that the text deals with particular prominent events in the life of the Buddha," and Falk and Steinbrückner (p. 3), referring back to that characterization ("taking it for part of a Buddha vita"), state that "This view can be maintained, although it became apparent that the episode dealt with on this sheet runs parallel to what modern research calls the 'Miracle of Śrāvastī.'" This text describes the Śrāvastī incident at length and has no reference to any other events in the Buddha's life, so that it is more likely it is part of a dedicated Śrāvastī text rather than of a longer Buddha biography as seemed to be implied by the initial description.

Although the Śrāvastī text has some superficial resemblances to the second Buddha biography presented above, such as the predominance of the *vegavatī* meter as well as a general similarity in script and language, it is clear that they are not part of the same manuscript or text. Their scribal hands are distinctly different (although this does not automatically rule out their being part of the same text and/or manuscript, since as we have seen, the BBS-G scroll was jointly written by two different scribes). The entire surviving portion of the text in question (65 lines) concerns only the Śrāvastī episode, which must have been elaborated at even considerably greater length in the complete text. This contrasts with the structure of the second biographical text presented here, in which certain

episodes are discussed at some length (for example the praise by the *nāga* king presented in the sample text, in nine verses), but with nowhere near the amount of detail in the Śrāvastī text. Thus the Śrāvastī text is more likely to be part of a separate composition presenting that legend alone, rather than of a complete biography. Perhaps it falls into the category of biographical text described by Lamotte (1988: 654) as "extracts or anthologies which merely relate certain events in the life of the Buddha"; or more likely, it is an isolated specimen of an *avadāna* or similar genre rather than a "biography" as such.

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| | |
|---|---|
| *Apadāna* | See n. 24. |
| BBS | *Bahubuddhakasūtra* |
| BBS-G | **Bahubudhagasutra* (Gāndhārī) |
| BHS | Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit |
| BHSG/BHSD | *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar*/*Dictionary*. See Edgerton 1953. |
| *Buddhacarita* | See Olivelle 2008. |
| CKI | Corpus of Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions. See Baums and Glass 2002–, part II. |
| CPD | *A Critical Pali Dictionary*. See Andersen et al. 1924–2011. |
| DP | *A Dictionary of Pali*. See Cone 2001–2020. |
| FBXJJ | 佛本行集經 *Fó běnxíng jí jīng*. T vol. 3, no. 190. |
| *Lalitavistara* | See Lefmann 1902. |
| LV | *Lalitavistara*. See Lefmann 1902. |
| Marciniak II | See Marciniak 2020. |
| Marciniak III | See Marciniak 2019. |
| MC | Middle Chinese |
| MIA | Middle Indo-Aryan. |
| Mvu | *Mahāvastu*. See Senart 1882–1897 and Marciniak 2019 and 2020. |
| MW | *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*. See Monier-Williams 1899. |
| PED | *The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary*. See Rhys Davids and Stede 1921–1925. |
| *Samādhirajasūtra* | See Vaidya 1961. |
| *Saṅghabhedavastu* | See Gnoli 1977–1978. |
| *Śayanāsanavastu* | See Gnoli 1978. |
| Senart | See Senart 1882–1897. |
| Skt | Sanskrit |

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