

Early Biographical Narratives of the Buddha:
An Edition and Study of Robert Senior Kharoṣṭhī Fragment 24

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Abstract

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This thesis presents a study of Robert Senior fragment 24 (RS 24), a Gāndhārī birch-bark scroll written in Kharoṣṭhī script. The manuscript preserves two narratives connected to the early biography of the Buddha: the story of the *nāga* Elapatra and the young brahmin Nala (Skt Nālaka), and the story of the merchants Trivusa and Valia (Skt Trapusa and Bhallika). Through comparison with Pali, Sanskrit, and Chinese parallels, this study examines the extant versions of these narratives and their relationships to the Vinaya, sūtra, and commentarial traditions. The thesis argues that the narratives preserved in RS 24 belong to an early stratum of Buddhist biographical literature prior to the formation of more continuous and systematized Buddha biographies. RS 24 thus preserves important evidence for the transmission and development of Buddhist narrative literature in Gāndhāra during the early centuries of the Common Era.

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Dedication

For all my parents and teachers

Conventions

- [] An unclear or partially preserved akṣara (graphic syllable) whose reading is less than certain. Also used for references to line numbers within the reconstructed text and translation.
- (*) A lost or illegible akṣara that has been conjecturally restored on the basis of context, parallel texts, or other evidence.
- <*> An akṣara or a component thereof that was omitted or miswritten by the scribe and has been conjecturally restored or corrected by the editor.
- « » An akṣara or a component thereof that was omitted by the scribe and then added by him or by a subsequent hand as an interlinear or marginal insertion.
- . The missing portion (consonantal element or diacritic vowel sign) of a partially legible akṣara.
- ? A visible or partially visible but illegible akṣara.
- + A missing akṣara that would have appeared on a lost or obscured portion of the scroll. A series of these symbols indicates the number of lost syllables as estimated according to surrounding lines of text.
- /// In the diplomatic transcription, marks the beginning or end of an incomplete line.
- ... In the reconstruction or translation, it indicates an unknown number of missing akṣaras.
- ◇ A space left blank in the original text.
- = In the transcription, a word division within an akṣara, used in phrases such as *sarvam=asti* in which the final consonant of the preceding word and the initial vowel of the following word are written together as a single syllable.

Abbreviations

AbhiNS	*Abhiniṣkramaṇasūtra, <i>Fó běnxíng jí jīng</i> 佛本行集經 T 30 no. 190
AN	Āṅguttaranikāya (ed. Warder, PTS, Oxford 1961)
BHS	Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit (lexical item or phrase)
BHSD	Franklin Edgerton, <i>Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary</i> (New Haven, 1953)
BHSG	Franklin Edgerton, <i>Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar</i> (New Haven, 1953)
BL	British Library Collection of Kharoṣṭhī Manuscripts
CPS	Catuspariṣat Sūtra (ed. Waldschmidt 1960, 435–8)
Ch	Chinese (lexical item or phrase)
Cp	Cariyāpiṭaka (ed. N. A. Jayawickrama, PTS, London 1974)
DN	Dīghanikāya (ed. T. W. Rhys Davids, J. E. Carpenter, PTS, London 1890–1911)
DĀ	Dīrghāgama, T 1 no. 1
DDB	<i>Digital Dictionary of Buddhism</i> (ed. Charles Muller 1995, http://www.buddhism-dict.net)
DhG Vin	Chinese Dharmaguptaka Vinaya, <i>sì fēn lǜ</i> 四分律 T 22 no. 1428
Dhp-a	Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā (ed. H.C. Norman, PTS, London 1906–14)
Divy	Divyāvadāna (ed. Vaidya 1959)
DP	Margaret Cone, <i>A Dictionary of Pali</i> (2001–21)
DPPN	G. P. Malalasekera, <i>Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names</i> , 2 vols. (London, 1937–38)
G	Gāndhārī (lexical item or phrase)
Ja	Jātaka, together with <i>Jātakatthavaṇṇanā</i> (ed. V. Fausbøll, London 1877–96)
Lal	Lalitavistara (ed. Vaidya 1958)
MN	Majjhimanikāya (ed. V. Trenckner, R. Chalmers, PTS, London 1887–1902)
MĀ	Madhyamāgama, T 1 no. 26
Mahīś Vin	Chinese Mahīśāsaka Vinaya, <i>Mishāsè bù héxī wú fēn lǜ</i> 彌沙塞部和醯五分律 T 22 no. 1421

MIA	Middle Indo-Aryan (lexical item or phrase)
MSV-KV	*Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya-kṣudraka-vastu, <i>Gēnběn shuō yíqiè yǒubù pínàiyé zá shì</i> 根本說一切有部毘奈耶雜事 T 24 no. 1451
MVMS	*Mahāvaipulya-mahāsaṃnipāta-sūtra, <i>Dà fāngděng dà jí jīng</i> 大方等大集經 T 13 no. 397
Mvu	Mahāvastu-avadāna (ed. Marciniak 2019)
MW	Monier Monier-Williams, <i>A Sanskrit-English Dictionary</i> (Oxford, 1899)
Nett	Nettipakaraṇa (ed. E. Hardy, PTS, London 1902)
OIA	Old Indo-Aryan (lexical item or phrase)
P	Pali (lexical item or phrase)
PTS	Pali Text Society
PTSD	T. W. Rhys Davids, Stede, eds., <i>The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary</i> (London, 1921–25)
PYJ	*Chinese Lalitavistara, <i>Pǔ yào jīng</i> 普曜經 T 3 no. 186
RS	Robert Senior Collection of Kharoṣṭhī Manuscripts
SN	Saṃyuttanikāya (ed. M. L. Feer, PTS, London 1884–98)
SĀ	Saṃyuktāgama, T 2 no. 99
SBhV	Saṅghabhedavastu (ed. Gnoli 1977–78)
Skt	Sanskrit (word or phrase)
Sn	Suttanipāta (ed. D. Andersen, H. Smith, PTS, London 1913)
Sp	Samantapāsādikā (Vinaya-aṭṭhakathā) (ed. J. Takakusu, M. Nagai, PTS London 1924–47)
Sv	Sumaṅgalavilāsinī (Dīghanikāya-aṭṭhakathā) (ed. T. W. Rhys Davids, J. E. Carpenter, PTS, London 1886–1932)
T	<i>Taishō shinshū daizōkyō</i> 大正新脩大藏經 [Buddhist Canon Newly Compiled during the Taishō Era (1912–26)]. 100 vols. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎, Watanabe Kaikyōku 渡辺海旭 et al., eds. Tōkyō: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–34. Digitized in CBETA (v. 5.2 or updated, https://www.cbeta.org)

- Th-a Paramatthadīpanī V (Theragāthā-aṭṭhakathā) (ed. F. L. Woodward, PTS London 1940–59)
- Ud Udāna (ed. P. Steinthal, PTS, London 1885)
- Vin Vinayapiṭaka of the Theravādin (ed. H. Oldenberg, London 1879–83)
- VMS *Vaipulya-mahāvīyūha-sūtra, *Fāngguǎng dà zhuāngyán jīng* 方廣大莊嚴經 T 3 no. 187
- X X (*Wan*) *xu zangjing* 卍字續藏經 (Man Extended Buddhist Canon). 150 vols. *Xin wenfeng chuban gongsi* 新文豐出版公司, Taipei 台北, 1968–70. Reprint of Nakano Tatsue 中野達慧, et al., eds. *Dai Nihon zoku zōkyō* 大日本續藏經 [Buddhist Canon of Great Japan, Continued], 120 cases. Kyoto: *Zōkyō shoin* 藏經書院, 1905–12. Digitized in CBETA (v. 5.2 or updated, <https://www.cbeta.org>)

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Subject of the Study: The Robert Senior Collection (RS) Fragment 24¹

The discovery of Gandhāran birch bark manuscripts written in the Gāndhārī language and Kharoṣṭhī script has transformed the study of early Buddhist literature by providing access to some of the oldest surviving Buddhist texts currently known.² Among the major Gandhāran manuscript collections,³ the Robert Senior (RS) Collection occupies a particularly important position due to its relatively secure dating and its preservation of numerous canonical and narrative materials with close parallels in other Buddhist canon languages.

The RS Collection consists of twenty-four birch bark scroll fragments preserving a total of at least forty-one texts. The fragments entered the possession of the British Library for conservation in 1999 but were soon after loaned to the University of Washington by their then-owner, Robert Senior. Information about the origin of the fragments prior to this remains unknown since the manuscripts were acquired through the antiquities market rather than through controlled excavation. Nevertheless, they are generally believed to originate from the region of Haḍḍa near Jalalabad in eastern Afghanistan.⁴ The dating of RS scrolls can be established through both internal and external evidence. Internally, the pot in which the scrolls were deposited bears an inscription dated to the year 12 of an unnamed king's reign, but Richard

¹ I am indebted to Mark Allon's preliminary study of this collection.

² In contrast to this statement, the Pali canon is sometimes thought to represent the oldest scripture of Buddhism because it happened to be the only Indic canon that survived complete and intact until today. However, as Richard Salomon points out, the authority of the Pali Tipiṭaka seems to be an "accident of history" as several Sanskrit manuscripts from Central Asia, and especially the Gāndhārī Buddhist manuscripts, dated to the couple first centuries CE, have been discovered (Salomon 2018: 56).

³ For a survey of the major Gandhāran Buddhist manuscript collections, see Salomon 2003, Salomon 2006, Salomon 2014, Salomon 2018: 76–9. For the corpus and genre of Kharoṣṭhī manuscripts, see Falk and Strauch 2014.

⁴ For a detailed introduction of the Senior manuscripts, see Salomon 2003 and Allon 2014. For the process of conservation, see Glass 2007: 71. For a methodological critique concerning provenance and archaeological context, see Fussman 2012.

Salomon has argued that this must refer to Kaniṣka's era, corresponding to 139–140 CE.⁵

Externally, radiocarbon analysis suggests a probable lower range of 135–158 CE and a higher range of 301–319 CE. Comparison with the internal dating gives a secure probable range of 130–250 CE.⁶

The original purpose of the RS manuscripts has been the subject of scholarly discussion. The most widely accepted theory was proposed by Mark Allon, the authority on the collection, who suggests that the manuscripts were a “commissioned collection” and functioned as “relics.”⁷ In other words, the manuscripts were written for ritual deposition, serving as relics within a stūpa context.⁸ Such a hypothesis may help explain several features of the collection, including scribal errors, unfinished texts, and the relative homogeneity of genre within the surviving manuscripts.

The contents of the collection are predominantly associated with a subcollection of Buddhist sūtras known as the Saṃyuttanikāya (SN) in Pali and the Saṃyktāgama (SĀ) in Chinese. Of the forty-one identified texts in the collection, at least twenty-nine are SN/SĀ type, three correspond to texts preserved in the MN/MĀ type, one is DN/DĀ type, five are narrative materials whose closest parallels are found primarily in Vinaya literature,⁹ one is a compilation of episodes with sutra and Vinaya parallels, one is a version of the Anavatapta-gāthā narrative, and several remain uncertain.¹⁰ Furthermore, studies of the RS collection published so far, both preliminary and in-depth, arranged by publication date, are as follows.

⁵ Salomon 2003: 78; Allon et al 2006: 284.

⁶ Allon et al 2006: 284.

⁷ Allon 2007b: 4.

⁸ For reasons why Gandhāran Buddhists bury their manuscript, see Salomon 2009.

⁹ For the sake of convenience, I will temporarily categorize them as “Vinaya” type in this section, although it is not necessarily the case that they are Vinaya texts.

¹⁰ Allon 2007b: 21–2. Note also that Joseph Marino has identified RS 23B as preserving the Bāvarī story, which is found in the Pali Khuddaka Nikāya but also circulated independently in other traditions.

Table 1. RS publication to date

No.	Publication	Fragment	Content ¹¹
1	Glass 2007	RS 5	Sañña-sutta (SN III 230) Natumhāka-sutta (SN III 34) Nibbidābahula-sutta (SN III 179) Vāsijāta-sutta (SN III 153–4)
2	Allon 2007a	RS 22.3	Dutiya-cchiggaḷayuga-sutta (SN V 457)
3	Salomon 2008; Salomon and Majcher 2022	BL 1 + RS 14	Anavataptagāthā (Nett 141.12–142.5)
4	Lee 2009; Lee et al 2022	RS 19	Dārukkhandha-sutta (SN IV 179–81)
5	Allon 2009	RS 24 verso	The Story of Tapussa and Bhallika
6	Silverlock 2015; Silverlock et al 2022	RS 12	Cūḷagosiṅga-sutta (MN I 205–11)
7	Marino 2017; Marino 2021	RS 20	Suhadukha sutra (SN IV 171–2) Mahaparaḍaha sutra (SN V 450–542)
8	Allon 2020; Allon et al 2020	RS 22.2	Anattalakkhaṇa-sutta (SN III 66–8)
9	Allon 2024	RS 2	Sāmaññaphala-sutta (DN I 47–86)

Although a substantial portion of the RS collection has already received scholarly attention, most published studies have focused on sutra materials.¹² By contrast, the Vinaya-related narrative texts remain comparatively understudied. This imbalance is particularly significant because these narratives preserve important evidence for the formation and transmission of early Buddhist biographical traditions. This thesis focuses on RS 24, a fragment preserving two episodes from the Buddha’s biography: the story of Tapusa and Bhallika (recto) and the story of Nālaka and Elapatra (verso). Although Allon (2009) conducted a preliminary

¹¹ The content corresponds to the sutta known from the Pali canon, though parallels are likewise attested in the Chinese Āgamas and other traditions.

¹² In addition to Marino 2017, there is an unpublished manuscript on RS 17 and RS 20, in which RS 17 comprises the Nādi-sutta (SN III 138) and Tissa-sutta (SN III 106–9). There is also work in progress on RS 13, which comprises the Veḷudvāreyya-sutta (SN V 353–56) by Kanata Kawasaki. There are several more in progress by Mark Allon.

study of RS 24 verso on the story of the merchants Trapusa and Bhallika, the fragment as a whole has not yet received a comprehensive philological and literary study. Apart from RS 24, which contains two stories and is the subject of this study, the other three Vinaya-related narratives in the RS collection, identified by Allon, are as follows.¹³

Table 2. RS Vinaya-related narratives

Fragment	Content	Parallels in Vinaya
RS 15 + 18	Conversion of Sujātā or episode in which a <i>nāga</i> -king Mucalinda protects the Buddha from rain	DhG Vin (T 22 no. 1428, 786a10–b7), Mahīs Vin (T 22 no. 1421, 103b32–c6)
RS 16 + 23A1	Devadatta’s wish to lead Sangha, enumeration of five kinds of teachers	Vin II 185–7, SbhV II 73–8, Mahīs Vin (T 22 no. 1421, 18a1–22), DhG Vin (T 22 no. 1428, 591c4–593a29), Sarvāstivādin (T 23 no. 1435, 258a9–259a8), Ch ShbV (T 24 no. 1450, 169a12–170b24)
RS 16 + 23A2	Anuruddha’s wish for ordination	Vin II 180–3, SbhV I 200, Mvu III 225–30, Mahīs Vin (T 22 no. 1421, 16c21–17c14), DhG Vin (T 22 no. 1428, 590b13–591c16), Ch ShbV (T 24 no. 1450, 144b9–145b14)

The above identification and parallels may change upon further study. The classification of these narratives raises important methodological problems. Although they are frequently categorized as “Vinaya” texts because their closest parallels are preserved in Vinaya literature, such categorization may oversimplify the fluidity of early Buddhist narrative transmission. At a minimum, however, these texts are clearly parts of the biographical narratives of Śākyamuni Buddha.

¹³ Allon 2007b: 12–8.

1.2. Physical Description of the Manuscript

This manuscript survives in relatively poor condition: both lateral margins have sustained damage, and the top portions are missing. The scroll is wide and long, with the dimensions measuring approximately 25.5×42.5 cm; the original manuscript is approximately 43.7 cm wide.¹⁴ When viewed from the verso, portions of the left margin remain intact with some missing fragments here and there, though the ink has almost entirely faded or washed away, whereas most of the upper right margin is missing. This could be due to one side being in contact with the inner wall of the clay pot.¹⁵ The resulting moisture absorption may have caused the ink to dissolve. It is also possible that the moisture damage happened during the composition of the scroll. Therefore, with both margins either missing or the ink not visible to the eyes, secure reading, for the most part, is limited to the middle parts of the manuscript.

There are two problems with the physical condition of this manuscript, namely that of the bark and that of the ink. First, the bark must have gotten wet and dried unevenly. It can be seen from several bubbles or wrinkles on the bark throughout, mainly on the right side of the recto or the left side of the verso. The liquid on the bark must have caused the ink to fade or dissolve across much of the manuscript. There are at least three bark knots, one large knot in the middle of the lower portion, and two small knots on the left lower margin of the recto, which the scribe continues to write on rather than avoiding them. Further, the crumbs of severely damaged portions of the birch bark are scattered throughout the manuscript. Some of the crumbs show compacted, greenish accretions that resemble mold or fungal growth along the margins of the

¹⁴ Allon 2009: 9.

¹⁵ The Senior scrolls were purportedly found in a clay jar consisting of two parts: the pot proper and the lid of the jar, see Salomon 2003: 74.

manuscript, possibly the result of biological activity associated with moisture exposure.¹⁶

Second, the ink is another major problem in addition to the poor bark condition. In addition to the moisture on the paper, the ink used may not have been of good quality. For the most part, the writing has a pattern of reinking after every nine to ten akṣaras. That said, even after reinking, the ink becomes very faint after the fourth akṣara. The scribe does not appear to have refreshed the ink when the ink had become almost invisible. Of course, the ink could have been visible at the time of the writing, and only became faint over the centuries. For the most part, in the dry, unaffected part of the manuscript, the fully loaded ink is smeared out, meaning the dense ink has spread beyond the original akṣara strokes, and for the most part, the ink appears washed out into the bark surface to the extent that the akṣaras are no longer legible. This could be a problem with either the ink or the pen. The ink solution could have been mixed with too much water.

As is typical of many Kharoṣṭhī manuscripts, this scroll was folded horizontally in half, resulting in a vertical split upon unrolling (Figure 1). Before this final folding, the scroll was folded from the bottom upward roughly 12 times, with the recto facing inward and the verso



Figure 1. RS 24 prior to unrolling.

¹⁶ Such deposits should be treated with caution, since similar discolorations or surface accretions may also result from preservation materials or conservation treatments. For instance, gauze or related backing materials occasionally adhere to the edges of small bark fragments and may leave fibrous or greenish residues on the manuscript surface.

exposed on the exterior, leaving the top margin exposed and thus more vulnerable to damage.¹⁷

As a result, the creases from the folding led to twelve horizontal breaks in the manuscript, and most of the upper part of the scroll is missing (Figure 2).¹⁸

There are 32 lines of writing on the recto and 30 on the verso. There might be a possibility of at least one line missing at the top of the manuscript. After completing the recto, the scribe flipped the manuscript horizontally, like a modern book, to continue writing on the verso, such that the upper and lower edges of both recto and verso remain the same, but the right margin of the recto corresponds to the left margin of the verso.¹⁹ The writing on the recto is much more slanted downward than on the verso. There are approximately 30–40 akṣaras per line, depending on the size and spacing of the characters. For the most part, the scribe employed thinner strokes and smaller akṣaras on the recto (Figure 4), whereas the verso is written in comparatively larger akṣaras with thicker ink (Figure 5). The recto preserves approximately 718 readable akṣaras, while the verso preserves approximately 573. Taken together, the manuscript preserves roughly 1,291 readable akṣaras, and roughly 60 to 70 percent of the original text appears to survive in legible condition.

Prior to reconstruction, the two major fragments at the top of the manuscript were positioned incorrectly and must be reversed in order. Around the eighth line of the recto, or the sixth line of the verso, the manuscript appears to be completely detached, unlike the surrounding areas where traces of physical connection remain visible. At first glance, this separation gives the impression that an additional line may have been lost between the two sections. Closer

¹⁷ Salomon 2003: 84.

¹⁸ Baums 2014: 209–10.

¹⁹ For longer scrolls, it is usually flipped vertically. See Salomon 1999: 87.

examination, however, suggests that the fragments are directly connected and that no line is missing.

Both the recto and verso narratives remain incomplete.²⁰ Based on the extant parallels, the stories would be expected to continue beyond the surviving portions of the manuscript, yet neither text reaches the proper conclusion. This abrupt ending may simply result from the manuscript reaching the lower edge of the scroll. Several possibilities may be considered: the available bark surface may have been insufficient to complete the text, the scribe may have intentionally left the narratives unfinished, or the continuation may once have existed on another scroll that has not survived.²¹ Traces of ink near the lower edge suggest that the text originally continued beyond the preserved portion, but the manuscript breaks off precisely at this point. Likewise, because the upper portions of the manuscript are heavily damaged, it remains impossible to determine where either narrative originally began or how many lines are missing at the top. It is therefore possible that both the recto and verso preserve only portions of longer continuous narrative sequences extending from earlier episodes.

As noted above, the manuscript is damaged at one end and heavily affected by ink smudging at the other (Figure 6). As a result, no line on either the recto or verso survives in completely legible condition. Nearly every line contains either missing bark or obscured akṣaras. The reconstructions proposed here are therefore based primarily on parallels and contextual

²⁰ The narratives nevertheless end at a meaningful narrative units rather than in the middle of sentences. By “incomplete,” I refer primarily to comparison with the closest parallel versions. The story in the recto may possibly have continued onto the first several lines in the verso, although this remains uncertain. Likewise, the story in the verso concludes in a coherent manner. However, when compared with its closest parallel in the DhG Vin, some narrative elements and plot developments appear to be absent. It is possible that the Gāndhārī version intentionally preserved the stories in an abbreviated form.

²¹ RS 24 is one of the scrolls that remain unfinished, with the others being RS 5, 13, 14, 18, and 16 + 23A. See Allon 2024: 16.

considerations, though they necessarily remain tentative, since the Gāndhārī version may have differed from the extant parallels.



Figure 2. RS 24 recto before conservation

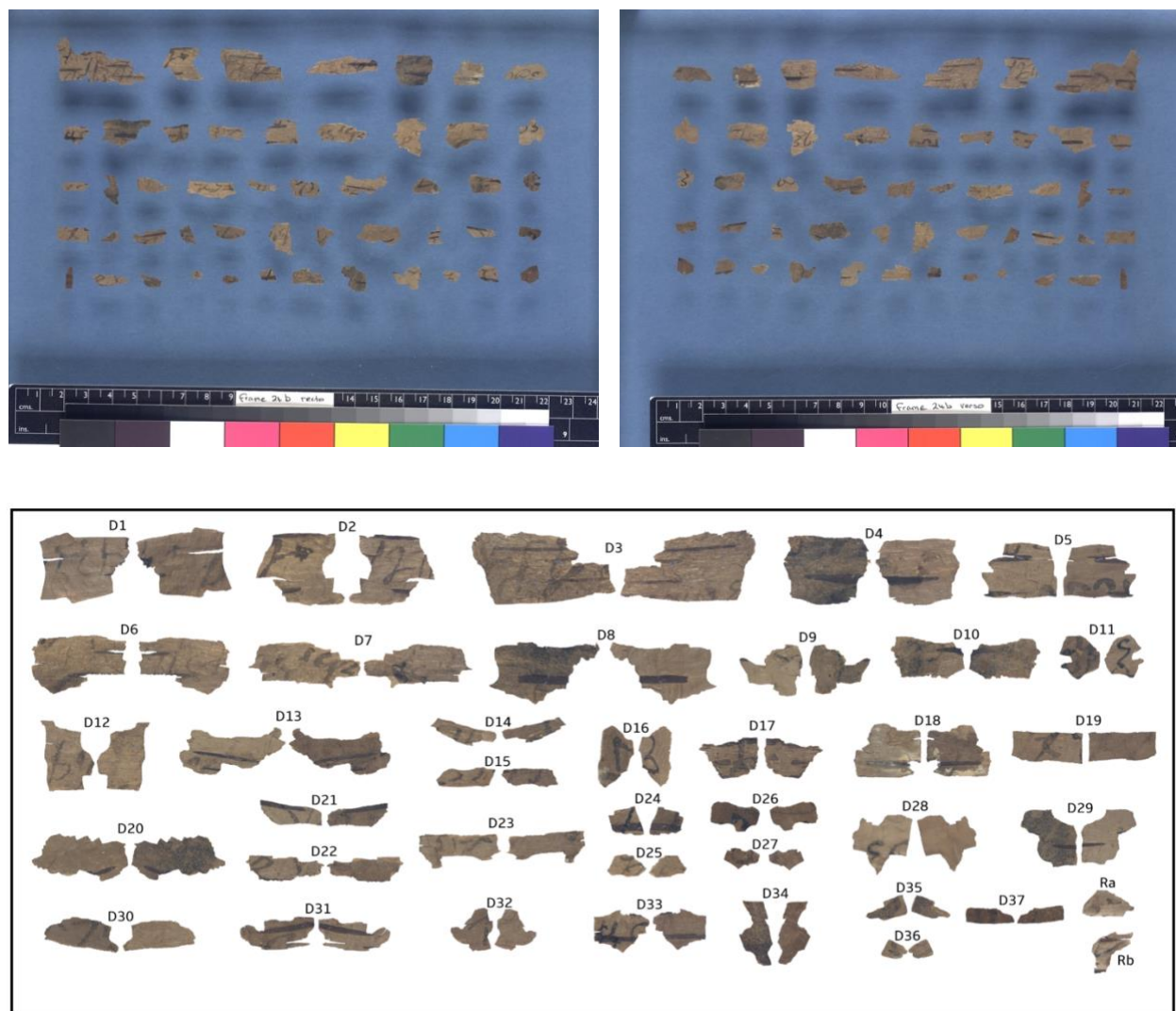


Figure 3. Top left: RS 24 recto debris frame. Top right: RS 24 verso debris frame. Bottom: Remaining fragments from the debris frames, recto and verso, after the main fragment is reconstructed and some of the debris are placed in their appropriate places. Ra and Rb fragments are debris from the main fragment.

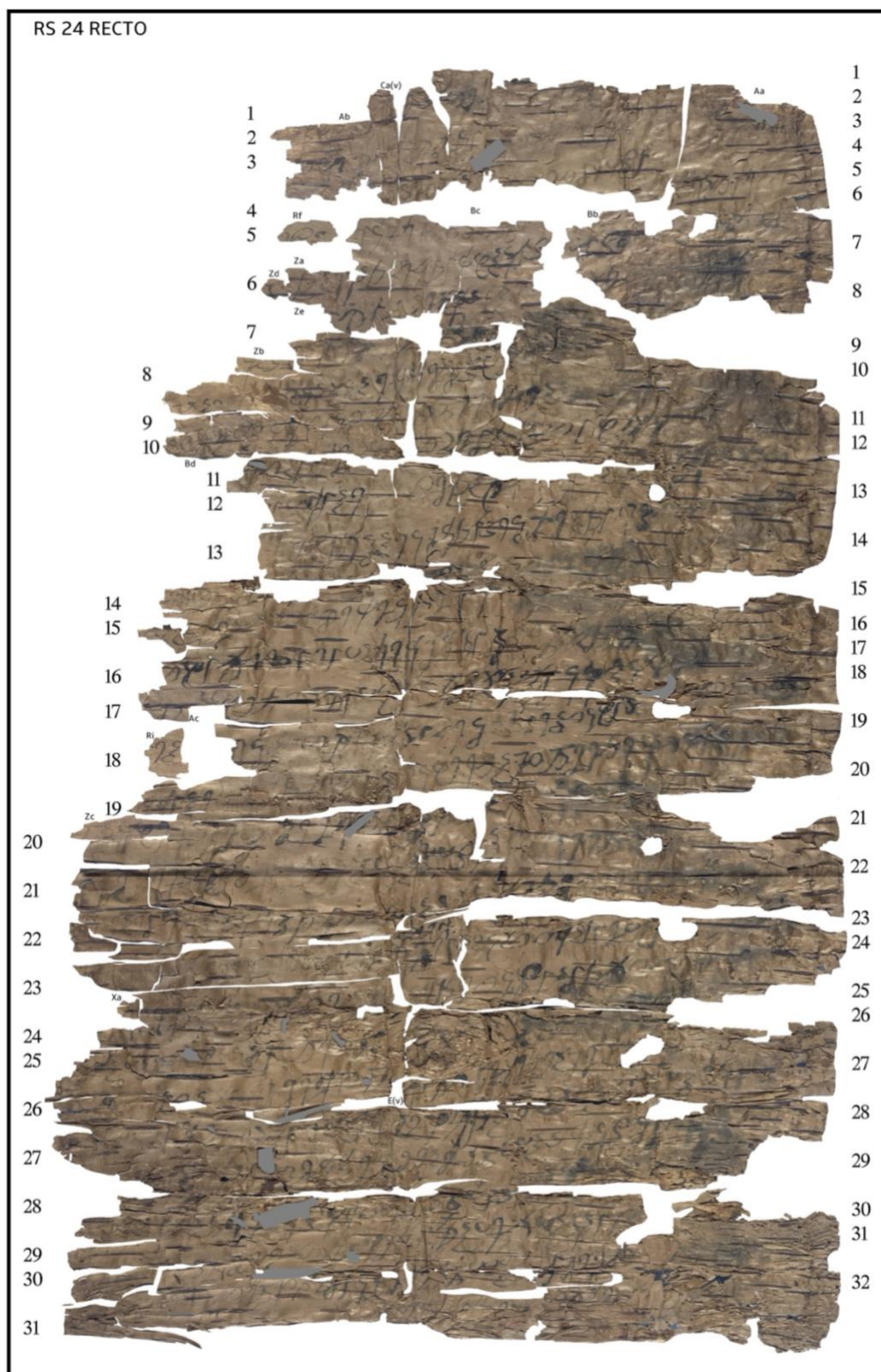


Figure 4. RS 24 recto, reconstructed



Figure 5. RS 24 verso, reconstructed

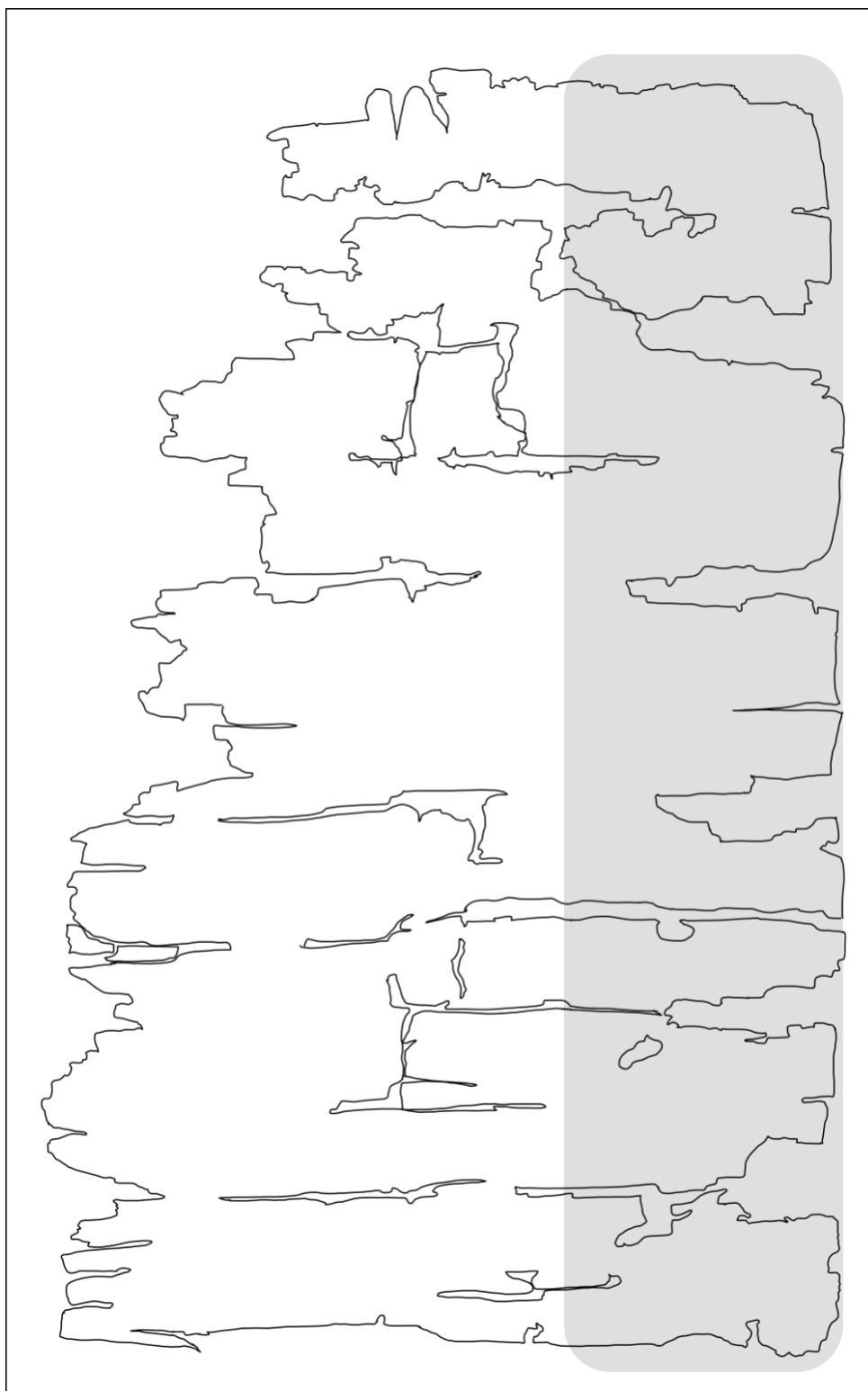


Figure 6. Outlines of the preserved portions of the recto. The gray area indicates moisture damage to the bark, accompanied by ink smudging, taking about one-third of the manuscript

1.3. Content

The manuscript contains two incomplete narrative texts: the recto preserves an account of the young student-brahmin Nālaka and the *nāga*-king Elapatra, while the verso preserves the story of the merchants Trapusa and Bhallika. The details of this story and how they are preserved in the manuscript will be discussed in the following chapters. Although these narratives are connected to the Buddha's biography, their canonical parallels are found primarily in Vinaya literature and independent sutras rather than in the Nikāya or Āgama collections.

The first episode recounts the conversion of the young brahmin Nālaka (or Nala in the Gāndhārī version) and the recognition of the Buddha by a non-human figure, the *nāga*-king Elapatra, together with his past life story that extends across multiple Buddha eras and culminates in an encounter with Śākyamuni Buddha.²² The second episode concerns the encounter between the Buddha and the merchants Trapusa and Bhallika, called Trivusa and Valia in the Gāndhārī version, shortly after the Buddha's awakening.²³ As John Strong notes, this episode brings together several "firsts:" the first lay disciples, the first food offering, the first alms bowl, the first teaching in a strict sense, and the first relics.²⁴ Because of this, it is particularly famous within the Buddhist tradition and has parallels in many places, including Vinayas, commentaries, independent sutras, and is also mentioned in the Chinese travelogues.

1.4. Reference in the Index Scrolls (RS 7 + 8)

The narratives preserved in RS 24 appear to have no explicit corresponding reference in the Index Scrolls (RS 7 + 8).²⁵ One possible exception, however, may be the expression

²² In the present study, "Nala" is used when referring specifically to the Gāndhārī form preserved in RS 24, while "Nālaka" refers to the broader narrative figure attested across Pali, Sanskrit, and Chinese versions.

²³ Similarly, "Trivusa" and "Valia" are used when referring to the RS 24 version of the story, while "Trapusa" and "Bhallika" refers to the extant versions.

²⁴ Strong 2004: 74.

²⁵ Allon 2007b: 19.

taṣagaḍavagre found in RS 7 line 11. The word *taṣagaḍavagre* could be the equivalent of Skt *Tathāgata-varga*, “Section on the Tathāgatha.” This section likely refers to a group of texts whose content concerns events following the Buddha’s enlightenment. However, such an interpretation remains uncertain, since all other references on RS 7 + 8 refer to individual texts rather than thematic groupings.²⁶ The relevance of this expression is noteworthy because the word *taṣagaḍa* occurs once in the RS 24 recto line 25 in reference to the Buddha Kāśyapa, although the word *taṣagaḍa* is extremely common.

Moreover, the term appears again in RS 8 line 26:

*sarvapiḍa sutra pacapacaiśa 20 20 10 4 1 sadha dharmadaśeṇa sadha taṣagaḍavagena
sadha spaḍiṭhanieṇa sadha aṇoda[i] ? ///*

In all fifty-five, 55, sūtras, together with the *Dharmadaśeṇa*, together with the *Taṣagaḍavagena*, together with the applications of mindfulness, together with the *Aṇodatia*.

As Richard Salomon notes, the interpretation of *sadha* remains uncertain. While it most likely means “together with” or “including,” it could also mean “along with” or “in addition to.”²⁷ Just as this ambiguity affects the classification of the Anavatapta-gāthā as a sutra, despite its later classification as an avadāna, it would also affect the RS 24 narratives being regarded as sutras. Such evidence suggests that the boundaries between genre categories in the RS collection may not yet have been rigidly fixed.

1.5. School Affiliation

Questions concerning the sectarian affiliation of the RS collection remain complex. Several scholars have proposed connections with the Dharmaguptaka school based on close correspondences between certain fragments and Chinese translations associated with the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya and Dīrghāgama traditions. At the same time, other scholars have noted

²⁶ Salomon 2003; Allon 2014: 25–6; Allon 2007b: 20.

²⁷ Salomon 2008: 17.

affinities with the Sarvāstivāda tradition, particularly through parallels with the Chinese Saṃyuktāgama corpus.

Table 3. Scholarly views on the sectarian affiliation of the RS collection

Material Discussed	Proposed Affiliation ²⁸	Reference
RS 20.2 (SN)	Sarvāstivāda	Salomon 2003
RS all	Dharmaguptaka	Allon 2007
RS 5.4 (SN)	Sarvāstivāda	Glass 2007
BL 1 + RS 14 (KN)	Dharmaguptaka for BL 1 Uncertain for RS 14	Salomon 2008
RS 24.2 (Vinaya)	Dharmaguptaka	Allon 2009
RS 19 (SN/AN)	Sarvāstivāda	Lee 2009
RS 12 (MN)	Sarvāstivāda	Silverlock 2015
RS 22.2 (SN)	Dharmaguptaka	Allon 2020
RS 2 (DN)	Dharmaguptaka	Allon 2024

Salomon and Allon have been the principal scholars attempting to determine the sectarian affiliation of the Gandhāran Buddhist manuscripts. Salomon's position has generally remained cautious, avoiding definitive conclusions and instead proposing possible affiliations with either the Dharmaguptakas or the Sarvāstivādins. In his initial introduction to the Senior manuscripts (2003), he tentatively favored a Sarvāstivāda affiliation on the grounds that the Chinese SĀ is generally associated with the Sarvāstivāda tradition.²⁹ Later studies by Meihuang Lee and Blair Alan Silverlock adopted a similar approach, associating manuscript affiliation primarily with the canonical collection to which a text belongs: texts of the SĀ and MĀ type were connected with the Sarvāstivādins, whereas DĀ materials were considered more likely Dharmaguptaka.³⁰ In *The Buddhist Literature of Ancient Gandhāra*, Salomon remarks that “it is impossible to determine the school affiliation of a fragmentary text, especially in the case of sutras, which typically

²⁸ This does not necessarily represent the view of all authors, since some identifications remain only tentative suggestions. The proposed affiliation here is based primarily on the degree to which the passage appears to lean toward particular parallel traditions.

²⁹ Salomon 2003: 90.

³⁰ Lee 2009: 39; Silverlock 2015: 31.

differed less across school boundaries than the other classes of canonical literature.”³¹

Nevertheless, Salomon also identified several factors suggesting possible Dharmaguptaka connections, mostly based on the British Library (BL) collections.³²

Allon, by contrast, has argued much more strongly for a Dharmaguptaka affiliation of the RS collection from the outset. His argument proceeds from a broader survey of the collection as a whole. Excluding uncertain materials, he identifies at least five texts, namely RS 2 (DĀ), RS 4A, RS 15 + 18 (Vinaya narrative), RS 22.2 (SĀ), and RS 24 (Vinaya narrative), as showing particularly close affinities with Dharmaguptaka parallels.³³

The sectarian affiliation cannot be securely established solely on the basis of sutra classification, because sutras circulated widely across school boundaries and often shared highly similar wording and structure. Vinaya materials, by contrast, may provide firmer evidence because they tend to preserve more distinctive sectarian features. In this regard, RS 24 is particularly significant, since its closest parallels are found primarily in Vinaya literature and show notable agreement with Dharmaguptaka versions.

In his study of RS 24 verso, Allon (2009) has already identified three points of close correspondence with the Dharmaguptaka parallel, the most significant being the agreement in the verse.³⁴ Moreover, this study shows that the RS 24 recto provides further evidence. Most notably, it preserves the total number of Arhats in the world at a certain point in the Buddha's lifetime, which corresponds specifically to the Dharmaguptaka version.

G: (**teṇa*) *samaeṇa dvaḍaśaśaḍe rahatāṇa loo ahuṣi ahoṣi ekaḍaśaśaḍe ṣaveaṇa bhayava dvaḍaśama*

(At that time, there were one hundred and twelve Arhats in the world; one hundred and eleven disciples, and the Blessed One was the twelfth.)

³¹ Salomon 2018: 101.

³² See Salomon 2018: 101–2.

³³ Allon 2007b: 5–6.

³⁴ For the three points mentioned, see Allon 2009: 11–3.

DhG Vin: 時世間有一百一十一阿羅漢，佛為一百一十二。

(At that time, there were one hundred and eleven Arhats in the world, and the Buddha was the one hundred and twelfth.)

Mahīś Vin: 爾時，世間有六十二阿羅漢。

(At that time, there were sixty-two Arhats in the world.)

AbhiNS: 是時，世間即成九十二阿羅漢。

(At that time, ninety-two Arhats appeared in the world.)

The Gāndhārī version has a total of 112 Arhats, with 111 disciples plus the Buddha, similar to the explanation in the DhG Vin version. Other Vinaya and sutra traditions preserve different numbers: Mahīś Vin has 62, whereas AbhiNS has 92 Arhats in total. The total number is not arbitrary but reflects the cumulative narrative development of earlier episodes in which new disciples successively attain arhatship. Because the various Vinaya and biographical traditions preserve differing accounts of these earlier conversions and narrative sequences, the total number of arhats at the stage of the Elapatra and Nālaka episode varies accordingly across traditions. This feature may provide stronger evidence for sectarian affiliation than lexical parallels alone. Unlike isolated wording or phrases, which may easily circulate across traditions through borrowing or textual convergence, numerical agreements are less likely to arise coincidentally. RS 24, therefore, offers a potentially more precise basis for discussing sectarian affiliation within the RS collection.

Furthermore, in the episode in which Elapatra offers goods to anyone who can answer his questions, most parallel versions preserve similar motifs involving golden and silver bowls filled with precious grains. In the DhG Vin, once Nala successfully answers the question, Elapatra further offers women from four castes in addition to these treasures. The parallels are as follows:

G: (**suaṇapatri ruacuṇaparivure r*)*u(*a)p(*a)tri yo suaṇacuṇaparivure ...*
*kṣ(*a)triak(*a)ña va braṇaṇaṇa va viśagañ(*a) va śud(*ra)ña*)

(Golden bowl completely filled with silver grain, and silver bowl completely filled with golden grain ... the woman of the *kṣatriya* caste, the woman of the *brāhmaṇa* caste, the woman of the *vaiśya* caste, or the woman of the *śūdra* caste.)

DhG Vin: 金鉢盛銀粟、銀鉢盛金粟 ... 刹利女、婆羅門女、居士女、工師女者。
(Golden bowls filled with silver grain and the silver bowls filled with golden grain ... a *kṣatriya* woman, a *brāhmaṇa* woman, a *vaiśya* woman, or a *śūdra* woman.)

Mahīś Vin: 金銀鉢滿金銀粟，又莊嚴二女。
(A golden bowl filled with silver grain and a silver bowl filled with golden grain, and two adorned maidens.)

AbhiNS: 好金器滿盛銀粟，於銀器內滿盛金粟，將此龍女，莊飾其體，以妙種種璫珞嚴身。
(Fine golden bowls filled with silver grains and silver bowls filled with golden grains. These *nāga* maidens shall be adorned and decorated with various exquisite necklaces.)

MSV-KV: 金篋滿中盛金。
(A golden casket filled with gold.)

Among the extant parallels, the inclusion of women belonging to four castes appears only in the Gāndhārī version and the DhG Vin. The similarity is particularly striking not only in content but also in arrangement. Both versions preserve the same sequence of social classes beginning with *kṣatriya*, followed by *brāhmaṇa*, *vaiśya*, and *śūdra*.³⁵ Such close agreement suggests a particularly strong relationship between the Gāndhārī version and the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya tradition. This agreement is significant because the correspondence extends beyond general narrative motifs to include specific structural details and ordering. Hence, the evidence strengthens the possibility that the RS collection in general, and RS 24 in particular, is closely affiliated with the Dharmaguptaka tradition, or at least derives from a closely related textual lineage.

³⁵ On the arrangement of the four castes in Buddhist literature, see the text notes to recto line 17.

1.6. Significance, Scope, and Structure

The placement of these stories within Vinaya contexts is especially important. Several Vinaya traditions preserve these narratives within sections related to ordination or the early formation of the Buddhist community. Yet the narratives also circulate independently across multiple textual traditions, languages, and genres. This fluidity raises broader questions concerning the relationship between biography, narrative transmission, and canonical organization in early Buddhism.

Rather than viewing these stories merely as fixed episodes within a standardized Buddha biography, the present study approaches them as relatively independent narrative units that circulated in varying forms before their incorporation into larger Vinaya and biographical compilations.³⁶ Their preservation within the Gandhāran manuscript tradition provides rare evidence for how such narratives were transmitted and adapted in northwestern Buddhist communities during the early centuries of the Common Era.

This study investigates RS 24 from both philological and literary-historical perspectives. At the philological level, it seeks to provide a transcription, reconstruction, translation, and analysis of the extant manuscript fragments. Particular attention will be given to textual reconstruction and commentary. At the same time, this thesis asks broader questions concerning the role of narrative literature in early Buddhism: How should these episodes be situated within the development of Buddhist biographical traditions? To what extent were narratives such as those of Trapusa and Bhallika or Elapatra and Nālaka already integrated into larger Buddha

³⁶ Salomon's discussion of the Gāndhārī Anavatapta-gāthā and Rhinoceros Sūtra suggests that many Buddhist narrative texts circulated in comparatively fluid and non-standardized forms before becoming incorporated into larger canonical compilations. He describes the textual relationships as involving "flexible quasi-oral texts and conflated recensions" and argues that such materials could undergo expansion, contraction, rearrangement, and recombination across different textual environments. See Salomon 2000; Salomon 2008; Salomon 2022b.

biographies during the second century CE? Alternatively, should they be understood as relatively independent narrative units later incorporated into expanded biographical frameworks?

The study also examines how these narratives circulated across different textual communities. Their parallels appear in Pali, Sanskrit, and Chinese sources. Such variation raises important questions concerning narrative flexibility, sectarian adaptation, and the transmission of Buddhist literature across regions and languages.

The thesis is organized as follows. Chapter two situates RS 24 within the broader context of early Buddhist biographical and narrative literature. Chapter three provides the transcribed text, reconstruction, and translation of the manuscript itself. The present study does not attempt a full treatment of paleography, orthography, phonology, and morphology, all of which deserve separate detailed investigation in future studies. Chapters four and five examine the two narrative episodes preserved in RS 24 together with their translations, parallels, and commentary. The conclusion summarizes the study's implications for understanding Gandhāran Buddhist literature, narrative transmission, and the formation of early Buddhist biography.

Chapter 2: RS 24 in the Context of Early Buddhist Biographical Literature

2.1. Biographical Narratives in the Vinayas

Narratives concerning the life of the Buddha are widely preserved throughout Vinaya traditions as well as in independent sūtras outside the Nikāya/Āgama collections.³⁷ Yet these narratives are neither Vinaya in the narrow sense of monastic rules and regulations, nor sūtras in the sense of doctrinal discourses attributed to the Buddha. Rather, they belong to the early biographical narrative traditions surrounding the Buddha's awakening, early ministry, and the gradual formation of the Buddhist community.

Modern scholarship has long observed that continuous biographies of the Buddha emerged relatively late.³⁸ Bernard Faure notes that the first extended biographies of the Buddha do not appear to have been compiled until around the second century CE. He identifies three major sources: the Buddhacarita, which begins with Siddhārtha's birth and ends with the Great Departure; the Lalitavistara, which begins in Tuṣita Heaven and concludes with the first sermon and return to Kapilavastu; and the Mahāvastu, which begins with the previous Buddha Dīpaṅkara and continues to approximately the conversion of King Bimbisāra.³⁹ Similarly, Donald Lopez identifies five major sources for the Buddha's life: the Mahāvastu, the *Abhiniṣkramaṇasūtra, the Lalitavistara, the Nidānakathā, and the Buddhacarita.⁴⁰ Yet these discussions primarily concern continuous or semi-continuous Buddha biographies and pay comparatively less attention to biographical materials preserved in Vinaya literature, especially in the Chinese Vinaya traditions.

³⁷ Exceptions include texts such as the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta (DN II 72–168) and the Ariyapariyesanā Sutta (MN I 160–75), which preserve substantial biographical materials within Nikāya literature. For a study of Ariyapariyesanā Sutta and its parallel, see Anālayo 2011b.

³⁸ For modern scholarly works on Buddha's biography, see Strong 2001; Nakamura 2001; Nakamura 2005; Schaeffer 2015; Faure 2022; Lopez 2025.

³⁹ Faure 2022: 48–50.

⁴⁰ Lopez further notes that the first four largely concern the period from the Buddha's previous lives through enlightenment and the early formation of the Buddhist community. The final journey and death of the Buddha is found in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* (Lopez 2025: 8–11).

A more useful framework for the present study is provided by Yinshun, who approaches Buddha biography not as a single literary genre, but as the gradual accumulation and arrangement of narrative materials associated with different institutional and doctrinal contexts. He observes that extant Buddha biographies broadly consist of two major narrative complexes: first, narratives centered on the Buddha's final journey from Rājagṛha to Vaiśālī and ultimately to Kuśinagara, culminating in the *parinirvāṇa*; and second, narratives centered on the Buddha's conversion of disciples and the expansion of the Saṅgha.⁴¹ The latter category is especially important for understanding RS 24 and the Vinaya traditions discussed below.

In the Vinayas, these accounts are especially prominent in sections concerning ordination, called the “Chapter on Receiving Precepts” (*shòujiè jiǎndù* 受戒撻度) in the Chinese translations of the Vinayas, and the “Great Chapter” (*Mahākhandhaka*) in the Pali Vinaya. Yinshun observes that the events of the Buddha's life were originally transmitted in many fragmentary forms within the Buddhist community:

The life story of the Buddha was originally transmitted within the Buddhist community as multifaceted and fragmentary narratives. To express a particular doctrinal meaning, a specific regulation, or a certain event, compilers had arranged and recounted the fragments in a sequential order. Progressing from brief accounts to longer ones, they gradually formed the extensive biographies of the Buddha.⁴²

According to this model, continuous Buddha biographies emerged gradually through the editorial arrangement and expansion of shorter narrative units associated with specific doctrinal, institutional, and ritual contexts. Yinshun further remarks that “the connection between institutional systems and narrative circumstances was manifold and was not compiled into fixed

⁴¹ Yinshun 1994: 358–60.

⁴² 佛的一生事跡，在佛教界，本是多方面的片段的傳述。為了表達某一法義，某一制度，某一事件，由編集者編成次第而敘述出來。由短而長，漸形成大部的佛傳 (Yinshun 1994: 358).

textual form from the beginning.”⁴³ Thus, biographical narratives preserved in Vinaya traditions should be understood as important stages in the formation of Buddha’s biography.

Shayne Clarke describes Vinaya literature as consisting broadly of two divisions: the *prātimokṣa*, containing rules and regulations, and the P *khandhaka*/Skt *vastu* material, which concerns institutional procedures and the legal functioning of the Saṅgha.⁴⁴ He further notes that the *khandakas* are arranged thematically and include discussions of ordination procedures and restrictions on who may or may not be ordained.⁴⁵ However, narratives in the RS 24 do not fit neatly into either category. They instead appear at the very beginning of the ordination sections, before formal regulations are introduced. These sections begin with narratives concerning the Buddha’s awakening and gradually proceed to the establishment of ordination procedures and monastic regulations. Between these two points, a sequence of post-enlightenment encounter narratives appears. The placement of the RS 24 narratives within several major Vinaya traditions may be summarized as follows:⁴⁶

⁴³ 制度與事緣的結合，是多方面的，也不是一開始就編集成文的 (Yinshun 1994: 361).

⁴⁴ Clarke 2014: 30.

⁴⁵ Clarke 2014: 34.

⁴⁶ The chapters in each Vinaya is presented selectively to highlight the surrounding narratives in between the narratives of RS 24, beginning with the attainment of enlightenment. For a study of the Buddha’s biographies in the four complete Chinese Vinayas, see Wang 2019.

Table 4. Comparative narrative sequence of post-enlightenment episodes in the ordination sections of selected Vinaya traditions

Pali Vin	DhG Vin	Mahīś Vin	Chinese SbhV Chapter 5
The attainment of enlightenment	The attainment of enlightenment	The attainment of enlightenment	The attainment of enlightenment
Account of a Brahmin at the Banyan tree	Account of Trapusa and Bhallika (RS 24 verso)	Offering of fruit by a tree deity	Offering of fruit by two Brahma deities
Account of Mucalinda <i>nāga</i> -king (RS 15 + 18)	Offering of fruit by a tree deity	Account of Trapusa and Bhallika (RS 24 verso)	Account of Trapusa and Bhallika (RS 24 verso)
Account of Tapussa and Bhallika (RS 24 verso)	Encounter with an Uruvela Brahmin	Account with Mucalinda <i>nāga</i> -king (RS 15 + 18)	Encounter with Māra
Account of the Brahma Sahampati	Offering of Sujata (RS 15 + 18)	Offering of Sujata (RS 15 + 18)	Account with Mucalinda <i>nāga</i> -king (RS 15 + 18)
Teaching of the five monks	Account with Mucalinda <i>nāga</i> -king (RS 15 + 18)	Brahma requests to teach the Dharma	Brahma requests to teach the Dharma
Conversion of Yaśa and friends (*RS 24 recto)	Brahma requests to teach the Dharma	Teaching the five monks	Teaching the five monks
Account of Māra	Teaching the five monks	Conversion of Yaśa and friends (*RS 24 recto)	Conversion of Yaśa and friends (*RS 24 recto)
Meeting with Bimbisara	Conversion of Yaśa and friends (*RS 24 recto)	Account of Narada and Elapatra <i>nāga</i>-king (RS 24 recto)	Account of Kāśyapa brothers
Conversion of Śāriputta and Moggallāna	Account of Narada and Elapatra <i>nāga</i>-king (RS 24 recto)	Account of Kāśyapa brothers	Account of King Bimbisāra and conversion of the Magadhan people
Regulations concerning perceptors and monastic conduct	Challenge of Māra	Account of King Bimbisāra and conversion of the Magadhan people	Conversion of Śāriputta and Maudgalyāyana
	Regulations concerning perceptors and monastic conduct	Conversion of Śāriputta and Maudgalyāyana	Account of Anāthapiṇḍika

The table demonstrates that narratives associated with the Buddha's awakening, first lay followers, encounters with *nāga* or other deities, early disciples, and the gradual expansion of the Saṅgha consistently appear prior to formal ordination procedures and monastic regulations. Episodes preserved in RS 24, including the Trapusa-Bhallika and Nālaka-Elapatra narratives, as well as possibly the conversion of Yaśa, occur within this broader biographical sequence in the Pali Vinaya, the Mahāvastu, and in three Vinayas in their Chinese translations—Dharmaguptaka, Mahīśāsaka, and Saṅghabhedavastu. The story of Nālaka-Elapatra only appears in the Dharmaguptaka, Mahīśāsaka, and *Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya Kṣudraka Vastu (*Gēnběn shuō yíqiè yǒubù pínàiyé zá shì* 本說一切有部毘奈耶雜事).⁴⁷ However, while the Mahāvastu contains a Nālaka narrative, it does not preserve the Elapatra *nāga* episode.

In addition to the Vinayas discussed above, the Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya (*Móhē sēngqí lǜ* 摩訶僧祇律) preserves a shorter and more schematic account of the Buddha's post-enlightenment activities. At the beginning of the *khandaka* section, it explains that during the first five years after the Buddha's enlightenment, the Saṅgha remained entirely pure, after which disciplinary regulations gradually became necessary. The text then introduces the four kinds of ordination: self-ordination beneath the Bodhi tree, “well-come” (*shàn lái* 善來) ordination for early disciples, and later institutionalized forms of ordination by ten or five monks.⁴⁸ Here, the Buddha's life narrative functions not as an external biography appended to the Vinaya, but as the narrative foundation for the emergence of the Saṅgha and its disciplinary system.

The Sarvāstivāda Vinaya (*Shísòng lǜ* 十誦律) exhibits a somewhat different tendency. The “Chapter on Receiving Precepts” begins not with a continuous narrative of the Buddha's

⁴⁷ T 24 no. 1451.

⁴⁸ 世尊成道五年，比丘僧悉清淨，自是已後漸漸為非，世尊隨事為制戒，立說波羅提木叉四種具足法：自具足、善來具足、十眾具足、五眾具足 (T 22 no. 1425, 412b24–7).

awakening, but with problems arising in the growing monastic community, such as the lack of preceptors and improper monastic conduct.⁴⁹ Yet, Sarvāstivāda traditions generally preserve extensive biographical materials, especially in the *Pravrajyāvastu (*chūjiāshi* 出家事),⁵⁰ *Kṣudrakavastu, and the Sanskrit Saṅghabhedavastu of the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya.

These examples show that early biographical narratives of the Buddha frequently appear in Vinaya *khandhaka* sections on miscellaneous matters prior to the introduction of formal regulations themselves. These narratives establish the historical and institutional foundations of the Saṅgha's emergence and its disciplinary system. At the same time, the variations across traditions suggest that many of these episodes circulated independently before being incorporated into larger Vinaya and biographical compilations.

2.2. Biographical Narratives in the Independent Sūtras

Independent sūtras preserved in the Chinese canon often transmit more continuous and expanded biographies of the Buddha than those found in Vinaya literature. Texts in the Buddha Biography section (佛傳部) of the Taishō canon (T 3–4 nos. 183–96) arrange episodes concerning the Buddha's previous lives, birth, renunciation, awakening, early disciples, and expansion of the Saṅgha into increasingly connected narrative sequences. These texts represent later attempts to compile more complete and continuous accounts of the Buddha's life.

Many of these biographies preserve close structural and narrative relationships with earlier Vinaya traditions. Yinshun argues that numerous Buddha biographies developed through the gradual expansion and combination of narrative materials already preserved within Vinaya contexts, especially narratives associated with ordination, conversion of disciples, and the

⁴⁹ The section begins from T 23 no. 1435, 148a5.

⁵⁰ T 23 no. 1444.

institutional formation of the Saṅgha. He further observes two major lineages of biographical organization concerning the Buddha's conversion of disciples and expansion of the Saṅgha. The first, associated broadly with Vibhajjavāda traditions, narrates the Buddha's conversion of Kāśyapa, Śāriputra, and other early disciples as the foundation for establishing the Saṅgha. The second, associated with the Sarvāstivāda traditions, extends the narrative further toward Kapilavastu, the conversion of the Śākya, and eventually toward narratives associated with Devadatta and the schism.⁵¹

For instance, the *Abhiniṣkramaṇasūtra, traditionally associated with the Dharmaguptaka school, differs substantially from the biographical narratives preserved in the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya itself. Its later chapters, especially from chapter fifty-three onward, resemble Sarvāstivāda-style developments concerning Kapilavastu and the Śākya clan.⁵² For Yinshun, this demonstrates that later Buddha biographies were not simple reproductions of single sectarian Vinaya traditions, but expanded compilations incorporating materials from multiple narrative lineages over long periods of transmission.

The Trapusa-Bhallika narrative preserved on the RS 24 verso appears widely throughout the Buddha's biography literature preserved in the 佛傳部. By contrast, the Nālaka-Elāpatra narrative preserved on the RS 24 recto appears more narrowly within Dharmaguptaka and Mahīśāsaka Vinayas, as well as in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda Kṣudraka Vastu and the *Abhiniṣkramaṇasūtra. The uneven distribution of these narratives suggests that certain post-enlightenment episodes circulated more widely and became stabilized earlier within Buddha-biography traditions, while others remained associated with more specific Vinaya-related narrative lineages.

⁵¹ Yinshun 1994: 360–1.

⁵² Yinshun 1994: 360.

2.3. RS 24 and Biographical Narrative

The relationship between RS 24, Vinaya narratives, and later biographical sūtras may also be understood in light of Richard Salomon's observations on early Gandhāran Buddhist literature. In his study of the Gāndhārī Rhinoceros Sūtra, Salomon argues that certain Buddhist texts circulated independently prior to their incorporation into larger canonical collections.⁵³ Although the Rhinoceros Sūtra later became embedded in the Suttanipāta, the Gāndhārī manuscript preserves it as an independent scroll, suggesting that smaller textual units could continue to circulate outside larger compilations even after canonization had begun. Salomon similarly observes that Gandhāran Buddhist literature often reflects “flexible quasi-oral texts” whose contents remained open to expansion, rearrangement, and recombination across different textual environments.⁵⁴

A similar phenomenon appears in the Gāndhārī Anavatapta-gāthā. Salomon notes that the text developed through three stages. In the first stage, represented by the Gāndhārī Anavatapta manuscripts, one or more versions of the text circulated in relatively informal and non-standardized forms prior to editorial regularization. In the second stage, represented by the *Fó wǔbǎi dìzǐ zìshuō běnqǐ jīng* 佛五百弟子自說本起經, a more semi-standardized version emerged that already anticipated many features of the later traditions while still preserving earlier structural features and variant readings. In the third stage, the text was incorporated into the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya and underwent further expansion and stabilization within a larger canonical framework.⁵⁵

⁵³ Salomon 2000: 14.

⁵⁴ Salomon 2008: 67.

⁵⁵ Salomon 2008: 80.

This proposed developmental pattern may also be relevant to the texts preserved on RS 24. The manuscript itself may stand closer to the first stage represented by the Gāndhārī Anavatapta materials, preserving relatively independent narratives in comparatively flexible forms. The Vinaya traditions discussed above may reflect a second stage in which such narratives became incorporated into ordination and institutional frameworks associated with the formation of the Saṅgha. Independent biographical sūtras may represent a later stage in which these materials were reorganized into increasingly continuous and expanded biographical compilations. Nevertheless, the relationship between Vinaya and independent biographical sūtras was likely not strictly linear, since the traditions continued to interact, borrow from one another, and undergo further expansion over long periods of transmission.

Another Gāndhārī manuscript related to Buddha biography, the Bahubudhaga-sūtra from the Library of Congress, provides further context for this discussion.⁵⁶ Salomon distinguishes two broad types of Buddha biography in later Buddhist literature: “buddhological” biographies situated within the lineage of past and future buddhas, represented by texts such as the Bahubudhaga-sūtra, and “historical” biographies focused specifically on the life of Śākyamuni, to which RS 24 more closely belongs.⁵⁷

In short, RS 24 fits well within this broader textual environment. The manuscript preserves selected post-enlightenment episodes concerning merchants, deities, brahmins, *nāgas*, and early disciples rather than a complete and continuous account of the Buddha’s life. These narratives later became incorporated into Vinaya ordination chapters and independent Buddha-biography sūtras, while in RS 24 they still remain comparatively episodic and relatively

⁵⁶ For a study of this manuscript, see Salomon 2021. Cf. Salomon 2024.

⁵⁷ See also Salomon 2023 for another Gāndhāran manuscript that may represent yet another form of early Buddhist biographical literature, namely a poem in praise of the seven Buddhas.

independent. The manuscript therefore appears to preserve an earlier stage in the development of Buddhist biographical literature prior to the formation of more systematized and continuous Buddha biographies.

- 11 [bh]. ? ? ? ? ? [re] ? ajavagreṇa yava[j]i ? [p].ṇedo śa[r]. ? [g].[d]. e[la]patro ya [ṇag]. /// +
+ + + + + + + + +
- 12 [ṇi ta ja di driṭhi] ? ? ? do a ? [m]. [ṇ]. ? ? + .o priḍi praūkha[roḍi] aṣa ṇala maṇa[v]. /// + + +
+ + + + + + + + +
- 13 ki ? ? ? ? [g]. ? [yo] suaṇapatri atha ruacaṇiparivura aṣa ruapatri ath. /// + + + + + + + + +
+ + + +
- 14 + + + + + ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? [e ru a khu] ? ? ? ? /// + + + + + + + + +
- 15 + + + + + + + + + + /// + + + + + + + + + a vae praroemi aṣuṇi ya vatimi eṣo [h].
[maṇ].[v]. /// + + + + +
- 16 + + + + + + + + + + .u ? [p]. [tri] y[o] suaṇacuṇaparivure aṇido maṇava ṇa [du]a ya ki
ṇaga ka /// + + + + + + + + +
- 17 + + + + + ? [y]. ag.kṣ.ṣi baraṇaṣi [kṣ].tri[ak]. ? ? bramaṇaḱa[ṇa va] viśa[gāṇ]. + śu[d]. /// +
+ + + + + +
- 18 ti [d]. ? ? + + + + ? te ṇagaraya suaṇapa[tri] rua[cu]ṇa ? ? ? ? k[u]śa ? [ṣi] ru[a]. /// + + +
sua[ṇ]. /// + + + + + + + + +
- 19 ? ? ? ? [ṇa]gakaṇa aye ahu bhayavaṣatia agara[de spa]ṇa[g].[r].[a]. p.[v]. ? ? ? a.ṣa ṇ.l. ma ?
/// + + + + + + +
- 20 + + + + + + ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? [ṣe] lae ahu bhayavaṣatia agara spa[ṇ]. /// + + +
- 21 + + + + + + /// ? ? ? ? ? bhayava ṇa a[vayi] spakha ma ? dhrarma cara bhrama[hio] dukhaṣa
ataia sa h[o vaṇa] /// + +
- 22 ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? [ahuṣi ṣ]. ye[v]. ? ? [p]. di [du] sa ? ? ta ya ṇo pacavekṣata ḍ aṇuade
aṣa[ve ji] /// +

- 23 ? ? ? + + + ? śamaeṇa dvaḍaśāśade rahatana «loo» ahu[ṣ]i «ahoṣi» ekaḍaśāśade śaveṇa
bhayava dva[ḍaśama aśa bhayava el]. /// +
- 24 ? ? ? ? ? [a].[ḍ].[ḍ]=[a]ya ki puṇu tu ṇagaraya apea r.[a].[ṣi a]ś[un]i ya va[t[esi] apegade [a]
+ ? /// + +
- 25 + + + + + + /// ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ◇ bhayava kaśavaśa tasaga[ḍ].[ra]haśamaśamu[da] ?
- 26 + + + + + + + + de e va de a śa aja[eṇ]. śakamuṇi bhayava loo upajiśadi t. ś. ? [śa] ? [ta
śa] ? [y]. ? [ś].
- 27 ? ? [araha śamaśa]mudha[śa śrud]. ? [ś]. paḍigahid[e] u a [hi]ḍa vaṇa vi ḍi va ta ḍi teṇa [hu
bhate a] ? ?
- 28 + + + + + ? ? ? [p].ukharomi taśa ma[ma] bhate eḍa a[huṣi] aḥirio ya ? ? [v]. [ji] [ñ].ṇa[d]. ?
/// + + +
- 29 + + + /// + + + + + + + + + + + t[e]ṇa me bhat[e] ? ? ? [t]. śikṣa [kh].[ḍ]. ? [ela]patra
[chiṇa] ? [vaṇa ñ]. ?
- 30 + + + + + + + + + + /// ? [va]ṇa ṇaśa[ma ki] imaśa karma[sa vi]vag[o bhaviśadi so] ahu
bhate ta[śa karmaś]. [vi] ? ?
- 31 + + + + + + + + + + [ṇia]. a.va [ṇ]. ? ? [śa mama] bhate [a] ? ? paraṇi.u ? [bh].yava
bhaviśa[ḍ]i [a]jira [u t]. ? ? ?
- 32 + + + + + + + + + + ? ? iḍi k.ya[ś]. [via].[v]..i + bh.vi[śadi] ///

- 18 + + + + /// ? teṇa uāṣa ? ? ? uāṣakra ? ? bhayavad. [p].d. vadi ? eka ? ? ? ? ? + + + +
- 19 ? ? ? [travuṣa]valia vaṇia bhayavaḍa ma[th]. ? masu[piḍi]a ca uañame[ṣ]. id. bh.t. bh. ? ? + +
+
- 20 ca maṣupiḍi[a c]. paḍigīṇa a[n].[apa uad]. ? ⊙ [p].[di] ? [a].[ṣi] bhayava[d]. ? ? ? ? ?
- 21 ṇa aṇuapa [uaḍae] asa o bhayava trivu[ṣav].lia vaṇia eḍaḍ=aya eṣa [tuspa v].[ni]a budh.
ś. ? ? ? + + + +
- 22 eṣa vae bhat[e] bhayava śaraṇa gachama dha[r]ma [ca] uāṣea me bhate [bh].[y]. ? + ? ? /// +
+ + + + + + + +
- 23 ? ? ? ? śaraṇa gaḍ[o] ida ca [o vaṇa paḍ]. ? ? ? ? di a ṇa śa[raṇa g].[d]. ṇa ya + + + + + +
- 24 [yava] trivaṣavalia vaṇia [a]meṇa aṇumodaṇeṇa ◇ aṇamoḍi yam=atha ? ? [di] daṇa ? ? ? ?
- 25 viśa[di] su[hatha] d[iadi] daṇa ta suha[e] bha[vi]śaḍi aṣa u bhayava trivuṣa ? ? ? vaṇi ? ?
- 26 [n]. [a].[n].mo[d].[n].[n]. aṇamoḍa[īta] taspid=i boṣimaḍamul. s.t.a. ? /// + + +
- 27 lakeṇa ṇi[ṣiḍi] vimutas[uha]pi[di]ṣabi[di] asa bhayava ? ? ? ? .u ? ? ?
- 28 ? [v]usa[va]liṇa matha ca masu[pid].a ca pa[d].getse asa ca ? ? ? ? ? ? ?
- 29 vaḍa ceḍaṣa [yeva c].ḍaṣa pari[vi]tarke a[ñña ca] catvari [śe] ? patra atra ? ? ? ? ?
- 30 rukṣamulo yeṇa bhayava teṇa [u]aṣa[kra]mi ///

*suaṇacuṇaparivure avido maṇava ṇa dua ya ki ṇagaka(*ña) + + + + + [17] + + + + +*
*(*śa)y(*e) aḡ(*a)kṣ(*a)ṣi barañasi kṣ(*a)triak(*aña va) bramaṇakaña va viśagañ(*a va)*
*śud(*raḥaṇa) + + + + + [18] ti d. ? ? + + + + ? te ṇagaraya suaṇapatri*
*ruacuṇa(*parivu)<*ra> (*ña) kuśa(*lo)ṣi ru(*apatri) suaṇ(*acuṇaparivura ṇa) [19] (*kuśaloṣi)*
*nagakaña aye ahu bhayavaśatia agarade spanag(*a)r(*io) p(*ar)v(*ayīśami a)ṣa ṇ(*a)l(*a)*
*ma(*ṇava) + + + + + [20] + + + + + + ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? se lae ahu bhayavaśatia*
*agara span(*agaria) [21] + + + + + + ? ? ? ? ? bhayava ṇa avayi spakha ma(*i) dhrarma cara*
*bhramahio dukhaṣa ataia sa ho vaṇa + + + [22] ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ahuṣi ṣ(*a) yev(*a) ? ?*
*p(*a) di du sa ? ? ta ya ṇo pacavekṣata ḍ anuade aṣave ji(*ta) [23] (*vimuta aṣa teṇa) samaeṇa*
dvaḍaśaśade rahataṇa loo ahuṣi ahoṣi ekaḍaśaśade ṣaveṇa bhayava dvaḍaśama aṣa bhayava
*el(*apa) [24] (*tra ṇagaraya e)d(*a)d aya ki punu tu ṇagaraya apea r(*oe)ṣi aśuṇi ya vateṣi*
apegade a + ? + + [25] + + + + + + ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ḍ bhayava kaśavaṣa
*tasagad(*a)rahaṣamaṣamuda(*śa) [26] + + + + + (*paḍigahi)de e va de a ṣa ajaeṇ(*a)*
*śakamuṇi bhayava loo upajiṣadi t. ś. ? ṣa ? ta ṣa ? y(*a) ? ṣ. [27] ? ? araha samaṣamudhaṣa*
*śrud(*o ya) ṣ(*a) paḍigahide uahida vaṇa vi di va ta di teṇa hu bhate a(*ṣuṇi) [28] + + + +*
*+ ? ? ? ? (*pra)ukharomi taṣa mama bhate eḍa ahuṣi aḥirio ya ? ? v. ji ñ(*a)ṇad(*aśaṇa) + +*
*[29] + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + teṇa me bhate ? ? ? t. śikṣa kh(*a)d(*ida) elapatra*
*chiṇa (*ya) vaṇa ñ. ? [30] + + + + + + + + + + ? vaṇa ṇaṣama ki imaṣa karmasa vivago*
*bhaviṣadi so ahu bhate taṣa karmaṣ(*a) vi(*vago) [31] + + + + + + + + + + + ṇi(*a e)va*
*ṇ(*e) ? (*ta)ṣa mama bhate a(*jira) paraṇi(*vude) bh(*a)yava bhaviṣadi ajira u t. ? ? ? [32] +*
*+ + + + + + + + + ? ? idi k(*a)yaṣ(*a) vi(*a)v(*ad)i(*da) bh(*a)viṣadi*

3.2.2. Story of Elapatra and Nala

[1] (*Having bowed to the feet [of the Blessed One, some] sat to one side. Having had a polite conversation with the Blessed One, some) [2] (*sat to one side. Having joined palms toward the Buddha, some) sat to one side. (*Some remained silent and sat to one side.) [3] (*While sitting to one side, then, to the eighty-four thousand), the Blessed One (*teaches) the gradual teaching to Yaśa, namely the teaching (*of giving, morality, and heaven; he explains the danger of sensual desires, their elimination,) [4] (*the impurity of them), and the benefit of renunciation. The Blessed One ... [5] (*reveals), analyzes, elucidates ... The Blessed One taught in detail... the suffering ... [6] He illuminates (*the origin of suffering, the cessation) of suffering, the path leading to the cessation of suffering. He teaches, (*manifests) ... [7] ... Then ... of thousands, seated on that very seat ... [8] ... so too, [while] those eighty-four thousand ... [9] ... the eye of Dharma, (*which is pure, whose dust is free, whose defilement has gone), arose. Then, those eighty-four (*thousand beings perceived the truth) ... [10] ... spoke this: “O venerable, we all go to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the community of monks for refuge! [11] (*O venerable! May the Blessed One accept us as lay followers), from today on, as long as we live, as long as we breathe, as ones (*who have gone to the refuge).” And *nāga*-king Elapatra ... [12] ... (?) ... manifests joy. Then, the young brahmin Nala ... [13] Why? ... *nāga* king’s golden bowl completely filled with silver grain, and silver bowl (*completely filled with golden grain) ... [14] ... [15] ... I weep and shed tears. O young brahmin! For, this ... [16] (*golden bowl completely filled with silver grain, and silver bowl) completely filled with golden grain (?) O young brahmin! There is no pain. And why? *nāga*-maiden ... [17] ... (*if you wish), in Vārāṇasī, (*the woman) of the *kṣatriya* caste, the woman of the *brāhmaṇa* caste, the woman of the *vaiśya* caste, (*or the woman of the *śūdra* caste) ... [18] ... to that *nāga*-king: the golden bowl

completely filled with silver grain (*is not suitable); the silver bowl completely filled with golden grain, [19] [and] *nāga*-maiden, [too], (*is not suitable). This, I, in the presence of the Buddha, will go forth from the home to homelessness. Then, Nala Manava ... [20] ... May I obtain, in the presence of the Buddha, from the home life into homelessness ... [21] The Blessed One said: “The Dharma is well spoken by me. Practice the holy life to put an end to suffering!” Moreover, [22] ... he was ... Having examined ... from the taints without clinging, (*the mind) [23] (*is liberated. At that) time, there were one hundred and twelve arhats in the world; one hundred and eleven disciples, and the Blessed One was the twelfth. Then, the Blessed One [24] spoke this (*to *nāga*-king Elapatra): “Why, again, O *nāga* king, do you sometimes (*weep) and shed tears, sometimes ... [25] ... to the Blessed One: of Kāśyapa, the Tathāgata, Arhat, Perfectly Complete Buddha [26] ... was received, with the passing away of (?), Śākyamuni, the Blessed One, will arise in the world ... [27] ... Arhat, Perfectly Complete Buddha, has been heard, and it has been received and presented. Moreover (?) Therefore, O Venerable, tears [28] ... I manifest. O venerable! This occurred to me: It is wondrous! ... the knowledge and vision ... [29] ... O Venerable! by me ... the training was violated and the elapatra [grass] was torn. Again (?) [30] ... Moreover, I consider: what will be the fruition of this action? O venerable! I, the fruition of that action [31] ... of me. O Venerable! Soon, the Blessed One will be completely entered into *nirvāṇa*. Soon ... [32] ... This will be the transformation of the body.

*vaṇia eḍaḍ aya eṣa tuspa v(*a)ṇia budh(*a) ś(*araṇa gacha dharma ca) [22] eṣa vae bhate*
*bhayava śaraṇa gachama dharma ca uṣea me bhate bh(*a)y(*ava dhareṇi ajavagreṇa yavajiva)*
 [23] *(*praṇuedo) śaraṇa gado ida ca o vaṇa paḍ(*ama) ? ? ? di a ṇa śar(*a)ṇ(*a) g(*a)d(*a) ṇa*
*ya + + + + + (*bha) [24] yava trivaṣavalia vaṇia ameṇa aṇumodaṇeṇa aṇamoḍi yam atha*
*(*dia)ḍi daṇa (*tam athae bha) [25] viśaḍi suhatha diḍi daṇa ta suhae bhaviśaḍi aṣa u bhayava*
*trivusa(*valia) vaṇi(*a e) [26] ṇ(*a) (*a)ṇ(*u)moḍ(*a)ṇ(*e)ṇ(*a) aṇamodaṭṭa taspīḍ i*
*boṣimaḍamul(*o) s(*a)t(*aaha ekapa) [27] lakeṇa ṇiṣiḍi vimutasuhapiḍiṣabiḍi asa bhayava(*ḍa*
*eda ahuṣi kaṣa) [28] (*tri)vusavaliaṇa matha ca masupīḍ(*i)a ca paḍ(*i)getse asa ca(*tvaro*
*maharaya bhaya) [29] vaḍa ceḍaṣa yeva c(*e)ḍaṣa parivitarke aṇa ca catvari śe(*la)patra*
atra ? ? ? ? [30] rukṣamulo yeṇa bhayava teṇa uṣakrami

3.2.4. Story of Trivusa and Valia

[1] ... [2] ... [3] ... (*nāga-king Elapatra) ... Blessed One ... [4] ... [5] ... [6] ... Then, the Blessed One ... [7] ... [8] Trivusa ... with the brother, Valia ... Trivasa and Valia ... [9] ... out of compassion, desiring their welfare, seeking benefit, (*he approached the two merchants), Trivusa and Valia. [10] (*Having approached), he said this to the two merchants, Trivusa and Valia: “(*O merchant, O merchant! This), by the Blessed One ... [11] ... utmost complete perfect enlightenment, fully awakened that ... [12] ... Offer him (*with almsfood); that will be (*for a long time) ... [13] ... [14] ... At the foot of the (*Bodhi) tree, they approached the Blessed One. (*Having approached), [15] the two merchants, Trivusa and Valia, saw the Blessed One from a distance, who is serene, pleasing, with peaceful senses and a tranquil mind. [16] who has attained the highest self-restraint, who has achieved tranquility, and who has reached the supreme self-restraint and tranquility, guarded, whose (*senses) are conquered, (*a *nāga*) ... [17] (*like a pool of water, clear), serene, and <(*translucent)>. Having seen the Blessed One, the mind (*became serene) ... [18] (*They approached the Blessed One was. Having) approached, (*having) bowed to the Blessed One's (*feet), (*they stood to) one (*side). [19] (*Standing to one side,) the two merchants, (*Trivusa) and Valia, offered rice cake and honey ball to the Blessed One, [saying]: "O venerable! This (*rice cake) and honey balls (*is for the Blessed One). [20] May you accept it out of compassion!" ☉ (*It was accepted) by the Blessed One ... [21] out of compassion. Then, the Blessed One spoke these words to the two merchants, Trivusa and Valia: "O merchant! (*May you go) to the Buddha (*and Dharma for refuge)!" [22] "O venerable! We all go to the Blessed One and to the Dharma for refuge. O venerable! May (*the Blessed One) accept us as lay followers, from today on, as long as we live,) [23] (*as long as we breathe), as ones gone to refuge!"

Then, the first among ? who had gone to the refuge ... [24] (*The Blessed One) expressed approval of the two merchants, Trivasa and Valia, with this gratification: “The purpose for which a gift is (*given, that will be for the benefit). [25] A gift is given for the sake of happiness, that will be for happiness.” Then, the Blessed One, to the two merchants, Trivasa and (*Valia), [26] having rejoiced (*with gratification), at that very foot of the seat of enlightenment, (*for seven days), [27] seated in a (*single) meditative posture, experiencing the joy and happiness of liberation. Then, (*this occurred to) the Blessed One: “(*How) [28] will I receive the rice cake and honey balls of Trivasa and Valia?” Then, (*the Four Great Kings) [29] having known the thoughts (*of the Blessed One) with (*their very own) minds, the four (*stone) bowls, here ... [30] At the foot of a tree, they approached the Blessed One.

Chapter 4: Story of Elapatra and Nala

4.1. Narrative Overview

The story presented on the recto is about the *nāga*-king Elapatra (P *Erakapatta*/Skt *Elāpatra*, *Elāpattra*), who, in his desire to find the Buddha, asks a set of questions to the people in the country of Vārāṇasī, knowing that those who can answer must be either the Buddha or someone who learned from the Buddha. Eventually, a young Brahmin (P/Skt *māṇava*) called Nala (P/Skt *Nālaka*) is able to answer Elapatra's questions after himself learning it from the Buddha. Elapatra then asks Nala to bring him to the Buddha. Upon arriving, the Buddha teaches the Dharma to both of them. Nala joins the monastic community and attains arhantship, whereas Elapatra becomes the first non-human disciple of the Buddha by taking refuge in the three jewels. This story is preserved in many versions in several different text traditions, as discussed below.

The narrative plot from all the extant versions unfolds roughly as follows:

1. The Buddha travels through Vārāṇasī.
2. The *nāga*-king Elapatra appears from the Ganges river, holding various goods, and is accompanied by *nāga* maidens.
3. Elapatra asks questions in two verses on *uposatha* days.
4. Elapatra announces that whoever could answer the verses would obtain certain goods.
5. Nālaka, who lives nearby, tries to answer the questions.
6. Nālaka requests seven days to find out the answer.
7. Nālaka asks the six who had made a vow to be teachers, but no one could answer.
8. Nālaka asks the Buddha.
9. The Buddha explains the verses to Nālaka in three verses.

10. Nālaka visits Elapatra and explains the verses.
11. Elapatra wants to know where Nālaka got his answer.
12. Nālaka and Elapatra, along with their attendants, visit the Buddha.
13. The Buddha teaches them the three meritorious deeds.
14. Nālaka and his attendants attain the pure eye of Dharma and take refuge in Triratna and the five precepts, becoming upāsakas.
15. Elapatra explains the reasons that he is both sad and happy.
16. Nālaka expresses his desire to go forth.
17. The Buddha accepts Nālaka as a monk.
18. The total number of Arahants in the world is indicated.
19. Elapatra explains the reason that he has become a *nāga* in this life.
20. Elapatra takes refuge in the Triratna, becoming the first non-human to take refuge in the Triratna.

The Gāndhāri version preserves remnants of this story. While Elapatra's name remains the same, Nālaka's name is Nala.⁵⁸ After Nala correctly answers Elapatra's questions, they both, along with their followers, visit the Buddha. When they arrive, the Buddha teaches them the Dharma, leading Nala to become a monk and Elapatra to become a follower of the Buddha. Elapatra, in turn, explains the reason he becomes a *nāga* in this life.⁵⁹

4.2. Extant Versions

The detailed parallels of this story appear in the following texts, arranged by language:⁶⁰

1. Erakapattanāgarāja-vatthu of Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā (Dhp-a) III 230–6.

⁵⁸ The exact spelling of the name is “Nala.” However, since the scribe in this collection only writes *n* as *ṇ*, I have adjusted the name to Nala in my general discussion while preserving the spelling Nala in the edition.

⁵⁹ Cf. Allon 2007b: 17.

⁶⁰ Pali texts referenced in this paper are those of the Pali Text Society's edition.

2. Chinese Dharmaguptaka Vinaya (DhG Vin), *Sì fēn lǜ* 四分律, translated by Buddhayaśas (佛陀耶舍) in collaboration with Zhú Fóniàn (竺佛念) in 408 CE (T 22 no. 1428, 791a6–792c15).
3. Chinese Mahīśāsaka Vinaya (Mahīs Vin), *Mishāsè bù héxī wǔ fēn lǜ* 彌沙塞部和醯五分律, translated by Buddhajīva (佛陀什) in collaboration with Zhú Dàoshēng (竺道生) between 423–424 CE (T 22 no. 1421, 106a6–107a15).
4. Chinese *Abhiniṣkramaṇasūtra (AbhiNS), *Fó běnxíng jí jīng* 佛本行集經, translated by Jñānagupta (*Shénà Juéduō* 闍那崛多) between 587–591 CE (T 30 no. 190, 825a18–831b9).⁶¹
5. Chinese *Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya Kṣudraka Vastu (MSV-KV), *Gēnběn shuō yíqiè yǒubù pínàiyé zá shì* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶雜事, translated by Yijing (義淨) in 710 CE (T 24 no. 1451, 303a6–305a17).
6. The new Gāndhārī (G) version, Robert Senior Collection fragment 24 recto (designated RS 24 recto).⁶²

In addition to these full narrative accounts, shorter allusions to Nālaka, Elapatra, or both appear in several individual texts:

1. Nālaka-sutta of Suttanipāta (Sn) 132–9, which contains the questions of Nālaka.⁶³
2. Mahāvastu (Mvu) III 490–500.⁶⁴

⁶¹ For the abbreviated English translation, see Beal 1875: 275–80.

⁶² Allon 2007b: 17.

⁶³ For an English translation, see Bodhi 2017: 274–80.

⁶⁴ References to the *Mahāvastu* follows the new edition by Marcinak 2019. Cf. Senart 1882–97: 382–9. For the relationship between *Mahāvastu* and the *Mahāsāṃghika Lokottaravāda Vinaya*, see Tournier 2012. For an English translation, see Jones 1956: 379–88.

3. Faxian's (法顯) travelogue, *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms* (*Fóguó jì* 佛國記),⁶⁵ written from 399 to 418 CE, briefly mentions Elapatra (T 51 no. 2085, 864a19–20).⁶⁶
4. Xuanzang's (玄奘) travelogue, *Buddhist Records of the Western World* (*Dàtáng xīyù jì* 大唐西域記), written in 646 CE, also briefly mentions Elapatra (T 51 no. 2087, 884b28–c8).⁶⁷
5. *Samādhirāja-sūtra* 10.69–70.⁶⁸
6. *Puṇyārāśyavadānam* of Gopadatta's *Jātakamālā* 10.43.⁶⁹
7. Cowell's translation of the *Buddhacarita* XVII 3.⁷⁰

In addition to textual parallels, the Elapatra narrative also appears in early Buddhist visual culture. One of the earliest representations is found on the reliefs of the Bharhut stupa, where Elapatara is depicted twice: first as a five-headed snake and second as a human figure with a five-hooded snake canopy over his head, worshipping the Buddha, who is represented by a tree.⁷¹ The identification of the figure is confirmed by an inscription on the relief: *erapato nāga rāja bhagavato vandate* (“Erapatra, the *nāga*-king, worships the Blessed One”).⁷² A second representation appears in the mural fragments of Ajanta Cave IX, identified by Monika Zin.⁷³ A third example is a Gāndhāra relief from Sahr-i-Bahlol, identified by Aurel Stein, and now preserved in the Peshawar Museum, which presents a similar motif: Elapatra appears both as a

⁶⁵ The text is also known as *Gāosēng fǎxiǎn zhuàn* 高僧法顯傳 (“The Biography of the Eminent Monk Faxian”) in the Taishō Tripiṭaka.

⁶⁶ For an English translation, see Legge 1886: 96.

⁶⁷ For an English translation, see Beal 1884: 137.

⁶⁸ Vaidya 1961: 64.

⁶⁹ Hahn 1990: 120.

⁷⁰ Cowell 1894: 190–1. It is important to note that Cowell's edition of *Buddhacarita* does not entirely represent the original Sanskrit work of Aśvaghoṣa. The surviving Sanskrit manuscripts preserve only the first thirteenth chapters. The last four chapters were composed by the Nepalese author, Amritānanda, in 1830 CE (Cowell 1894: x–xi). Hence, the passage mentioning Nālaka and Elapatra in chapter 17 does not belong to Aśvaghoṣa's original composition but represents a later insertion.

⁷¹ The Pali *Dhp*-a mentions that the Buddha is sitting under a Sirissa tree.

⁷² See Cunningham 1879, 26–7; plate XIV.

⁷³ For a full description and argument, see Zin 2000: 1171–83.

five-headed serpent and in human form, while the Buddha is shown seated among monks.⁷⁴ A fourth possible representation is another Gāndhāra relief from Karamār, identified by Alfred Foucher, now in the Lahore Museum.⁷⁵ However, Zin and Vogel disagree with such identification because the figure lacks the characteristic serpent-hood canopy.⁷⁶ These early visual representations suggest that the Elapatra narrative is both early and widely circulated across literary, geographical, and artistic contexts.

⁷⁴ Vogel 1995: 107, plate VIIIa. Zin (2000) disagree with Vogel's identification because the depiction of the serpent is very small, which does not match the text (1183).

⁷⁵ Foucher 1905: 503–7.

⁷⁶ See Vogel 1995: 107; Zin 2000: 1183.

Table 5. Narrative summary of the story of Elapatra and Nālaka compared with the parallels and partial parallels⁷⁷

	RS 24 recto	DhG Vin	Dhp-a	Mvu	Abhi-NS	Mahiś Vin	MSV-KV
The Buddha travels through and resides in Vārāṇasī.		✓	✓	✓		✓	
The previous life of <i>nāga</i> -king Erakapatta during the dispensation of Kāśyapa Buddha.			✓				
The background story of Nālaka's family who lives in Avantī.					✓		
Elapatra / [Erakapatta's daughter] appears from the Ganges river, {holding various goods, and is accompanied by his daughter}.		{✓}	[✓]		{✓}	{✓}	
Elapatra / [Erakapatta's daughter] recites questions in two / [one] verse(s) on uposatha days, [hoping to know the existence of the Buddha].		✓	[✓]				
People from all over Jambudvīpa want to win Elapatra's daughter.			✓				
The Buddha learns that a young man called Uttara will receive the answer to the verses from the Buddha.			✓				
The background story of Nālaka's family who lives in Avantī.				✓	✓		
Elapatra lives in Takṣaśilā							✓
Elapatra recites questions in [one] / two verse(s) {on uposatha days, hoping to know the existence of the Buddha}.				[✓]	{✓}	{✓}	✓
Elapatra announces that whoever could answer the verses would obtain the goods [and his daughters].		[✓]		[✓]	[✓]	[✓]	✓

⁷⁷ Bracketed narrative elements represent additional details contained only in some texts. A bracketed check mark means the relevant text contains the narrative episode in addition to the extra detail contained in the brackets. Shaded rows represent narrative episodes that are transposed to different locations in the texts with corresponding shading styles. The parts with external borders are the narrative units preserved in the Gāndhārī version.

	RS 24 recto	DhG Vin	Dhp-a	Mvu	Abhi-NS	Mahis Vin	MSV-KV
The young Brahmin Nālaka, who lives in [Vārāṇasī] / {Māgadha} at that time, tries to answer the questions.		[✓]			{✓}	{✓}	[✓]
Nālaka requests seven days to find out the answer.		✓			✓	✓	✓
Nālaka asks the six who had made vow to be teachers but no one could answer.		✓			✓	✓	
Nālaka asks the Buddha.		✓					✓
The Buddha teaches Nālaka the Four Noble Truths and Nālaka attains the fruit of stream-entry.							✓
The Buddha explains the verses to Nālaka / [Uttara] in [one] / two / {three} verse(s).		{✓}	[✓]	[✓]	✓	✓	✓
The Buddha explains additional two verses to Uttara.			✓				
Exchange between the Buddha and Elapatra in verses, followed by exchange between the Buddha and Nālaka in verses.				✓			
Nālaka visits Elapatra and explains the verses.		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Elapatra / [Erakapatta] wants to know where Nālaka / [Uttara] gets the answer.		✓	[✓]		✓	✓	✓
Nālaka / [Uttara] and Elapatra / [Erakapatta], along with their attendants, visit the Buddha.	✓	✓	[✓]		✓	✓	✓
The Buddha teaches them the three meritorious deeds [and Four Noble Truths].	[✓]	✓					
Nālaka and his attendants attain the pure eye of Dharma and take refuge in the Triratna [and observe five precepts], becoming upāsakas.	✓	[✓]					

	RS 24 recto	DhG Vin	Dhp-a	Mvu	Abhi-NS	Mahis Vin	MSV-KV
Elapatra / [Erakapatta] is sad {and happy}.	{✓}	{✓}	[✓]		{✓}	{✓}	✓
Elapatra offers golden and silver bowls along with women from four castes.	✓	✓					
Erakapatta explains the previous deeds causing him to be a <i>nāga</i> in this life.			✓		✓	✓	✓
Elapatra takes refuge in the Triratna and observes the five precepts.					✓	✓	
The Buddha speaks and explains one verse to Erakapatta.			✓				
Every human attains the fruit of stream-entry, wheareas Erakapatta transforms into a form of a young man.			✓				
The Buddha teaches them the three meritorious deeds and Four Noble Truths.					✓		
Nālaka expresses his desire to go forth.	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
The Buddha accepts Nālaka as a monk.	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Exchange between the Buddha and Nālaka in verses.					✓		
The total of 112 / [92] / {62} of Arahants in the world.	✓	✓			[✓]	{✓}	
Elapatra explains the previous deeds causing him to be a <i>nāga</i> in this life.	✓	✓					
Elapatra takes refuge in Triratna, becoming the first non-human who takes refuge in Triratna.		✓					
The Buddha teaches Nālaka dependent origination and deeper Dharms, and Nālaka finally becomes an Arahant.							✓

*bhagavato santike nāmagottaṃ sāvetaṃ ekamanta nisīdiṃsu. appekacce tuṇhībhūtā
ekamantaṃ nisīdiṃsu. (SN V 353)*

Then the brahmins and householders of Bamboo Gate approached the Buddha. Having arrived, having bowed to the Blessed One, some sat to one side. Some exchanged greetings with the Blessed One. Having had a polite conversation, they sat to one side. Some held up their joined palms toward the Buddha and sat to one side. Some, having announced their name and clan, sat down to one side. Some remained silent and sat to one side.

那羅陀共相問訊，在一面坐，八萬四千眾，或有禮如來足在一面立者，或有擎拳共相問訊在一面坐者，或有向如來自稱姓名而在一面坐者，或叉手視如來在一面坐者，或有默然不語在一面坐者。(DhG Vin at T 22 no. 1428, 792b2–6)

Narada and the others exchanged greetings and sat to one side. Among the eighty-four thousand beings, some bowed at the feet of the Tathāgata and remained standing to one side. Some raised their joined hands in greeting and then sat to one side. Some announced their own names and clans to the Tathāgata and then sat to one side. Some folded their hands, gazing at the Tathāgata, and then sat to one side. Some remained silent, without talking, and sat to one side.

Text notes:

The upper portions of the manuscript are mostly missing due to its vulnerable position to damage, being on the outside of the rolled bark. Although almost all of the first line is missing, with only ink remnants remaining, it is expected to be about Nala and Elapatra visiting the Buddha, based on the parallels. The second line preserves only some words in the middle.

Based on the Pali and Chinese parallels, the first two lines are the standard formula of different actions visitors do before sitting down when meeting the Buddha for the first time, which include:

1. Bowing at the feet of the Buddha,
2. Exchanging greetings with the Buddha,
3. Having a polite conversation with the Buddha,
4. Announcing their own names and clans,
5. Gazing at the Buddha,
6. Remaining silent.

In addition to the first two lines, there is at least one line missing in the manuscript, which may have originally preceded the first two visible lines. Based on the expression in the *Veḷudvāreyya-sutta* (SN V 353), which also appears in RS 13, one possible reconstruction of the missing line is as follows.

[0] (**asa u ṇala ya elapatra nagaraya caḍoraṣiḍi praṇaṣahaṣa yeṇa bhayava teṇa uaṣakami uaṣakamita apegace bhayavaḍa*)

[0] (*Then Nala and *nāga*-king Elapatra, with eighty-four thousand beings, approached the Blessed One, and having approached, some ...)

If this is indeed the beginning of Elapatra and Nala's story, then the missing line is expected to introduce the main characters, Nala and *nāga*-king Elapatra, along with their followers.

However, as is typical in *Gāndhārī* manuscripts, the beginning may use a completely different formula than those found in other close parallels.

Complicating matters, the reading of line 3 opens the possibility that the first eight lines of the manuscript actually depict the story of Yaśa, whose name may appear. If this is the case, then in the middle of line 8 the text may transition to the story of Elapatra and Nala using the

adverbial phrase *evam eva*, “likewise” or “similarly.” If such is the case, it is not clear how the Yaśa story appears at the beginning of the manuscript. It could possibly be a continuation of another manuscript; it could also just appear in this manuscript as a short version of the story, or act as the opening of Elapatra and Nala’s story.

Most Vinaya traditions whose narratives also appear in the RS scrolls preserve the story of Yaśa’s conversion, including the Pali Vīna, DhG Vin, Mahīś Vin, Chinese SbhV, and the Mvu. More strikingly, in the Vinaya traditions that preserve both the Yaśa narrative and the Elapatra and Nālaka episode, the two stories appear consecutively. In the DhG Vin and Mahīś Vin, the story of Elapatra and Nālaka follows immediately after the conversion of Yaśa and his friends. The present Gāndhārī version may therefore suggest a similar narrative arrangement in which the Yaśa story and the Elapatra episode originally occurred in sequence.

Since there are two possibilities for the story from line 1 to 8, either Yaśa’s or Elapatra and Nala’s story, the following analysis will be done with the parallels from both stories. In any case, the two stories share a similar phrase and event, differing only in the characters. For instance, the Pali Vin I 20 has the following:

*atha kho āyasmā yaso te paññāsamatte gihisahāyake ādāya yena bhagavā
tenupasaṃkamī, upasaṃkamitvā bhagavantaṃ abhivādetvā ekamantaṃ nisīdi.
ekamantaṃ nisinno kho āyasmā yaso bhagavantaṃ etad avoca.*

Then, the venerable Yasa took those fifty householder friends to the Blessed One. Having arrived, having bowed before the Blessed One, he sat down to one side. While seated there, the venerable Yasa addressed the Blessed One.

The expression is similar to the DhG Vin opening, with the main character mentioned first, followed by the number of accompanying beings, and then the greeting with the Buddha before sitting down. The greeting here is much simpler and shorter. It has P *upasaṃkamitvā bhagavantaṃ abhivādetvā ekamantaṃ nisīdi*, which the G version also has *ekamata ṇiṣi(*ḍi)su*

in the second line. However, the second line of the G version has the remnants of *ap(*e)g(*a)c(*a) tuṣ(*ihudā)*, which points to a longer version of the greeting rather than the simpler one. Yet, it cannot be sure whether the characters in this line are indeed Elapatra and Nala or Yasa and friends.

Line 2. *ekamata ṇiṣi + [s]u*: The legible words, though in a fragmentary condition, begin from *ekamata* (P *ekamantaṃ*/Skt *ekāntaṃ*), “to one side,” matched by the Chinese 在一面坐, “to sit on one side.” Further, the akṣara *ṣi* in the word *ṇiṣi + [s]u* is found to be folded and appears on the verso. The scribe consistently writes *ṣi* with a slightly rightward footmark (what Glass calls a type 2 footmark),⁷⁸ but not with *ṣa*, *ṣe*, and *ṣu* in this manuscript. Although the underlined akṣara usually indicates a weakened intervocalic consonant, it is more likely to be a stroke variation.⁷⁹ The akṣaras *ṣu* and *ṣo* in recto line 16, and *ṣe* in recto line 21, are all in intervocalic positions but written unmodified, with a straight footmark. This word *ṇiṣi + [s]u* is a verb and can be reconstructed as *ṇiṣi(*ḍi)su* (P *niṣīḍimsu*/Skt *niṣiḍimsu*/BHS *niṣīḍensuh*), in the third-person plural aorist form of *ni + √sad*, “to sit down.”⁸⁰

ap.g.c.: The word is reconstructed as *ap(*e)g(*a)c(*a)* based on the Gāndhārī parallels RS 13 recto lines 6–8, *apegeca* and *apegaca*. The top of akṣara *g* in the manuscript is missing, and thus it cannot be determined whether it is *ga* or *ge*. The reconstruction *ap(*e)g(*a)c(*a)* is based on the equivalent in P *appekakce*, from *api + ekacca*, “some.” It is not common in standard Sanskrit, although it appears in the BHS form of either the rare *apyekata* or the much more common *ekatya*.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Glass 2007: 89 (§4.4).

⁷⁹ For the discussion of modified akṣara *ṣi*, see Silverlock 2015: 151–3 (§4.2.2).

⁸⁰ Silverlock 2015: 371, 660.

⁸¹ BHSD s.v. *apyekata*, *ekatya*; DP s.v. *appekakca*.

tuṣ. /// + +: The manuscript breaks after *tuṣ.*, though the word *tuṣ(*ihudā)*, corresponding to P *tuṇhīb̄hūtā*/Skt *tūṣṇīmbhūta*, “remained silent,” is expected, following RS 13 recto line 8 *tuṣihudā*.

The Buddha teaches them Dharma (Lines 3–6)

Edition:

[3] ? ? ? ? ? + + + + + ? [ś]. ? [s]. [h]. śa bhayava ? ṇarparvikaśa ? [th].ś. yaśa ka [s]. + /// +
 + + + + + + + + + + + [4] ? a. ? ? [sa] ? ? ? ṇekhama aṇuśaś. ? ? ? ? s. [bh].yava te [k]. ///
 + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + [5] raḍi vivayaḍi uta[n̄]i[ḡ].[r]. + + + + + +
 + ? ? ? ? ? [bha]yava vistareṇa ? /// [dukh]. ? + + + + + + + + + + + + [6] pra[ga]śaḍi ?
 + s. ? [d̄].o dukhaṇi ? + [d̄].khaṇiṛoṣagaminapaḍivaḍo pra[ña]viḍi pra ? ? /// + + + + + + + +
 + + +

Reconstruction:

[3] (*ekamata ṇiṣaṇa asa u caḍora)ś(*iḍi) s̄(*a)h(*a)śa bhayava (*a)ṇarparvikaśa
 (*ka)th(*e)ś(*i) yaśa kaś(*a) daṇakaśa śilakaśa svagakaśa kama adina) [4] (*va okara)
 sa(*kileśa) ṇekhama aṇuśaś(*a) pagaśeḍi) s(*a) bh(*a)yava te k. + + + + + + + + + + +
 + + + + + + + (*viva) [5] raḍi vivayaḍi utaṇig(*a)r(*odi) + + + + + + + ? ? ? ? (*kha)
 bhayava vistareṇa ? dukh(*a) ? + + + + + + + + + + + + [6] pragaśaḍi
 (*dukha)s̄(*amu)d̄(*e)o dukhaṇi(*roṣo du)khaṇiṛoṣagaminapaḍivaḍo praṇaviḍi
 pra(*dagaśeḍi) + + + + + + + + +

Translation:

[3] (*While sitting to one side, then, to the eighty-four thousand), the Blessed One (*teaches)
 the gradual teaching to Yaśa, namely the teaching (*of giving, morality, and heaven; he

explains the danger of sensual desires, their elimination,) [4] (*the impurity of them), and the benefit of renunciation. The Blessed One ... [5] (*reveals), analyzes, elucidates ... The Blessed One taught in detail ... the suffering ... [6] He illuminates (*the origin of suffering, the cessation) of suffering, the path leading to the cessation of suffering. He teaches, (*manifests) ...

Parallels:

八萬四千眾已坐定，世尊漸次為說勝法，勸令發歡喜心。所謂法者，布施持戒生天之法，呵欲不淨、讚歎出離為樂。(DhG Vin at T 22 no. 1428, 792b6–9)

After the eighty-four thousand beings had sat down, the Blessed One gradually expounded the excellent teaching to them, encouraging them and causing them to rejoice. The teaching consists of giving, morality, and ways of being reborn in the heavens; rebuking the impurity of sensual desires; praising renunciation as happiness.

復為八萬四千人說種種妙法，示教利喜，所謂：施論乃至出要為樂。皆歡喜已，更為說諸佛常所說法，苦集盡道。(Mahīś Vin at T 22 no. 1421, 107a2–4)

Further, he expounded a variety of wonderful teachings for eighty-four thousand people, instructing, teaching, benefiting, and delighting them, namely: the discourse on giving up to the joy of renunciation. When they had all become joy, he further taught them the truth consistently proclaimed by all Buddhas: suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path.

爾時，世尊告彼八萬四千眾等，其那羅陀最為上首，次第為說，所謂教行布施持戒，得上生天，又說欲中多諸過患，令生厭離，證於漏盡，又教出家讚歎功德，助成解脫 ... 世尊所有教法，令他歡喜真正要趣，謂四聖諦，苦集滅道。世尊既將此四聖

諦，種種方便，解說顯示，教誨建立，分別宣揚，教行學習，如是生苦，如是苦集，如是苦滅，如是得道。世尊以此四種聖諦種種因緣，顯示宣說，乃至教行。(AbhiNS at T 3 no. 190, 829c12 – 23)

At that time, the Blessed One addressed the eighty-four thousand beings, among whom Nālaka was the most prominent. He taught them in order, namely, teaching them the practice of giving, morality, and attaining rebirth in the heavens. Further, he explained the many faults in sensual desires to inspire a sense of detachment and to realize the exhaustion of defilements. Further, he taught the merits and praises of renunciation, which is helpful in the attainment of liberation ... The Blessed One's entire teaching leads others to rejoice in the path toward the true direction, namely the Four Noble Truths: suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path. The Blessed One has taken these Four Noble Truths and, through various skillful means, explained, revealed, instructed, established, analyzed, proclaimed, and taught the practice, [namely] "such is the suffering of birth, such is the origin of suffering, such is the cessation of suffering, such is the attainment of the path." The Blessed One takes the various causes and conditions of the Four Noble Truths to reveal, proclaim, and even teach [them].

Text notes:

Lines 3–6 contain the Buddha's teachings to Nālaka and Elapatra after they greeted the Buddha from the previous lines. The teachings begin with gradual instruction (*P anupubbikathā*), consisting of generosity, morality, heaven, the dangers of sensual pleasure, the elimination of impurity, renunciation, and ultimately leading to the Four Noble Truths.

Line 3. *bhayava*: In each case, the scribe spells the Gāndhārī equivalent of *bhagavant* as *bhayava* (=Ch *shì zūn* 世尊), where intervocalic *g* > *y*.⁸²

? *narparvikaṣa* ? [*th*].ṣ. *yaśa ka[s]*.: While this and the following phrase are mostly illegible, a comparison with parallel passages in Pali and Sanskrit is useful for reconstructing the text. For instance,

anupubbi katham kathesi, seyyathidaṃ dānakatham sīlakatham saggakatham; kāmānaṃ ādīnava okāraṃ saṃkilesaṃ; nekkhame ānisaṃsaṃ pakāsesi. (Ud 49)

[The Buddha] taught the gradual teaching, namely the teaching of giving, morality, and heaven; he explained the danger of sensual desires, their elimination, the impurity of them, and the benefit of renunciation.

This expression also appears in Sanskrit.

asya yaśodasya śreṣṭhiputrasya bhagavāṃ prasadanīyāṃ kathāṃ kathe tadyathā dānakathāṃ sīlakathāṃ svargakathāṃ puṇyakathāṃ puṇyavipākakathāṃ. (Mvu III 524)

The Blessed One taught a pleasing teaching to Yaśoda, the merchant's son, namely the teaching of generosity, morality, heaven, merit, and the ripening of merit.

The scribe writes (**a*)*narparvikaṣa* for P *anupubbi katha*/Skt *anupūrvīkathā*, with preconsonantal *r* in both *rpa* and *rvi*.⁸³ Although rhotic metathesis occurs in *rpa*, the anticipated spelling *rvi* is maintained as well. The scribe writes these two akṣaras with a rightward footmark. The preconsonantal *r* is typically written with a loop to the left stem and a rightward extension at the end in the RS Collection.⁸⁴ This rightward footmark is not to be mistaken for a postconsonantal *r*, but rather a graphic phenomenon, similar to a footmark type 3 in Glass's classification.⁸⁵ So, I have transcribed it as *rpa* and *rvi*. Note also that the scribe drops the *u* and writes only (**a*)*narparvi*- instead of the anticipated reflex of Sanskrit *anupūrvī*-.

⁸² Cf. Silverlock 2015: 174–5.

⁸³ This case is different from the word *dhrarma* in which the scribe writes with a postconsonantal *r* in *dhra* and preconsonantal *r* in *rma*. Here the scribe writes with preconsonantal *r*.

⁸⁴ Glass 2007: 102.

⁸⁵ Glass 2007: 89.

The next word after *(*a)ṇarparvikaṣa* is expected to be a verb. This word in the manuscript is folded and appears on the verso. However, the reading is uncertain. Following the Pali parallel, the verb could be *(*ka)ṭh(*e)ṣ(*i)*, corresponding to P *kathesi*, an aorist 3rd singular from the root $\sqrt{kath}$, “he taught.” However, the first akṣara could also be *a* instead of *ka*, and there could be an akṣara in between *a/ka* and *ṭh*.

Based on the parallel, the next expected word is P *seyyathidaṃ*/BHS *tadyathā*, “namely.” If this is the case, then the previous word cannot be *(*ka)ṭh(*e)ṣ(*i)* as the last akṣara of that word must belong to this word to form *ṣ(*e)yaśa*. However, the attested form is *sayasa* with dental *s*, rather than retroflex and palatal (GD s.v. *sayasa*). Therefore, it is unlikely that the word P *seyyathidaṃ* appears in the G version. In any case, it points to the possibility that the next word after *(*ka)ṭh(*e)ṣ(*i)* is the character name *Yaśa* (=P *yasa*/Skt *yaśa*), as hypothesized above, in the accusative singular masculine, the recipient to whom the Buddha teaches the gradual teaching.

The next word can be safely reconstructed as *kaṣ(*a)*, “the teaching,” corresponding to P/Skt *kathām*, in the accusative singular feminine. Yet, based on the parallel, *kaṣa* is expected to appear at the end of the compound after each item, such as *daṇakaṣa*, *śilakaṣa*, and so on, in a *tatpuruṣa* compound. Nevertheless, the missing portion here is expected to include the contents of gradual training similar to the Pali parallel, namely *daṇa*, *śila*, *svaga*, *kama adinava okara sakileśa* in Gāndhārī. In other words, the teaching of giving, morality, heaven, the danger of sensual desires, their elimination, and the impurity of them.

Line 4. *ṇekhama aṇuśaś. ? ? ? ?*: This can be reconstructed as *ṇekhama aṇuśaś(*a pagaśedi)*, “he teaches the benefit of renunciation,” based on the P *nekkhamme ānisaṣa pakāsesi* (Ud 49). The word *aṇuśaś(*a)*, corresponding to P *ānisaṣa*/Skt. *anuśaṣa*, can mean “praise”

in Sanskrit and “benefit” in Pali and Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit, with the latter meaning most appropriate here in the Gāndhārī (PTSD s.v. *ānisaṃsa*; BHSD s.v. *anuśaṃsa*).⁸⁶ The Chinese parallels use the meaning “to praise” rather than “benefit,” as seen in DhG Vin, “praising renunciation as happiness” (讚歎出離為樂), and Mahīś Vin, “he teaches renunciation [and] praises [its] merits” (教出家讚歎功德). The verb *pagaśeḍi*, corresponding to Skt *prakāśayati*, in the third-person singular causative of *pra* + $\sqrt{kāś}$, “to explain,” applies to the sets of objects before it. In other words, he explains the teachings of giving, morality, heaven, the danger of sensual desires, their elimination, the impurity of them, and the benefit of renunciation.

Lines 4–5. + + *raḍi vivayaḍi uta[n̄]i[g].[r]*. +: The sequence of finite verbs here can be safely reconstructed as *(*viva)raḍi vivayaḍi utaṇig(*a)r(*odi)*. These verbs are all in the third-person singular present form, equivalent to Skt *vivarati*, *vibhajati*, *uttānīkaroti*, “he reveals, analyzes, elucidates.” The portions surrounding these legible words are mostly missing. Yet, it is expected to be a string of finite verbs found in most sūtras, such as Pali expression *ācikkhati deseti paññāpeti paṭṭhapeti vivarati vibhajati uttānīkaroti*, “he explains, teaches, asserts, establishes, reveals, analyzes, clarifies” (SN II 25).⁸⁷ The exact wording and order here are uncertain. Among the Chinese parallels, only the AbhiNS reflects the sequence of synonymous verbs, “he explained, revealed, instructed, established, analyzed, proclaimed, and taught the practice” (解說, 顯示, 教誨, 建立, 分別, 宣揚, 教行學習), that is supposed to appear in the Gāndhārī version.

⁸⁶ “In general, an *anuśaṃsa* (G *aṇuśaśa*/BHS *ānuśaṃsa*/P *ānisaṃsa*) is the benefit derived from virtuous actions. According to Conze (1978: 98), the *anuśaṃsas* are especially “[t]he advantages gained from perfect wisdom” (Schlosser 2022: 155, 291).

⁸⁷ A more complete list of verbs in a similar formula is found in RS 12 and noted by Silverlock is “*aikṣaḍi deśeḍi pañavedi paṭaveḍi vivaraḍi vivayaḍi utaṇikarodi pagaśeḍi paśaśaḍi vaḍeḍi* (Skt *ācākhyaṭi deśayati prajñāpayati prasthāpayati vivarati vibhajati uttānīkaroti prakāśayati praśaṃsati vadayati*)” (Silverlock 2015: 211, n. 488).

Line 6. *pra[ga]śaḍi ? + ś. ? [d].o dukhaṇi ? + + khaṇiṛośagaminapaḍivado*: This phrase can be safely reconstructed as *pragaśaḍi (*dukha)ś(*amu)d(*e)o dukhaṇi(*rośo du)khaṇiṛośagaminapaḍivado*, a summary expression of the Four Noble Truths. Here, only three out of four noble truths are legible. There is a fragment that reads *dukha* in line 5 after *vistareṇa*, before the verb *pragaśaḍi* (=Skt *prakāśate*), “he illuminates,” although the exact position is uncertain. The reconstruction of *ś(*a)mud(*e)o* follows RS 20 verso line 20 *śamud[e]o* (=P/Skt *samudaya*).⁸⁸ The reduction from *aya* > *e* is a common development in MIA languages.⁸⁹

pra[ñā]vidi: This word is equivalent to P *paññāpeti*/Skt *prajñāpayati*, in the third-person singular causative present form of *pra* + *√jñā*, “to teach.” The attested form of this word in Gāndhārī is *pañavedi*, as recorded in RS 22.⁹⁰ Here, the akṣara *vi* is written with an *i*-diacritic that cuts through but is not too long. Although the attested word in RS 22 is *prañav(*e)dī*, the form here is *prañavidī*, showing *e* and *i* alternation.

Nala attains the eye of Dharma (Lines 7–9)

Edition:

[7] ? ? ? a[śa] ? ? ? ? [śi] di ṇa [ś]. ? ? + [ś].[ha]śaṇa taspīd=i a.śa[ṇo] ṇiṣa ? /// + + + + +
 + + + + + + + + + [8] [vi s]. + + + + + /// ? ? ? ? ? ? ? + + + ? [ṇ]. evam=[e]va t. ?
 [c].[d]ora ? /// + + + ? + + + + + [9] + + + + + + + + + /// + + + + + [dhr].rmaçakṣu
 upaji asa te caḍoraṣi ? ? [ṇ]. ? h.śa driṭh. ? [rm]. /// + + + +

Reconstruction:

⁸⁸ Marino 2017: 217.

⁸⁹ Marino 2017: 115. Cf. Salomon 2008: 102.

⁹⁰ Silverlock 2015: 350. See GD s.v. *praññavedi* for other attested forms.

[7] ? ? ? aśa ? ? ? ? śi dī + + + + s(*a)haśaṇa taspīd i (*a)śaṇo ṇiṣa(*ṇa) + + + + + + +
 + + + + + + + + + [8] vi s. + + + + + ? ? ? ? ? ? ? + + + + ? ṇ. evam eva t(*eśa)
 c(*a)dora(*śīdī) + + + + + + [9] + + + + + + (*viraja vigatamala viśudha)
 dhr(*a)rmacakṣu upaji asa te caḍoraśi(*dī) (*pra)ṇ(*aśa)h(*a)śa driṭh(*adhra)rm(*a) + +
 + +

Translation:

[7] ... Then ... of thousands, seated on that very seat ... [8] ... so too, [while] those eighty-four thousand ... [9] ... the eye of Dharma, (*which is pure, whose dust is free, whose defilement has gone), arose. Then, those eighty-four (*thousand beings perceived the truth) ...

Parallels:

時那羅陀及八萬四千眾，即於座上，諸塵垢盡，得法眼淨，見法得法，成就諸法得果證。(DhG Vin at T 22 no. 1428, 792b9–11)

At that time, Nārada and eighty-four thousand beings, right there in their seats, became free of all dust and defilement, attaining the purity of Dharma-eye, seeing the Dharma, and attaining the Dharma. They perfected all teachings and realized the fruits [of the path].

八萬四千人即於坐上，遠塵離垢，得法眼淨，見法得果。(Mahīś Vin at T 22 no. 1421, 107a4–5)

Eighty-four thousand people, right there in their seats, became distant from dust and separated from defilement, attained the purity of Dharma-eye, saw the Dharma, and attained the fruits [of realization].

而彼眾等，即於其坐，離諸塵垢，盡煩惱界，於諸法中，得淨智眼。(AbhiNS at T 3 no. 190, 829c23–24)

And those beings, right there in their seats, became free from all dust, exhausted the realm of afflictions, and amidst all phenomena, attained the eye of pure wisdom.

Text notes:

Line 7. *taspid=i*: This word is equivalent to Skt *tasminn eva*. The word *eva* undergoes a reduction in a sandhi environment.⁹¹ This phrase appears again in the verso line 24 of this manuscript. The Chinese parallels have 即於座上, 即於坐上, and 即於其坐, all reflecting the G expression *taspid i (*a)ṣaṇo* (=Skt *tasminn eva āsane*), “on that very seat,” in the locative singular neuter.

Line 8. *evam=[e]va*: This is probably the place where the transition from the Yaśa story to the Elapatra and Nala story occurs. Prior to *evam eva*, “so too,” it may have described that Yaśa and his friends attained the eye of Dharma in their very seat after listening to the Buddha’s teaching. The content after *evam eva* in this line may transition to Elapatra and Nala, along with their eighty-four thousand followers, who also attained the eye of Dharma in their seat. The parallel from the Vin I 20 has the following:

seyyathāpi nāma suddham vattham apagatakāḷakam sammadeva rajanam paṭiggaṇheyya, evam eva tesam tasmimyeva āsane virajam vītamalaṃ dhammacakkhum udapādi.

Just as a clean cloth, free from stains, would perfectly absorb dye, even so, while they were sitting right there, the stainless and pure eye of Dharma arose within them.

⁹¹ Silverlock 2015: 348.

Here, the phrase *evam eva* is used for a comparison between a clean cloth and that of the pure eye of Dharma. It is uncertain whether the G version has such a simile or not prior to *evam eva* in lines 7–8.

In addition, the Chinese parallel to the Elapatra and Nala story, AbhiNS, uses a similar simile involving a clean cloth.

譬如淨衣，無有垢膩，無有黑毛，隨欲染時，而受諸色。如是如是，彼諸大眾那羅陀等，於彼坐處，遠離煩惱，悉盡諸集，證知諸法，建立無畏，度諸疑網，不隨他語，知世尊教。(T 3 no. 190, 829c25–9)

Just as a clean cloth, free from grime or black wool, easily takes on various colors when dyed, in exactly the same way, the great assembly, including Narada and the others, remained in their places and distanced themselves from afflictions. Having exhausted all causes of suffering, they realized all phenomena and established themselves in fearlessness. Having crossed over the web of doubt, they no longer followed the words of others but understood the Blessed One's teaching.

AbhiNS provides evidence that the simile of a clean cloth appears in the Chinese translation of the Elapatra and Nala story, despite its absence in the DhG Vin version. In this case, it complicates the hypothesis of the Yaśa story's existence. It could be that, prior to *evam eva*, or 如是如是 in AbhiNS, is a simile for a clean cloth, and after that is a long description of the attainment of Nala and his followers. It is unusual for *evam eva* to represent a comparison between two narrative characters' experiences. It is typically the beginning of the second half of a simile. Hence, the reading and interpretation remain uncertain given the poor condition of the manuscript in this line.

Line 9. *[dhr].rmacakṣu upaji*: The manuscript breaks in the middle of akṣara *dha*; the



Figure 7.
Detail of *kṣu*
with a loop on
the right arm.

remnant of a rightward footmark can be seen, making the reading of *dhr*-. The individual word *dhrarma* will be discussed in the text note on line 11 below. The

kṣu in *dhrarmacakṣu* is written with a loop on the right arm, resembling the top of *ga*.

The compound *dhrarmacakṣu* is a *tatpuruṣa*, meaning “the eye of Dharma.” The finite verb is *upaji* (=BHS *utpadye*), in the third-person singular aorist of *ut* + *√pat*, “to arise.”⁹² A similar phrase also appears in the Gāndhārī Avadāna BL 4.2 on the verso line 221, *dharmacakṣu upadaïdo*, and on the verso line 230, *dharmacakṣu uparṇo*. This phrase is attested in the Pali and Sanskrit parallels of the Yaśa story as follows.

P: *virajaṃ vītamalaṃ dhammacakkhum udapādi* (Vin I 20)

Skt: *virajaṃ vigatamalaṃ dharmeṣu dharmacakṣur viśuddhaṃ* (Mvu III 533)

The Sanskrit source has *virajas*, *vigatamala*, and *viśuddha*, describing *dharmacakṣu*. These words agree with the Chinese parallels (DhG Vin and Mahīś Vin) that have 塵 (*virajas*), 垢盡 (*vigata-mala*), 法眼 (*dharma-cakṣu*), 淨 (*viśuddha*). AbhiNS has a different expression 於諸法中得淨智眼, somewhat agreeing with the addition of *dharmeṣu* in Samādhirāja-sūtra, and it has 淨智眼 (“the eye of pure wisdom”) instead of 法眼淨 (“the purity of Dharma-eye”). Given the higher correspondence of this manuscript with DhG Vin, *virajas*, *vigatamala*, and *viśuddha* are expected to appear before *dhrarmacakṣu*. Unfortunately, this part is missing and illegible in the manuscript. Thus, based on the parallels above, the reconstruction on line 9 becomes:

[9] + + + + + + (**viraja vigatamala viśudha*) *dhr(*a)rmacakṣu upaji asa te*
*caḍoraṣi(*di pra)ṇ(*aṣa)h(*a)ṣa driṭh(*adhra)rm(*a) + + + + +*

[9] ... the eye of Dharma, which is pure, whose dust is free, whose defilement has gone, arose. Then, those eighty-four (*thousand beings, whom the Dharma has been seen) ...

⁹² Silverlock 2015: 356. Cf. BHSG: 219.



Figure 8. Detail of *ca*.

caḍoraṣi ? ? [ṇ]. ? h.ṣa: This phrase can safely be reconstructed as *caḍoraṣi(*ḍi pra)ṇ(*aṣa)h(*a)ṣa*, corresponding to Skt *caturaśīti prāṇasahasram*, “eighty-four thousand beings.” Similar phrases are attested in other Gāndhārī manuscripts, such as Bajaur 2 recto 7.12, *caduraśīdi devaputrasahaṣa*, and Bhadrakalpika-sūtra 17 verso line 1, *caturaśīti varṣasahasra*. The phrase typically follows a pattern of “number + subject-thousand” in Buddhist Sanskrit texts. In this story, the subject is *prāṇa* (“beings”) with the number of eighty-four thousand. Note that the scribe writes *caḍoraṣiḍi* rather than *caduraśīdi*, showing an alternate spelling of *u* and *o*. The change of *u > o* is rare in the Senior Collection but quite frequent in the British Library Collection.⁹³ Here, the word begins with the modified akṣara *ca*, which is rarely attested in the RS scrolls and not consistently marked in other scholarly editions. It appears once in RS 17 line 24. However, the present scribe frequently writes the modified form *ca*, although regular *ca* also appears in the manuscript.⁹⁴

driṭh. ? [rm].: This word can safely be reconstructed as *driṭh(*adhra)rm(*a)*, equivalent to P *diṭṭhadhamma*/Skt *drṣṭadharmā*, understood as a *bahuvrīhi* compound, “one by whom the Dharma has been seen.” The past participle *drṣṭa* is embedded in the compound as the first member. There is also a phonological change from the original *ṣṭ > ṭh*, which is common in Gāndhārī.⁹⁵ Original vocalic *ṛ* is represented by *i*, as seen in *drṣṭa > driṭh*.⁹⁶ The manuscript breaks after the akṣara *ṭh*, and the top portion of *rma* can be seen. So, the expected akṣara in

⁹³ Silverlock 2015: 221 (§6.2.4).

⁹⁴ As previous scholarship has not consistently marked this distinction, further examination of the RS collection would be required to assess how common the feature is more broadly.

⁹⁵ Salomon 2008: 125.

⁹⁶ Salomon 2008: 106.

between is *dha/dhra*, yet given the frequent occurrence of *dhrarma* in this manuscript, I reconstructed it as *dhra*, though it may be that the scribe writes the normal *dha*.

Nala takes refuge in Triratna (Lines 10–11)

Edition:

[10] + + + + + + + + + + + *edaḍ=aya e ? vae bhate bhayava śaraṇo gachami dhrarma ца*
bhikhu[s]. /// + + + + + + [11] [bh]. ? ? ? ? [re] ? ajavagreṇa yava[j]i ? [p].ṇueḍo śa[r]. ?
[g].[d].

Reconstruction:

[10] + + + + + + + + + + + *edaḍ aya e(*śa) vae bhate bhayava śaraṇo gachami*
*dhrarma ца bhikhuś(*aga ца uaṣea me) [11] bh(*ate bhayava dha)re(*i) ajavagreṇa*
*yavaji(*va) p(*ra)ṇueḍo śar(*ano) g(*a)d(*o)*

Translation:

[10] ... spoke this: “O venerable, we all go to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the community of monks for refuge! [11] (*O venerable! May the Blessed One accept us as lay followers), from today on, as long as we live, as long as we breathe, as ones (*who have gone to the refuge).”

Parallels:

前白佛言：「我等自今歸依佛法僧，唯願世尊聽為優婆塞，盡形壽不殺生乃至不飲酒。」 (DhG Vin at T 22 no. 1428, 792b11–3)

[They] addressed the Buddha, saying: “From this day forth, we take refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. May the Blessed One accept us as lay followers. For as long as we live, we will not kill, up to the consumption of intoxicants.”

見法得果已，受三自歸，次受五戒。(Mahīś Vin at T 22 no. 1421, 107a6)

Having perceived the Dharma and attained the fruit [of realization, they] took refuge in the Three [Jewels], and subsequently received the five precepts.

彼諸大眾那羅陀等 ... 即並歸依佛法僧寶，受持五戒。(AbhiNS at T 3 no. 190, 829c26–9)

At that time, Narada and all the great assembly ... then took refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha, and undertook the five precepts.

Text notes:

Line 10. *e ? vae bhate bhayava śaraṇo gachami dhrarma ca bhikhu[s]*. /// + +: This phrase and the following are the formula for taking refuge. The first word can be reconstructed as *e(*śa)*. Here, *śa* is written with a hook on the left side of the arm. The word *eṣa* (=Skt *ete*) is a demonstrative pronoun in nominative plural masculine, agreeing with the subject *vae* (=Skt *vayam*) in the first-person plural nominative pronoun. The verb *gachami* (=Skt *gacchāmi*) is in the third-person singular present form of $\sqrt{\text{gam}}$. However, the plural form of G *gachama* (=Skt *gacchāmaḥ*) is expected since the subject is in plural. On the verso line 22, there is a similar phrase *eṣa vae bhat[e] bhayava śaraṇa gachama*, but with the verb *gachama* in the plural form, agreeing with the plural subject. Hence, this scenario points to either a scribal error or, more likely, the confusion and instability between *-ama* and *-ami* for the first-person endings.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ For further discussion, see Silverlock 2015: 352–3.

The G *bhayava* is equivalent to Skt *bhagavantam* in the accusative singular masculine, functioning as the object of the verb *gachami*. The more commonly attested accusative form of *bhayava* is *bhayavata* (GD s.v. *bhagava*). The scribe appears to omit the final *-ta* here.⁹⁸

dhrarma: Here, the scribe clearly writes *dhrarma*, in which postconsonantal *dhra*- and preconsonantal *-rma* appear. It is a combination of rhotic metathesis and “intrusive *r*.”⁹⁹ This spelling is rare but attested in several Senior manuscripts (RS 17 1.16, RS 20 1.10). The scribe writes mostly *dhrarma* (RS 24 recto lines 10, 11, 22) and one instance of *dharma* (RS 24 verso line 23) in this manuscript.¹⁰⁰

Lines 10–11. + + + + + *[bh]. ? ? ? ? ? [re] ? ajavagreṇa yava[j]i ? [p].ṇueḍa śa[r]. ? [g].[d].*: This phrase is reconstructed as *(*uasea me) bh(*ate bhayava dha)re(*i) ajavagreṇa yavaji(*va) p(*ra)ṇueḍa śara(*ana) g(*a)d(*e)* based on the similar formula that appears in the RS Collection. In particular, RS 20 recto lines 10–11: *uasao me bhi goḍama dhareṇi ajavagreṇa yavajiva p(*r)añueḍa śaraṇa gaḍe*.¹⁰¹ The word *goḍama* is not evident in this manuscript.¹⁰² This part seems to be a repetition of the previous line *bhate bhayava*. The expected verb is *(*dha)re(*i)* (=Skt *dhārehi*), in the second-person singular imperative of $\sqrt{dhr}$ with the active ending *-hi*.¹⁰³

The next three words, *ajavagreṇa yavaji(*va) p(*ra)ṇueḍa*, are all adverbs, meaning “from today on, as long as I live, as long as I breathe.”¹⁰⁴ The Chinese parallels omit these expressions; the DhG Vin has only 盡形壽, which is equivalent to G *yavajiva*/Skt *yāvajjīvam*.

⁹⁸ See also the text note on *añā* in the verso line 28 and *patra* in the verso line 29.

⁹⁹ Allon 2001: 97–8; Salomon 2008: 129–30.

¹⁰⁰ For a critical assessment of the rhotic metathesis in Gāndhārī, see Suzuki 2024.

¹⁰¹ Marino 2017: 153. Cf. Allon 2001: 205.

¹⁰² Only certain figures refer to the Buddha in this manner. In the case of RS 20, the speaker is a brahmin.

¹⁰³ Marino 2017: 194–5.

¹⁰⁴ For the discussion of these words, see Marino 2017: 195–6.

Elapatra is sad and happy (Lines 11–19)

Edition:

[11] e[la]patro ya [ṇag]. /// + + + + + + + + + [12] [ṇi ta ja di driṭhi] ? ? ? do a ? [m].
 [ṇ]. ? ? + .o priḍi praūkha[roḍi] aṣa ṇala maṇa[v]. /// + + + + + + + + + + + [13]
 ki ? ? ? ? [g]. ? [yo] suaṇapatri atha ruacaṇiparivura aṣa ruapatri ath. /// + + + + + + + + + +
 + + + [14] + + + + + ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? [e ru a khu] ? ? ? ? /// + + +
 + + + + [15] + + + + + + + + + /// + + + + + + + + + a vae praroemi aṣuṇi ya vatemi eṣo
 [h]. [maṇ]. [v]. /// + + + + + [16] + + + + + + + + + .u ? [p]. [tri] y[o] suaṇacuṇaparivure
 aṇiḍo maṇava ṇa [du]a ya ki ṇaga ka /// + + + + + + + [17] + + + + + ? [y]. ag.kṣ.ṣi
 baraṇaṣi [kṣ].tri[ak]. ? ? bramaṇaka[ṇa va] viśa[gañ]. + śu[d]. /// + + + + + + [18] ti [d]. ? ?
 + + + + ? te ṇagaraya suaṇapa[tri] rua[cu]ṇa ? ? ? ? k[u]śa ? [ṣi] ru[a]. /// + + /// sua[ṇ]. /// + +
 + + + + + [19] ? ? ? ? [ṇa]gakaṇa

Reconstruction:

[11] elapatro ya ṇag(*araya) + + + + + + + + + [12] ṇi ta ja di driṭhi ? ? ? do a (*kha)
 m(*a)ṇ(*a) ? ? + .o priḍi praūkharoḍi aṣa ṇala maṇav(*a) + + + + + + + + + + + + +
 [13] ki ? ? ? (*ṇa)g(*ara)yo suaṇapatri atha ruacaṇiparivura aṣa ruapatri ath(*a
 suaṇacuṇaparivura) + + + + + [14] + + + + + ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? +
 + ? ? ? ? ? ? ? e ru a khu ? ? ? ? /// + + + + + + + [15] + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + +
 + + a vae praroemi aṣuṇi ya vatimi eṣo h(*e) maṇ(*a)v(*a) + + + (*sua) [16] (*ṇapatri
 ruacuṇaparivure r)u(*a)p(*a)tri yo suaṇacuṇaparivure aṇiḍo maṇava ṇa dua ya ki
 ṇagaka(*ṇa) + + + + + + + [17] + + + + + + (*śa)y(*e) ag(*a)kṣ(*a)ṣi baraṇaṣi
 kṣ(*a)triak(*aṇa va) bramaṇakaṇa va viśagañ(*a va) śud(*raṇaṇa) + + + + + [18] ti d. ? ?

+ + + + ? *te nāgaraya suaṇapatri ruacuṇa(*parivu)<*ra> (*ṇa) kuśa(*lo)ṣi ru(*apatri)*
*suaṇ(*acuṇaparivura ṇa) [19] (*kuśaloṣi) nagakaṇa*

Translation:

[11] And *nāga*-king Elapatra ... [12] (?) ... manifests joy. Then, the young brahmin Nala ...
 [13] Why? ... *nāga* king's golden bowl completely filled with silver grain, and silver bowl
 (*completely filled with golden grain) ... [14] ... [15] ... I weep and shed tears. O young
 brahmin! For, this, ... [16] (*golden bowl completely filled with silver grain, and silver
 bowl) completely filled with golden grain (?) O young brahmin! There is no pain. And why?
nāga-maiden ... [17] ... (*if you wish), in Vārāṇasī, (*the woman) of the *kṣatriya* caste, the
 woman of the *brāhmaṇa* caste, the woman of the *vaiśya* caste, (*or the woman of the *sūdra*
 caste) ... [18] ... to that *nāga*-king: the golden bowl completely filled with silver grain (*is
 not suitable); the silver bowl completely filled with golden grain, [19] [and] *nāga*-maiden,
 [too], (*is not suitable).

Parallels:

時伊羅鉢龍王悲泣不能自勝，或時踊躍歡喜。時那羅陀語龍王言：「今者悲泣，為惜金鉢盛銀粟、銀鉢盛金粟，及龍女等，而悲泣耶？」龍王報言：「我不以此諸物故悲泣。那羅陀當知！汝今取金鉢盛銀粟、銀鉢盛金粟，應取無苦。若須波羅捺城中剎利女、婆羅門女、居士女、工師女者，我當勸令與。何以故？那羅陀！汝不能與龍女共會。」那羅陀報龍王言：「金鉢盛銀粟、銀鉢盛金粟我不須，龍女亦不須，我今欲於如來所修梵行。」 (DhG Vin at T 22 no. 1428, 792b13–23)

At that time, the *nāga*-king Elapatra wept with grief and was unable to control himself, and then he leaped with happiness. Narada then addressed the *nāga* king, saying: "Are you weeping now because you do not want to lose the golden bowls filled with silver grain, the

silver bowls filled with golden grain, and the *nāga* maidens?" The *nāga* king replied: "I am not weeping because of any of these things. O Narada, you should know! You may now take the golden bowls filled with silver grain and the silver bowls filled with golden grain; you should accept them without distress. If you need a *kṣatriya* woman, a *brāhmaṇa* woman, a *vaiśya* woman, or a *śūdra* woman from within the city of Vārāṇasī, I shall urge them to be given to you. Why is that? O Narada! You are unable to consort with *nāga* maidens." Nārada answered the *nāga* king: "I have no need for golden bowls filled with silver grain or silver bowls filled with golden grain, nor do I have any need for *nāga* maidens. I now wish to practice holy conduct under the Tathāgata."

龍王聞已，先大歡喜，然後悲泣 ... 於是龍王語摩訶言：「汝今何為須此龍女？龍女多
 恚，或以毒火共相傷害！隨汝所須金銀寶物，盡當相與！」答言：「止，止！龍王！我
 不須龍女，亦不須金銀！我聞佛最後說偈，得離欲界欲故。」 (Mahīś Vin at T 22 no.
 1421, 106c13–107a10)

Having heard this, the *nāga* King was initially filled with great joy, but then he wept in sorrow... Then, the *nāga* king addressed the young man, saying: "Why do you now have a need for this *nāga* maiden? *Nāga* maidens are often full of wrath and might cause mutual harm with their poisonous fire! Whatever gold, silver, or precious treasures you require, I shall provide them all to you!" The youth replied: "Stop, Stop! O *nāga* king! I have no need for the *nāga* maiden, nor do I require gold or silver. I have heard the final verse spoken by the Buddha and have attained freedom from the desires of the desire realm."

爾時，伊羅鉢龍見佛聞法，瞻仰尊顏，悲喜相交，淚下如雨。(AbhiNS at T 3 no. 190, 829a10 – 1)

At that time, when the Elapatra *nāga* saw the Buddha and heard the Dharma, he gazed reverently upon the honorable face. Filled with a mixture of sorrow and joy, his tears fell like rain.

是時龍王即於佛前悲號啼哭，諸頭眼中一時出淚，成十四河駛流驚注。(MSV-KV at T 24 no. 1451, 304b11–3)

At that moment, the *nāga* king wailed and wept piteously before the Buddha; from the eyes of his many heads, tears poured forth simultaneously, forming fourteen rivers that rushed and surged in a startling torrent.

Text notes:

Line 11. *e[la]patro [nag]*. /// + +: In this line, the name of one of the main characters, Elapatra, appears, though it might have been introduced in the first missing line above. It can be safely reconstructed as *elapatro ṇaga(*raya)*. Another instance of *ṇagaraya* appears in the RS 18, which probably reads *mu(*ca)l(*i)d(*a) ṇagaray(*a)*, corresponding to P *atha mucalindo nāgarājā*, recounting the episode of Mucalinda protecting the Buddha from rain.¹⁰⁵

The name *Elapatro* has two different spellings in Indic parallels: *Elapatra* in Mvu and *Erakapatta* in Dhp-a. However, it is quite stable in the Chinese parallels as *yī luó bō* 伊羅鉢 with

¹⁰⁵ Allon 2007b: 13.

some variations in the Chinese character. MSV-KV and Faxian use *yī* 醫 and *yì* 翳,¹⁰⁶ respectively, for the first character of the name. They all represent similar phonetic values.

There is a section of the AbhiNS, translated by Jñānagupta, in which the Sanskrit *varṇamālā* syllabary (except for long vowels, *ai*, *au*, *aṃ*, *aḥ*, and *kṣa*) is spelled out.¹⁰⁷

Table 6. AbhiNS syllabary system

| Chinese | Indic | Chinese | Indic | Chinese | Indic | Chinese | Indic |
|---------|------------|---------|------------|---------|------------|---------|-----------|
| 阿 | <i>a</i> | 遮 | <i>ca</i> | 多 | <i>ta</i> | 耶 | <i>ya</i> |
| 伊 | <i>i</i> | 車 | <i>cha</i> | 他 | <i>tha</i> | 囉 | <i>ra</i> |
| 優 | <i>u</i> | 闍 | <i>ja</i> | 陀 | <i>da</i> | 邏 | <i>la</i> |
| 啞 | <i>e</i> | 社 | <i>jha</i> | 咤 | <i>dha</i> | 婆 | <i>va</i> |
| 鳴 | <i>o</i> | 若 | <i>ña</i> | 哪 | <i>na</i> | 嗜 | <i>śa</i> |
| 迦 | <i>ka</i> | 吒 | <i>ṭa</i> | 簸 | <i>pa</i> | 沙 | <i>ṣa</i> |
| 佉 | <i>kha</i> | 咤 | <i>ṭha</i> | 頗 | <i>pha</i> | 娑 | <i>sa</i> |
| 伽 | <i>ga</i> | 荼 | <i>ḍa</i> | 婆 | <i>ba</i> | 喃 | <i>ha</i> |
| 咍 | <i>gha</i> | 噤 | <i>ḍha</i> | 嚩 | <i>bha</i> | | |
| 俄 | <i>ma</i> | 拏 | <i>ṇa</i> | 摩 | <i>ma</i> | | |

Applying this syllabary system to 伊羅鉢, the Indic phonetic value for this transliteration is “*i-ra/la-patra*.” The character 鉢 is a phonetic-semantic translation. It is pronounced as *bō*, but also a translation for the term Skt *pātra* (“bowl”). This word in P *patta* can mean “bowl” and “leaf.” Xuanzang’s transliteration reflects this perfectly as *yī luó bō dá luó* 醫羅鉢咄羅,¹⁰⁸ which more represents the Indic form, possibly *pattra* for “leaf” rather than “bowl.” As for the second character, the chart lists two options: 囉 (*ra*) and 邏 (*la*), each with a different radical. This alternation between *ra* and *la* reflects the case in the Indic spelling.

There is consistency in the different spellings of this name. Almost all MIA sources spell *era-*, whereas Sanskrit sources use *ela-*. For instance, Dhp-a, as mentioned above, has

¹⁰⁶ T 51 no. 2085, 864a19.

¹⁰⁷ T 3 no. 190, 704a19–c10. Note that the same character 婆 is used for *ba* and *va*.

¹⁰⁸ T 51 no. 2087, 884c4.

erakapatta, and the Bharhut inscription has *erapato*.¹⁰⁹ On the other hand, Mvu has *elapatra*, and Divy has *elāpatra*.¹¹⁰ In this regard, the G *elapatra* aligns more closely with the Sanskrit tradition rather than with the dominant MIA pattern.¹¹¹

Monika Zin has proposed that *elapatra* may derive from *erāvaṇa*, Indra’s elephant, which appears in the Suttanīpata as a *nāgarāja* (Sn 67) and in the Dīghanikāya as *mahānāga* (DN II 258),¹¹² reflecting the broader Indic association with *airāvaṇa/airāvata*. While a phonological shift from *aira-* to *era-/ela-* is plausible, the transition from *-vaṇa* to *-pattra/-patta* is less convincing. It is more likely that it involves a semantic association between *vana* (“forest”) and *pattra/patta* (“leaf”), rather than a direct derivation from *Erāvaṇa*.¹¹³ Jean Philippe Vogel opposed this notion that *elapatra* derived from the Sanskrit *airāvata*, but it must be an example of popular etymology. He suggests that *erapatra*, as attested in the Bharhut inscription, represents “an intermediate form between *Airāvata* and *Elāpattra*.”¹¹⁴

The Pali, Chinese, and Gāndhārī versions explain that the name Skt *Elapatra*, *Elāpatra*/P *Erakapatta* comes from a type of grass (Skt *pattra*/P *patta*) called Skt *ela*, *elā*/P *eraka*. The Sanskrit dictionary gives the meaning as “any species of cardamom” (MW s.v. *elā*), whereas it is a “typha-grass” (PTSD s.v. *eraka*). Jñānagupta glosses the transliterated name in AbhiNS as a grass or leaf called *huò xiāng* 藿香, an aromatic herb in the mint family.

Elapatra appears in three distinct roles across different textual traditions. First, in the Sv, it is listed among the four great treasures: *saṃkha*, *ela*, *uppala*, and *puṇḍarīka*. Second, Elapatra is associated with a *nāga*-king who presides over the treasure bearing the same name, as

¹⁰⁹ See Cunningham 1879: 26–7; plate XIV.

¹¹⁰ Divy 37.7.

¹¹¹ For the merger **l* and **r* in OIA, see Kobayashi 2004: 144–6. Cf. Burrow 1972.

¹¹² Zin 2000: 1180.

¹¹³ Airavata and Elapatra are listed as separate entities in the list of *nāgas* mentioned in the Mahābhārata I 31.5–15.

¹¹⁴ Vogel 1926: 208.

indicated in the passage from Mvu¹¹⁵ and all Chinese parallels. Third, in the Divy, Elapatra appears in a slightly different configuration:

atha catvāro mahārājās caturmahānidhisthāh piṅgalaś ca kaliṅgeṣu mithilāyāṃ ca pāṇḍukaḥ elāpatraś ca gāndhāre śaṅkha vārāṇasīpure. (Divy 37.5–7)

Then, the four great kings are established over the four great treasures: Piṅgala among the Kaliṅgas; Pāṇḍuka in Mithilā; Elāpatra in Gāndhāra, and Śaṅkha in the city of Vārāṇasī.

In this passage, Elapatra functions as a guardian of a treasure, but is identified simply as one of the four great kings (*mahārājā*), rather than explicitly a *nāga*-king.

The G version reads *elapatro nagaraya*, aligning with this broader pattern. Thus, while the Divy preserves a formulation in which Elapatra is framed within the category of the four great kings, the wider tradition more consistently understands him as a *nāga*-king presiding over a corresponding treasure.

The account of Elapatra is told in the travelogues of Faxian and Xuanzang. Faxian records that in Vārāṇasī, at the Deer Park, “fifty paces to the south, the dragon Elāpatra asked him, ‘When shall I get free from this *nāga* body?’—at all these places topes were reared, and are still existing.”¹¹⁶ By the time of Faxian’s visit in the early fifth century CE, the stupas commemorating Elapatra were still standing at the site. Xuanzang, however, reports a different location for the legend. In his account of Takṣaśilā, he notes that,

“North-west of the capital about 70 li is the tank of the Nāga-rāja Elāpatra (*I-lo-po-to-lo*); it is about 100 paces round, the waters are pure and sweet; lotus flowers of various colours, which reflect different tints in their common beauty (garnish the surface); this Nāga was a Bhikṣu who anciently, in the time of Kāśyapa Buddha, destroyed an Elāpatra tree. Hence, at the present time, when the people of that country ask for rain or

¹¹⁵ Mvu III 491: *tahiṃ nidhānādhipatayo nāgarājāno nimantritakā āgatā* (“There came the *nāga*-kings, lords of treasures, who were invited”).

¹¹⁶ Legge 1886: 96. “其北二十步佛為彌勒授記處。其南五十步翳羅鉢龍問佛我何時得免此龍身。此處皆起塔見在” (T 51 no. 2085, 864a19–20). Cf. Lamotte 1988: 66.

fine weather, they must go with the Shamans to the side of the tank, and then cracking their finger (or, in a moment), after praying for the desired object, they obtain it.”¹¹⁷

These two accounts suggest that by the early medieval period, the legend of Elapatra was associated with different sacred sites. Faxian encountered stupas of Elapatra in Vārāṇasī in the fifth century CE, whereas Xuanzang, writing in the seventh century CE, records a pond connected with Elapatra in Takṣaśilā and does not mention the episode in Vārāṇasī.¹¹⁸ The association of a *nāga* with water is common in Buddhist literature. Several *nāgas* appear in the Buddha’s biography as beings who interacted with the Buddha and were converted to Buddhism. Besides Elapatra, examples include Apalāla and Mucalinda, who are associated with the lakes at Subhavastu and Uruvilvā, respectively.¹¹⁹

Line 12. *priḍi*: The scribe corrected another akṣara to *pri* by overwriting it. This word corresponds to Skt *prīti*/P *pīti*, “joy.” Another spelling of this word appears in the verso line 28 of this manuscript as *piḍi*, which will be discussed further in the verso’s commentary. *priḍi* is the first legible word of this line. The akṣaras before it are illegible due to a break in the manuscript, and although the manuscript does not break at the beginning, ink smudging obscures the form of the akṣara.

Based on the context from the parallel versions, Elapatra experiences a mixture of joy and sadness. DhG Vin has 悲泣不能自勝, 或時踊躍歡喜, and AbhiNS has 悲喜相交; both points indicate that Elapatra shows sadness first, then joy. Mahīś Vin, on the other hand, has a reverse order, 先大歡喜然後悲泣, joy first, then sadness. Dhp-a only has him experience sadness. In this regard, since the G version introduces a new section of the story after *priḍi*,

¹¹⁷ Beal 1884: 137. See T 51 no. 2087, 884b28–c8.

¹¹⁸ Cunningham (1879) associated Takṣaśilā place mentioned here with the present city of Hasan Abdāl in Pakistan (24).

¹¹⁹ Cunningham 1879: 24. Elapatra *nāga* is also mentioned in Brahmanical literature, see Beal 1884: 137, n. 44. For the discussion of the role of Elapatra in the Mahābhārata, see Vogel 1995: 58.

namely Nala's expression of his desire to go forth, one would expect the expression of sadness to appear before *prīḍi*.

Similar expressions in other sources, such as *dukkhī dummano pajjhāyati* (DN II 22–3), or *dukkhī dummano assūni pavattayamāno* (SN II 282), may give a clue for interpreting this line. There is a possibility of Skt *durmanas*/P *dummana*, “sad” in *ḍoa* ? [m].[n]. which could possibly be reconstructed as *ḍoa*(*kha)m(*a)n(*a). Yet, *ḍoa*(*kha) cannot be Skt *duḥkha* nor *dur-* as in *durmanas*. There is a delamination on the manuscript between the akṣara *a* and (*kha), which could possibly fit an akṣara. If this is true, then the reading could be (**dukha*)m(*a)n(*a), in which *ḍoa* belongs to the previous word.

praukha[roḍi]: The word after *prīḍi* is a finite verb *praukharoḍi*, corresponding to P *pātukaroti*/Skt *prāduṣkaroti*, in third-person singular present form of *pra* + *dur* + √*kṛ*, “he makes visible/he manifests.” It undergoes phonological change from *dur* > *u* and *ka* > *kha*, in which the *duṣ* sibilant is lost and conditions the change from *k* > *kh* in the following phoneme.

ṇala maṇa[v]: The name of the second main character first appears in this line, though it might have been introduced in the first missing line above. The name is reconstructed as *ṇala maṇav*(*a), corresponding to Skt *nālaka māṇavaka*, “young brahmin Nala/Nālaka.” The figure, who encounters the *nāga*-king Elapatra, appears under different names across the textual traditions. In the Dhp-a, he is the young brahmin Uttara, whereas in the Mvu, Uttara is Nālaka's elder brother. In the Sn, Nālaka is the nephew of the sage Asita, as in the Mvu, Mahīś Vin, and AbhiNS. In the Mvu, his full name is Nālaka Kātyāyana.¹²⁰

The Chinese sources preserve several transliterations: *nàluótuó tóngzǐ* 那羅陀童子, *nàluó mónà* 那羅摩納, and *nàluótuó* 那羅陀 or *nàlàtuó* 那刺陀, as found in the Mvu, AbhiNS, Mahīś

¹²⁰ See also DPPN s.v. *nālaka*.

Vin, DhG Vin, and MSV-KV, respectively.¹²¹ Following the syllabary system found in AbhiNS, the first name *nàluótuó* 那羅陀 corresponds to *narada*, whereas *tóngzǐ* 童子 and *mónà* 摩訶 both correspond to Skt *māṇava*, “young brahmin”. The different transliteration of Nālaka as Narada in Chinese sources could occur from two possibilities. First, the ultimate source of this name is from some text or tradition that pronounced it Narada; second, some kind of transcriptional and scribal error. However, it could be the case that at any point in the past 那羅陀 simply became the conventional Chinese way of rendering the name, even if the translator was aware of the Indic original pronunciation of the name. Jñānagupta glosses the transliterated name in AbhiNS as *bú jiào* 不叫, “not shouting,” possibly translated from the Skt *na* + $\sqrt{rud}$. If such is the case, then the Chinese name of Nālaka is indeed Narada.

Line 13. *suaṇapatri atha ruacaṇiparivura aṣa ruapatri ath.* /// + + + + + + +: This line contains the remnant of objects that Elapatra would give away if anyone is able to answer his questions. The phrase is reconstructed as *suaṇapatri atha ruacaṇiparivura aṣa ruapatri ath(*a suaṇacuṇaparivura)*, which is equivalent to Skt *suvarṇapātrīm atha rūpyacūrṇaparipūrṇāṃ asya rūpyapātrīm atha suvarṇacūrṇaparipūrṇāṃ*, “his golden bowl completely filled with silver grain, and silver bowl completely filled with golden grain.”¹²² The *G atha* corresponds to P/Skt *atha*, functioning as a connective particle (see DP s.v. *atha*). In the recto line 16, the same expression appears without *atha* but uses *yo* (=P/Skt *ca*).

G suaṇapatri corresponds to P *suaṇṇapātīm*/Skt *suvarṇapātrīm*, “golden bowl.” *G ruapatri* corresponds to P *rūpiyapātīm*/Skt *rūpyapātrīm*, “silver bowl.” Both are in the accusative

¹²¹ The pronunciation here is given in the modern standardized *pinyin* and may not reflect the pronunciation at the time the text. was written.

¹²² Compare similar phrases such as *caturāsīti suaṇṇapātisahassāni adāsi rūpiyapūrāni*, *caturāsīti rūpiyapātisahassāni adāsi suaṇṇapūrāni* (AN IV 393; cf. Ja IV 107.26–7); *suvarṇapātryo rūpyacūrṇaparipūrṇāḥ*, *rūpyapātryaḥ suvarṇaparipūrṇāḥ* (Divy 196.7).

singular feminine. G *ruacaṇiparivura* is equivalent to Skt *rūpyacūrṇaparipūrṇāṃ*, in which *cūrṇa* is “powder flour, aromatic powder” (MW s.v. *cūrṇa*), or “refined, subtle” in Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit (BHSD s.v. *cūrṇa*), from the root $\sqrt{cūrṇ}$, “to grind, pound, crush.” DhG Vin has *sù* 粟 as a kind of grain or millet. In any case, *cūrṇa* points to a kind of ground grain of varying degrees of coarseness.

The scribe writes *caṇi* in line 14 and *cuna* in line 17 for Skt *cūrṇa*, which seems to be a



Figure 9. Detail of *ca* in *caṇi*.

variation between *caṇi* and *cuna*. Note that *-p-* at a compound boundary, such as in the words *suṇa-patri*, *rua-patri*, and *ruacaṇi-parivura*, is retained in the spelling.¹²³ The phonetic weakening of intervocalic

consonant *p* > *v* > $\emptyset$ is seen in Skt *suvarṇa* > G *suṇa*, Skt *rūpya* > G *rua*, and Skt *paripūrṇa* > G *parivura*.

The remnants of the “golden bowl and silver bowl” phrase appear three times in lines 14, 17, and 19, which correspond closely to the DhG Vin of the Chinese parallels. First, Nālaka asks Elapatra whether he is sad about giving away the golden and silver bowls. Second, Elapatra answers that Nālaka can take the golden and silver bowls without distress. Third, Nālaka responds that he will not take any of the golden and silver bowls because he desires to become a monk.

Line 15. *vae praroemi aṣuṇi ya vatimi*: Based on the parallel, this should be the response of Elapatra about his weeping. The Chinese parallel in DhG Vin gives a clue of the expected scenario, “I am not weeping because of any of these things” (我不以此諸物故悲泣). A similar phrase is attested in several Indic sources, such as *kim idam ṛṣe rodasi aśrūṇi ca pravartayasi gambhīraṃ ca niśvasasi* (Lal 74); *kasmāt tvaṃ pathaka vahir vihārasya rodiṣyasi aśrūṇi*

¹²³ For other examples, see Silverlock 2015: 225, n. 540.

vartayasi (Divy 431.1). Here, G *praroemi* corresponds to Skt *prarodayāmi*, in the first-person singular causative present form of *pra* + $\sqrt{rud}$, “to weep.” The loss of *-d-* in G *praroemi* remains difficult to explain. G *vatimi* corresponds to Skt *vartayāmi*, in the first-person singular present form of $\sqrt{vrt}$, “to shed [tears].” Another possibility is that the G reads *vadimi*, which corresponds to Skt *pāṭayāmi*, in the first-person singular causative present form of $\sqrt{pat}$, “to fall down.” The second possibility, Skt *pāṭayāmi*, is more likely because *rt* should be represented by either *rt* or *ṛ* in Gāndhārī. Thus, this phrase can be read as either “I weep and shed tears” or “I weep and cause tears to fall.” Note that the subject of the first-person singular verbs is *vae* (=Skt *vayam*), in the first-person plural nominative rather than the first-person singular pronoun. This, again, points to the confusion and instability in the agreement between first-person endings and verbal endings.

Line 16. *ṇa [du]a*: The Chinese parallel in DhG Vin reads, “You may now take the golden bowls filled with silver grain and the silver bowls filled with golden grain; you should accept them without distress (汝今取金鉢盛銀粟, 銀鉢盛金粟, 應取無苦). If the DhG Vin reflects the Gāndhārī version, then *ṇa dua* may correspond to Ch 無苦, “without distress/suffering.” The Sanskrit equivalent would be *na duḥkham*, “there is no pain/suffering,” in the nominative singular neuter. G *dua* for Skt *duḥkha* is attested in RS 22 recto line 17.¹²⁴

Line 17. *ag.kṣ.ṣi*: This word can be safely reconstructed as *ag(*a)kṣ(*a)ṣi*, corresponding to Skt *ākāṃkṣasi*, in the second-person singular present form of *ā* + $\sqrt{kāṃkṣ}$, “to wish”. This can be further confirmed by the Chinese parallel, DhG Vin, which has 若須 (“if needed”). The G version before *ag(*a)kṣ(*a)ṣi* is reconstructed as *(*śa)y(*e)*, which corresponds to the Skt *sacet*/Ch 若, “if.”

¹²⁴ The attested form is *duae* (=Skt *duḥkhāya*) in the dative singular masculine. See Allon 2020: 228.

[kṣ].tri[ak]. ? ? bramaṇaka[ña va] viśa[gañ]. + śu[d]. /// + +: This phrase can safely be reconstructed as *kṣ(*a)triak(*aṇa va) bramaṇakaña [va] viśagañ(*a va) śud(*raṇa)*. The phrase refers to the women of the four castes, with the order of *kṣatriya*, *brāhmaṇa*, *vaiśya*, and *śūdra* in Sanskrit. Note that G *kaña* is written as *gaña* in *viśagaña*, pointing to the interchange between *k* and *g*. The four castes are arranged in this order, beginning with *kṣatriya* and *brāhmaṇa*, and this arrangement is attested throughout Buddhist texts. For instance, *yasyā ete guṇāḥ saṃvidyante kṣatriyakanyāyā vā brāhmaṇakanyāyā vā vaiśyakanyāyā vā śūdrakanyāyā vā tāṃ kanyāmasmākaṃ pratedaya* (Lal 98); it also appears in the Chinese Dīrghāgama as 刹利種, 婆羅門種, 居士種, 首陀羅種 (T 1 no. 1, 37a1–4).¹²⁵ In any case, the order of the four castes begins with the *kṣatriya*.

The Chinese parallel in DhG Vin has *jūshì* 居士, which corresponds to the G *viśa*/Skt *vaiśya*, the merchant caste, though the word 居士 is also used for “lay devotee.”¹²⁶ The later association of 居士 primarily with “lay devotee” may create ambiguity in interpreting the passage. In the context of Buddhayaśas’s translations, however, especially when appearing alongside the other three castes or in expressions such as 居士種, the term more likely corresponds to Skt *vaiśya*, the merchant caste.¹²⁷ The semantic overlap between *vaiśya* and

¹²⁵ Saṃghadeva’s EĀ has an anomaly order of 刹利, 婆羅門, 工師, 居士種, in which *vaiśya* being the last and *śūdra* the third (T 2, no. 125, p. 653a3–4).

¹²⁶ The word 居士 in today’s Chinese Buddhist world mostly refers to *upāsaka* (feminine *upāsikā*), namely a lay Buddhist devotee who undertakes certain religious commitments while remaining outside the monastic community, in contrast to *bhikṣus* and *bhikṣūṇīs*. An example of this is that translator of the sūtra 佛開解梵志阿闍經 (T 1 no. 20) is mentioned as 吳月支國居士支謙譯, meaning “translated by the lay devotee Zhi Qian of the Yuezhi nation during the Wu dynasty.” The Taishō Tripitaka notes that 居士 is written as 優婆塞 (Skt *upāsaka*) in the Song, Yuan, and Ming recensions. Several other terms are also used for non-monastic householders, including Skt *grhapati*, *kulapati*, *grhin*/Ch 長者, 在家, 居家. For the different connotations of these terms, see Nattier 2003: 22–5.

¹²⁷ The word 居士 as a type of caste (種) also appears in other sources, such as T 2 no. 100, 440b18–21; T 2 no. 125, 653a3–4. In one Sanskrit source, however, it mentions: *yāni khalu punar imāni grhiṇīnam iti kṣatriyakanyakānām brāhmaṇakanyakānām grhapatikanyakānām* (Bhikṣūṇī-Vinaya 240, ed. Roth 1970). Instead of *vaiśya*, the third

upāsaka in the Chinese translation may stem from two factors. First, both terms are frequently transliterated rather than translated, most commonly as *fēi shé* 吠奢 and *yōu pó sè* 優婆塞, respectively, which can obscure their semantic distinction. Second, within a Buddhist context, the category of *upāsaka* often overlaps with that of the *vaiśya*, insofar as lay devotees are typically presumed to belong to the mercantile class, while Brahmins and *kṣatriyas* tend to be explicitly identified when relevant.¹²⁸ Note that the first *upāsakas* were the two merchants, Trapusa and Bhallika, who also appear in the verso of this manuscript.

The last caste category is *śudra*. Buddhayasas’ translation of DhG Vin uses 工師, which is the only time this word appears in his translation; elsewhere, he uses the transliteration 首陀羅. In Buddhist tradition, the *śudra* caste is not fixed. Some preserve it; some replace it with *śrāmaṇa* (沙門) or *grhapati* (長者).¹²⁹

Line 18. *suaṇapa[tri] rua[cu]ṇa ? ? ?*: The scribe corrected *ta* to *ṇa* in *suaṇa*. This could likely reflect the written or visual influence rather than oral dictation. The scribe may have



Figure 10. *ta* is corrected to *ṇa*.

initially written an incorrect akṣara, then recognized the lexical expectation and corrected it. The phonological confusion between *ta/da* and *ṇa* is not natural. The next expected word based on its appearance in line 16 is *ruacuṇaparivure*.

However, the last akṣara of this word seems to be a very faint *ṇa*. So, the *ra* in *parivura* may have been dropped. The reconstruction becomes *ruacuṇa(*parivu) < *ra >*.

? *k[u]śa ? [ṣi]*: The last akṣara of the previous word *ṇa* is faint, but there is a remnant of the end of its footmark. The reconstruction of this phrase is *(*ṇa) kuśa(*lo)ṣi*, corresponding to

caste is replaced by *grhapati*, corresponding to Ch 長者, “elder,” or in Nattier’s word, “man of substance” (Nattier 2003: 24).

¹²⁸ For further comments on this matter, see Anālayo 2011a: 475, n. 175–80.

¹²⁹ T 1 no. 26, 421b24–6 and T 2 no. 125, 658c5–6.

Skt *na kuśalo 'sti*, “it is not suitable.” The phrasing suggests that there are fixed Gāndhārī *sandhi* rules applied to the words between *kuśalo* and *asti*. The reading G *aśi*, if correct, may correspond to Skt *asti*, in the third-person singular present form of $\sqrt{as}$. Although the form is attested elsewhere (GD s.v. *asti*), the reading in the present passage remains uncertain because of the poor condition of the manuscript. The DhG Vin and Mahīś Vin have “I have no need” (我不須), which applies to the golden and silver bowls, which are completely filled with grains.

Line 18–19. + ? ? ? ? *[ṇa]gakaña aye*: This phrase may tentatively be reconstructed as (**ṇa kuśaloṣi*) *nagakaña aye*. The word (**kuśaloṣi*) is not legible on the manuscript because of ink smudging, although the remaining traces appear compatible with such reading. The DhG Vin has “I also have no need for *nāga* maidens” (龍女亦不須), which suggests that the Gāndhārī passage similarly expresses Nala’s rejection of the *nāga* maidens. The G *aye* corresponds to Skt *ayam*, “this,” in the nominative singular masculine (GD s.v. *aya*).

Nala expresses his desire to go forth (Lines 19–20)

Edition:

[19] aye ahu bhayavaṣatia agara[de spa]ṇa[g].[r].[a]. p.[v]. ? ? ? a.ṣa ṇ.l. ma ? /// + + + + +

[20] + + + + + ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? [ṣe] lae ahu bhayavaṣatia agara spa[ṇ]. /// + + +

Reconstruction:

[19] *aye ahu bhayavaṣatia agarade spanag(*a)r(*io) p(*ar)v(*ayīśami a)ṣa ṇ(*a)l(*a)*

*ma(*ṇava) + + + + + [20] + + + + + ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ṣe lae ahu*

*bhayavaṣatia agara span(*agaria)*

Translation:

[19] This, I, in the presence of the Buddha, will go forth from the home into homelessness.

Then, Nala Manava ... [20] ... May I obtain, in the presence of the Buddha, from the home life into homelessness ...

Parallels:

爾時那羅陀梵志，見法得法成就諸法自知得果證，前白佛言：「唯然世尊！我今欲於如來所出家修梵行。」 (DhG Vin at T 22 no. 1428, 792b23–6)

At that time, the brahmin Narada, after seeing and attaining the Dharma, completing all Dharma, and knowing that he had already realized the fruition, spoke to the Buddha, saying: “Please, O Blessed One! I now want to go forth and practice the holy conduct under the Tathāgatha.”

摩訶前禮佛足，白佛言：「世尊！願與我出家受具足戒！」 (Mahīś Vin at T 22 no. 1421, 107a12–3)

The young brahmin prostrated to the feet of the Buddha, and spoke to the Buddha, saying: “O Blessed One, may you grant me to go forth and receive full ordination!”

而白佛言：「唯願世尊！與我出家及具足戒。」 (AbhiNS at T 3 no. 190, 830a5–6)

Then spoke to the Buddha, saying: “O Blessed One! Grant me to go forth and receive full ordination!”

世尊！我願於佛善法律中而為出家，成苾芻性堅修梵行 ... 世尊！先所許者我已作訖，欲於如來善法律中出家修學。(MSV-KV at T 24 no. 1451, 303a6; 304c11–2)

O Blessed One! I aspire to go forth under the Buddha's good Dharma and Vinaya, becoming a monk and diligently practicing the holy conduct ... O Blessed One! What you required before has been done by me; I want to go forth and learn under the Buddha's good Dharma and Vinaya.

Text notes:

The desire to go forth is expressed twice in lines 19 and 20. Following the context from DhG Vin, after Nala rejects the golden and silver bowls offered by Elapatra, he continues saying that "I now wish to practice holy conduct under the Tathāgata" (我今欲於如來所修梵行). In line 20, Nala expresses his desire to go forth directly to the Buddha, saying: "Please, O Blessed One! Now I want to go forth and practice the holy conduct under the Tathāgata" (唯然世尊! 我今欲於如來所出家修梵行).

Line 19. *aye ahu bhayavaṣatīa*: Line 19 reads *aye ahu bhayavaṣatīa*, whereas line 20



Figure 11. Detail of correction from *ha* to *e* in *lae*.

reads *lae ahu bhayavaṣatīa*. In line 20, G *lae* corresponds to Skt *labheya*, in the first-person singular optative in the Ātmanepada ending of $\sqrt{\text{labh}}$, "to receive." The attested optative form is *laeja* or *laece*, as seen in RS 19 lines 22 and 28.¹³⁰ Here, the scribe omitted the optative ending of *ja/ce*. This expression is reflected in Mahīś Vin as "may [you] give me" (願與我) and in AbhiNS as "give me" (與我).¹³¹ In line 19, G *aye* corresponds to Skt

ayam, "this," in the nominative singular masculine (GD s.v. *aya*). G *ahu* corresponds to Skt

¹³⁰ See Lee 2009: 144, 156. Lee notes that *ja* is written in the interlinear position as a later addition. It may therefore be inferred that the omission of final endings occurs relatively frequently in the hand of this scribe throughout the collection.

¹³¹ Cf. Vin I 12: *labheyyāma mayam bhante bhagavato santike pabbajjam*, "May we obtain, O venerable, the going forth in the presene of the Blessed One."

aham, “I” (GD s.v. *aha*).¹³² G *bhayavaṣatīa* corresponds to Skt *bhagavat-santike* in the locative singular masculine, “in the presence of the Buddha.” G *-ṣatīa* could also be in ablative, as attested in RS 19 recto 25.¹³³

agara[de spa]ṇa[g].[r].[a]. p.[v]. ? ? ?: This phrase can safely be reconstructed as *agarade spaṇag(*a)r(*io) p(*ar)v(*ayīṣami)*, corresponding to Skt *agārāt anagārikām pravrajīṣyāmi*, meaning “I will go forth from the home life into homelessness.” The G *spaṇagaria* derives from the *sandhi* between *agaraspa* and *aṇagaria*, which becomes detached and understood as a lexical item.¹³⁴

Further, G *p(*ar)v(*ayīṣami)*, corresponding to Skt *pravrajīṣyāmi*, in the first-person



Figure 12. Detail of *spa* with rightward footmark.

singular future form of *pra + √vraj*, “to go forth,” is not standard in the RS collections, which usually have *parvayida* in the past passive participle form. Yet, the context here is that Nala tells Elapatra he will go forth under the Buddha and will not accept his offer.

The Buddha accepts Nala as a monk (Lines 21–22)

Edition:

[21] + + + + + /// ? ? ? ? ? bhayava ṇa a[vayī] spakha ma ? dhrarma ḥara bhrama[hio]
 dukhaṣa ataia sa h[o vaṇa] /// + + [22] ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? [ahuṣi s]. ye[v]. ? ? [p]. di ? sa ? ?
 ta ya ṇo pacavekṣata ◇ aṇuade aṣa[ve ji] /// + [23] ? ? ?

Reconstruction:

¹³² The conversion formula in RS 19 line 22 has *avu* for Skt *aham* (Lee 2009: 75).

¹³³ Lee 2009: 73.

¹³⁴ For further discussion on *spaṇagaria*, see Silverlock 2015: 302–3.

[21] + + + + + ? ? ? ? *bhayava ṇa avayi spakha ma(*i) dhrarma cara bhramahio*
dukhaṣa ataia sa ho vaṇa + + + [22] ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? *ahuṣi s(*a) yev(*a) ? ? p(*a) di du*
sa ? ? ta ya ṇo pacavekṣata ◇ *aṇuade aṣave ji(*ta)* [23] (*vimuta)

Translation:

[21] ... The Blessed One said: "The Dharma is well spoken by me. Practice the holy life to put an end to suffering!" Moreover, he ... [22] ... Indeed, he was ... Having examined ... from the taints without clinging, (*the mind) [23] (*is liberated).

Parallels:

佛言：「來比丘！於我法中快修梵行盡苦源，即名受具足戒。」如先所見重觀察已，有漏心解脫，無礙解脫智生。(DhG Vin at T 22 no. 1428, 792b26–8)

The Buddha said: "Come, O monk! Cultivate the holy practices within my teaching to bring an end to the source of suffering, and this shall be known as receiving full ordination."

Having examined this once more as previously witnessed, the mind was liberated from all defilements, and the wisdom of unobstructed liberation arose.

佛言：「善來，比丘！」乃至鉢盂在手，亦如上說。出家未久，懃行不懈，得阿羅漢。

(Mahīś Vin at T 22 no. 1421, 107a13–5)

The Buddha said: "Come, O monk!" Then, the appearance of the alms bowl in his hand, as previously described. Not long after his renunciation, through diligent and untiring practice, he attained the state of an Arhat.

爾時，佛告彼童子言：「善來比丘！入我法中，行於梵行，正盡諸苦，令到其邊。」

(AbhiNS at T 3 no. 190, 830a7–8)

At that time, the Buddha addressed the youth, saying: “Come, O monk! Enter into my teachings and practice the holy life to completely bring an end to all suffering and reach the final shore.”

佛言：「善來苾芻！聽汝出家可修梵行。」聞是語已鬚髮自落，如曾剃髮已經七日，法衣著身，瓶鉢在手，威儀整肅如百歲苾芻。(MSV-KV at T 24 no. 1451, 304c12–5)

The Buddha said: "Come, O monk! I permit you to renunciate and cultivate holy practices." After hearing this word, the hair and beards fell away of their own accord, appearing as if they had been shaved seven days prior. Dharma-robed clothed their bodies; a water jar and an alms bowl appeared in his hands. Their deportment was as serious and composed as that of monks who had been ordained for a hundred years.

Text notes:

Line 21. *ṇa*: The G *ṇa* here corresponds to P *naṃ*/BHS *nam*, equivalent to Skt *nanu/nūnam*, “indeed, certainly” (GD s.v. *na*; BHSD s.v. *nam*).

a[vayi]: G *avayi* is a finite verb corresponding to BHS *avaci*¹³⁵/Skt *avocat*, in the third-person singular aorist.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ BHSG §32.24; 229.

¹³⁶ See also Silverlock 2015: 358; Lee 2009: 201; Salomon 2008: 110.

spakha ma?: This can safely be reconstructed as *spakha ma(*i)*. The scribe first wrote



Figure 13. *ma* is corrected to *i*.

ma, then corrected it to *i* when writing *mai*. The correction may reflect anticipatory writing influenced by a highly frequent form of *mama*, suggesting cognitive or oralized copying processes rather than simple graphic confusion. G *mai* is equivalent to Skt *mayā*, in the instrumental singular first-person pronoun. Another form is attested in RS 17 verso line 44 as *mahi*. Further, G *spakha* is a reflex of P *svākkhāto*/Skt *svākhyātaḥ*, from *su* + *ā* + *√khyā*, “well spoken.” So,

*spakha ma(*i) dhrarma* means “the Dharma is well spoken by me.”

ataia: This is equivalent to P *antakiriyāya*/Skt *antarkriyāya*, in the dative singular masculine, meaning “to put an end to” (DP s.v. *antakiriyā*). The form *ataia* is difficult to explain and may reflect multiple phonological developments. The loss of the nasal in *anta-* > *ata-* is expected in Gāndhārī, while *-ia* may reflect the reduction of the oblique ending of a singular feminine *-ā* stem and may be compared with other reduced oblique singular forms attested in the RS Collection.¹³⁷ Nevertheless, the precise development remains uncertain. The Pali equivalent of such an expression is as follows.

svākkhāto dhammo cara brahmacariyaṃ sammā dukkhassa antakiriyāyā'ti. (Vin I 12)

The dharma has been well spoken. Practice the holy life to completely put an end to suffering.

The Gāndhārī expression matches closely with the Pali version: *spakha mai dhrarma cara bhramahio dukhaṣa ataia*. The G has extra *mai* (“by me”), and P has extra *sammā* (“completely”). The DhG Vin has “cultivate the holy practices within my teaching to bring an

¹³⁷ For instance, *ayajae* for *ayodhyāyām* in the locative singular; *gagae* for *gaṅgāyāḥ* in the genitive singular, *saṇa* for *saṃjñāyāḥ* in the ablative singular. See Silverlock 2015: 319–21.

end to the source of suffering” (於我法中快修梵行盡苦源), which agrees with Pali and Gāndhārī but is missing “the dharma has been well spoken by me” (*spakha mai dhrarma*).

Line 22. *pacavekṣata*: This corresponds to Skt *pratyavekṣitvā*, “having examined,” a



Figure 14. Detail of *ca*.

gerund of *prati* + *ava* + $\sqrt{ikṣ}$. Other forms of this word are attested, such as *pracavekṣatu* in the nominative singular present participle¹³⁸ and *pacaekṣaḍi* in third-person singular present form.¹³⁹ The top portion of *ca* is written narrowly, almost looks like a flat straight line rather than the usual looped form on the right side of the arm.

aṇuade: This corresponds to P/BHS *anupādāya*, “not clinging [to existence],” in a gerund form. The contraction from *āya* > *e* is common in G.¹⁴⁰

Lines 22–23. *aṣa[ve ji]* /// + + + +: This is P *āsavehi*/Skt/BHS *āsravebhyaḥ*, “defilement.” The ending *-e* could either be instrumental or ablative plural.¹⁴¹ In this case, it should be in the ablative plural masculine when read together with *cittaṃ vimuktaṃ*, making the meaning “the mind is liberated from the defilements.”

The words continue from the end of line 22 to the beginning of line 23. The beginning of



Figure 15. Detail of *ji*.

line 23 has ink smudging. The reading could either be *ji(*ta vimuta)* or *ji(*ta vimucaḍi)*. Given the space on the manuscript, the reading *ji(*ta vimuta)*, “the mind is liberated,” is more plausible. This is attested in RS 22 recto line 29, which has *aṇuade asrave cita vimuta*.¹⁴² The reading of *ji* in *ji(*ta)* is based on the infrared image. The left arm of akṣara *ji* is straight rather than

¹³⁸ Salomon 2008: 222.

¹³⁹ Glass 2007: 150.

¹⁴⁰ Glass 2007: 111.

¹⁴¹ Glass 2007: 200; Salomon 2008: 227.

¹⁴² Allon 2020: 229.

slanted as in the usual form, but the right long arm is evident for *ji* rather than *ci*, which has a shorter right arm. The DhG Vin has “having examined this once more as previously witnessed, the mind was liberated from all defilements” (如先所見重觀察已, 有漏心解脫), agreeing closely with the G version here: *aṣave* (有漏) *jita* (心) *vimuta* (解脫).

The total number of Arhats in the world (Line 23)

Edition:

[23] + + + ? *samaeṇa dvaḍaśaśaḍe rahataṇa* «loo» *ahu[ṣ]i* «ahoṣi» *ekaḍaśaśaḍe ṣaveṇa*
bhayava dva[ḍaśama]

Reconstruction:

[23] (**aṣa teṇa*) *samaeṇa dvaḍaśaśaḍe rahataṇa loo ahuṣi ahoṣi ekaḍaśaśaḍe ṣaveṇa*
bhayava dvaḍaśama

Translation:

[23] (*At that) time, there were one hundred and twelve arhats in the world; one hundred and eleven disciples, and the Blessed One was the twelfth.

Parallels:

時世間有一百一十一阿羅漢，佛為一百一十二。(DhG Vin at T 22 no. 1428, 792b28–c1)

At that time, there were one hundred and eleven arhats in the world, and the Buddha was the one hundred and twelfth.

爾時世間有六十二阿羅漢。(Mahīś Vin at T 22 no. 1421, 107a15)

At that time, there were sixty-two arhats in the world.

是時，世間即成九十二阿羅漢。(AbhiNS at T 3 no. 190, 831b3)

At that time, ninety-two arhats appeared in the world.

Text notes:

Line 23. *rahatana*: This corresponds to Skt *arahatānām* in the genitive plural masculine. There is a loss of initial *a-* from *arahant* > *rahata*, which is typical in the RS and BL collections, as well as inscriptions.¹⁴³ This could have come from a *sandhi* contraction with the previous word ending in *-a* with the omission of the initial *a-* in *arahant*, and later became lexicalized in Gāndhārī.¹⁴⁴ The Chinese transliteration of this word, such as *luó hàn* 羅漢 by Kumārajīva, may reflect a Gāndhārī underlying in his Indic source, where the initial *ā* 阿 in *ā luó hàn* 阿羅漢 is omitted.

⟨⟨loo⟩⟩ *ahu[s]i* ⟨⟨ahoṣi⟩⟩: The scribe wrote *loo ahoṣi*, corresponding to Skt *loke abhūṣi*, in



Figure 16. Details of the interlinear insertion.

the interlinear position above *ahuṣi*. While there is no doubt that ⟨⟨loo⟩⟩ is an insertion, ⟨⟨ahoṣi⟩⟩ could represent either a correction or an addition. If it is a correction, then *ahuṣi* is corrected to *ahoṣi*. The difference is minor, involving only the interchange of *u* and *o*, both forms corresponding to P *ahosi*/BHS *abhūṣi*, “there were,” in the

third-person singular aorist form of $\sqrt{bhū}$.¹⁴⁵ Moreover, since *ahuṣi* also appears in the recto line 22, the spelling itself does not appear problematic. Elsewhere, the scribe occasionally corrected mistakes by crossing out the original form and writing the corrected reading above it.

Alternatively, ⟨⟨ahoṣi⟩⟩ may represent an addition rather than a correction. In that case, the text

¹⁴³ Silverlock 2015: 185. See also Baums 2009: 188.

¹⁴⁴ Lenz 2002: 192. See also Baums 2009: 188.

¹⁴⁵ BHS §32.72.

would first read “there were 112 arhats in the world,” followed by a secondary addition referring to the words after that. G *loo* reflects the elision of the intervocalic velar consonant in OIA *loka* > *loo*. As Blair Silverlock argues, the spelling *loo* may reflect the actual pronunciation rather than an orthographic simplification.¹⁴⁶

ṣaveaṇa: This corresponds to Skt *śrāvakānām* in genitive plural masculine. There is a parallelism between *dvaḍaśaśaḍe rahataṇa* and *ekaḍaśaśaḍe ṣaveaṇa*, in which a number is followed by a genitive plural word.

dva[ḍaśama]: This is equivalent to Skt *dvādaśama* in the nominative singular masculine, the ordinal number “12th.” The DhG Vin agrees closely with the G version here in terms of the total number of arhats in the world: “there were one hundred and eleven arhats in the world, and the Buddha was the one hundred and twelfth” (世間有一百一十一阿羅漢, 佛為一百一十二). Not only the total number, but also the expression of the ordinal number “one hundred and twelfth” (112th), appears in the DhG Vin. Other Chinese parallels preserve different totals of arhats at this point: the Mahīś Vin records 62, the AbhiNS 92, and the Chinese SbhV 61. These differences arise from the cumulative counting of arhats across the preceding episodes leading up to the story of Elapatra and Nala.

All versions begin with the same basic sequence: the first five monks, Yaśa, Yaśa’s four friends, and Yaśa’s fifty companions, producing a base total of 60 arhats. The DhG Vin further includes an additional group of fifty friends of Yaśa, followed by Nala and the Buddha, resulting in a total of 112. The Mahīś Vin omits the second group of fifty friends; adding only Nala and the Buddha yields a total of 62. The AbhiNS instead adds Pūraṇa and his twenty-nine kinsmen to the base 60, together with Nala and the Buddha, producing a total of 92. Finally, the Chinese SbhV

¹⁴⁶ Silverlock 2015: 230–1.

omits Nala altogether, so that the Buddha alone added to the base total results in 61. The agreement in the total number, especially since the figure derives from the cumulative addition of figures across multiple preceding episodes, suggests that the G version and the DhG Vin may reflect a shared biographical tradition. Both appear to presuppose a narrative sequence that includes the conversion of the first five monks, Yaśa, Yaśa's four companions, Yaśa's fifty friends, an additional group of fifty companions, and finally the episode of Nala and Elapatra.

Elapatra explains why he is both sad and happy (Lines 23–32)

Edition:

[23] [aṣa bhayava e]. /// + [24] ? ? ? ? [a].[d].[d]=[a]ya ki puṇu tu ṇagaraya apea r.[a].[ṣi
a]ś[unī ya va]t[eṣi] apegade [a] + ? /// + + [25] + + + + + /// ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? bhayava
kaśavaṣa tasaga[d].[ra]haṣamaṣamu[da] ? [26] + + + + + + + de e va de a ṣa aja[eṇ].
śakamuṇi bhayava loo upajiṣaḍi t. ś. ? [ṣa] ? [ta ṣa] ? [y]. ? [ṣ]. [27] ? ? [araha
ṣamaṣa]mudha[ṣa śrud]. ? [ṣ]. paḍigahid[e] u a [hi]ḍa vaṇa vi ḍi va ta ḍi teṇa [hu bhate a] ? ?
[28] + + + + + ? ? ? [p].ukharomi taṣa ma[ma] bhate eḍa a[huṣi] aḥirio ya ? ? [v]. [ji]
[ñ].ṇa[d]. ? /// + + + [29] + + + /// + + + + + + + + + + + t[e]ṇa me bhat[e] ? ? ? [t].
śikṣa [kh].[ḍ]. ? [ela]patra [chiṇa] ? [vaṇa ñ]. ? [30] + + + + + + + + + + + /// ? [va]ṇa
ñaṣa[ma ki] imaṣa karma[sa vi]vag[o bhaviṣaḍi so] ahu bhate ta[ṣa karmaṣ]. [vi] ? ? [31] + +
+ + + + + + + + + [ṇia]. a.va [ṇ]. ? ? [ṣa mama] bhate [a] ? ? paraṇi.u ? [bh].yava
bhaviṣa[ḍi] [a]jira [u t]. ? ? ? [32] + + + + + + + + + ? ? iḍi k.ya[ṣ]. [via].[v].i +
bh.vi[śaḍi] ///

Reconstruction:

[23] *aśa bhayava el(*apa)* [24] *(*tra ṇagaraya e)d(*a)d aya ki puṇu tu ṇagaraya apea*
*r(*oe)ṣi aśuṇi ya vatesi apegade a + ? + + [25] + + + + + ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ? ◇ bhayava*
*kaśavaśa tasagad(*a)rahaśamaśamuda(*śa)* [26] *+ + + + + (*paḍigahi)de e va de a śa*
*ajaeṇ(*a) śakamuṇi bhayava loo upajiśaḍi t. ś. ? śa ? ta śa ? y(*a) ? ś.* [27] *? ? araha*
*śamaśamudhaśa śrud(*o ya) ś(*a) paḍigahiḍe uahiḍa vaṇa vi ḍi va ta ḍi teṇa hu bhate*
*a(*ṣuṇi)* [28] *+ + + + + ? ? ? ? (*pra)ukharomi taśa mama bhate eḍa ahuṣi aḥirio ya ? ? v.*
*ji ṇ(*a)ṇad(*aśaṇa) + + [29] + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + teṇa me bhate ? ? ? t.*
*śikṣa kh(*a)d(*iḍa) elapatra chiṇa (ya) vaṇa ṇ. ? [30] + + + + + + + + + + ? vaṇa*
*ṇaśama ki imaśa karmasa vivago bhaviśaḍi so ahu bhate taśa karmaś(*a) vi(*vaga)* [31]
*(*ḍa) + + + + + + + + + + ṇi(*a e)va ṇ(*e) ? (*ta)śa mama bhate a(*jira) paraṇi(*vuḍe)*
*bh(*a)yava bhaviśaḍi ajira u t. ? ? ? [32] + + + + + + + + + + ? ? iḍi k(*a)yaś(*a)*
*vi(*a)v(*art)i(*ḍa) bh(*a)viśaḍi*

Translation:

[23] Then, the Blessed One [24] spoke this (*to *nāga*-king Elapatra): “Why, again, O *nāga* king, do you sometimes (*weep) and shed tears, sometimes ... [25] ... to the Blessed One: of Kāśyapa, the Tathāgata, Arhat, Perfectly Complete Buddha [26] ...was received, with the passing away of (?), Śākyamuni, the Blessed One, will arise in the world ... [27] ... Arhat, Perfectly Complete Buddha, has been heard, and it has been received and presented. Moreover (?) Therefore, O Venerable, tears [28] ... I manifest. O venerable! This occurred to me: It is wondrous! ... the knowledge and vision ... [29] ... O Venerable! by me ... the training was violated and the elapatra [grass] was torn. Again (?) [30] ... Moreover, I consider: what will be the fruition of this action? O venerable! I, (*from the fruition of) that

action [31] ... (*of me). O Venerable! (*Soon), the Blessed One will be (*completely entered into *nirvāṇa*). Soon ... [32] ... This will be (*the transformation) of the body.

Parallels:

so kira pubbe kassapabuddhasāsane daharabhikkhu hutvā gaṃgāya nāvaṃ abhiruyha gacchanto ekasmiṃ erakagumbe erakapattaṃ gahetvā nāvāya vegasā gacchamānāyapi na muñci, erakapattaṃ chijjivā gataṃ. so “appamattakaṃ etan”ti āpattiṃ adesetvā vīsati vassasahassāni araññe samaṇadhammaṃ katvāpi maraṇakāle erakapattena gīvāya gahito viya āpattiṃ desetukāmopi aññaṃ bhikkhuṃ apassamāno “aparisuddhaṃ me sīlan”ti uppannavippaṭisāro tato cavitvā ekarukkhadoṇikanāvappamāṇo nāgarājā hutvā nibbatti, erakapattottevassa nāmaṃ ahosi. so nibbattakkhaṇeyeva attabhāvaṃ oloketvā “ettakaṃ nāma kālaṃ samaṇadhammaṃ katvā ahetukayoniyaṃ maṇḍūkabhakkhaṭṭhāne nibbattomhī”ti vipaṭisārī ahosi. (Dhp-a III 230–1)

It is said that in the past, during the dispensation of Kassapa Buddha, having become a young monk, having boarded a boat on the Ganges, he was traveling along. In a thicket of eraka, having grasped an eraka leaf, even while the boat was moving swiftly, he did not let go. Having torn the eraka leaf, he went away. Having not confessed the offense, he [thought]: “This is a minor matter,” even having practiced the ascetic life in the forest for twenty thousand years. At the moment of death, [it is] as if seized by the throat by that eraka leaf. Although wishing to confess the offense, not seeing another monk, [he died] with remorse arisen, [thinking]: “My morality is impure.” Having passed away from there, he was reborn as a *nāga* king, having the size of a canoe made from a single tree trunk. His name was Erakapatta. Immediately at the moment of rebirth, having looked at himself, he became

remorseful, [thinking]: “Having practiced the ascetic life for such an amount of time, I have been reborn in a causeless womb, in a place whose foods are frogs.”

爾時世尊告龍王言：「汝何故悲泣不能自勝耶？」時龍王白佛言：「世尊！我念古昔迦葉佛時，修梵行故犯戒，壞伊羅鉢樹葉，此當有何報應。世尊！我由此業報故，生長壽龍中，如來般涅槃法滅盡後，我乃當轉此龍身，我失彼此二邊利，不得修梵行。以是故，悲泣不能自勝。」

爾時世尊復問龍王言：「汝以何緣復歡喜耶？」龍王白佛言：「我身自從迦葉佛聞，而告我言：『却後當有釋迦牟尼佛出現於世，為如來、至真、等正覺。』如今所見如實不異，我作此念：『未曾有，如來智慧所見，如實無二。』以是故，歡喜踊躍不能自勝。」 (DhG Vin at T 22 no. 1428, 792c1–13)

At that time, the Blessed One addressed the *nāga* king, saying: "For what reason do you weep with grief and were unable to control yourself?" Then the *nāga* king addressed the Buddha, saying: "O Blessed One! I recall that in the past, during the time of Kāśyapa Buddha, while I was cultivating holy practices, I violated the precepts by damaging the leaves of an elapatra tree, [thinking:] “What kind of retribution will result from this?” O Blessed One! Due to the karmic retribution of this deed, I was born among the long-lived *nāgas*. Only after the Tathāgata enters *parinirvāṇa* and the Dharma has completely disappeared will I finally be able to transform this *nāga* body. I have lost the benefits of both sides and am unable to cultivate pure practices. For this reason, I am weeping and cannot restrain my grief."

At that time, the Blessed One further questioned the *nāga* king: "For what reason are you so full of joy?" The *nāga* king addressed the Buddha, saying: "I myself heard from the Kāśyapa Buddha, who told me: 'In the future, the Śākyamuni Buddha will appear in the world as a Tathāgata, an Arhat, and a Perfectly Awakened One.' What I see today is truly not different [from those words]. I thought to myself: 'This is unprecedented! That which is seen by the wisdom of the Tathāgata is in accordance with reality and incomparable.' For this reason, I am jumping for joy and cannot contain myself."

佛問龍王：「何故須臾乍喜、乍悲？」答言：「世尊！我憶過去迦葉佛所，淨修梵行。於後時，捉紫華莖，往到佛所問言：『世尊！若比丘殺此草，得何等罪？』佛答我言：『以此因緣，或有墮最苦地獄者！』我聞此語不信不敬，便故刺伊羅樹葉，作是念：『試看有何果報？』竟不捨此見，亦不悔過。命終之後，今生長壽龍中，因是業故，名我為伊羅鉢龍。既受身已，復往佛所問言：『我何時當得脫此龍身？』佛答我言：『當來過於百千億萬歲，有釋迦牟尼佛出現於世，彼佛當記汝得解脫時！』我今既見世尊生希有心，始知諸佛言無虛妄，是以欣笑。又念昔違佛教，今復不能受佛明戒，是以悲泣。」

復白佛言：「願記我何時當得脫此龍身！」 (Mahīś Vin at T 22 no. 1421, 106c14–28)

The Buddha asked the *nāga* king: "Why is it that you fluctuate so suddenly between joy and sorrow?" He replied: "O Blessed One! I remember that in the past, under the Kāśyapa Buddha, I purified my conduct through holy practices. Later on, I took the stem of a purple flower, went to the Buddha, and asked him: 'O Blessed One! If a monk destroys such vegetation, what kind of transgression does he incur?' The Buddha answered me: 'Because of

such causes and conditions, one might even fall into the most painful of hells!’ Hearing these words, I lacked faith and respect. I then intentionally pierced the leaf of an *Ela* tree, thinking to myself: ‘Let us see what kind of karmic retribution results from this.’ In the end, I did not abandon that view, nor did I repent for my fault. After my life ended, I was born in this life among the long-lived *nāgas*. Because of this karma, I am named the *Elapatra nāga*. Once I had received this body, I went again to that Buddha and asked: ‘When shall I be liberated from this *nāga* body?’ The Buddha replied: ‘In the future, after hundreds of millions of years have passed, the Buddha Śākyamuni will appear in the world. That Buddha shall prophesy the time of your liberation!’ Now that I have met the Blessed One, I have conceived a rare state of mind and have come to realize that the words of the Buddhas are never false; therefore, I smile with joy. Yet, I also reflect on how I formerly defied the Buddha’s teaching and how I am now unable to receive the Buddha’s pure precepts; for this reason, I weep in sorrow.”

He further addressed the Buddha: “I pray that you prophesy when I shall be liberated from this *nāga* body!”

爾時，世尊告伊羅鉢大龍王言：「汝大龍王！何故忽然，瞻看我面，笑而復悲，如是淚下？」作是語已，伊羅鉢龍即白佛言：「如來世尊！我念往昔，有佛出世，名曰迦葉多陀阿伽度、阿羅訶、三藐三佛陀，我時於彼佛法之中，修行梵行，為出家人。世尊！我於彼時見有一草，名曰伊羅，我時以手斫彼草，取執捉將詣迦葉佛所，到佛所已，白彼佛言：『世尊！若有比丘，斫於此草，得何果報？』時彼世尊，即報我言：『汝比丘知！若人故心斫斷此草，彼人當墮牢固地獄。』... 世尊！而我當時既造於彼波夜提罪，而不信有波夜提報，復不能捨此之邪見，命終已後，遂即生於長壽龍中，是故彼

時為我立名，名伊羅鉢伊羅鉢也。而我爾時，還於彼處迦葉佛邊，問彼佛言：『大聖世尊！我於何時，當得脫此惡龍之形？何時當得復於人身？』...『汝大龍王！今應當知！過若干年若干百年若干千年，過若干百千萬億年後，當有佛出興於世，彼佛號為釋迦牟尼多陀阿伽度、阿羅呵、三藐三佛陀，彼釋迦佛，當記汝得復於人身。』...世尊！我見如此自罪過故，呵責自身，泣淚啼哭，如雨滿面；見世尊喜，所以微笑，為是因緣。我如是念：『希有希有！未曾有事，如是之法，諸佛世尊，乃能如是，無有二言。』...世尊！我以是緣，今復問佛世尊，我何時得脫此龍身？更何時得復於人身？』(AbhiNS at T 3 no. 190, 829a11–b21)

At that time, the Blessed One addressed the great *nāga*-king Elapatra, saying: “O great *nāga* king! Why have you suddenly gazed upon my face, and why do you now laugh and then grieve, with tears falling in this way?” After he had spoken these words, the *nāga* Elapatra replied to the Buddha: “Tathāgata, Blessed One! I recall that in the distant past, a Buddha appeared in the world named Kāśyapa, a Tathāgata, Arhat, and completely perfect awakened one. At that time, I practiced the holy conduct within the teachings of that Buddha as a renunciant. O Blessed One! In those days, I saw a certain blade of grass called *ela*. I then cut that grass with my hand, took it up, and went to where the Buddha Kāśyapa was staying. Having arrived there, I asked that Buddha: ‘O Blessed One, if a monk cuts such grass as this, what kind of karmic retribution will he receive?’ Then that Blessed One replied to me: ‘O monk, you should know! If a person intentionally cuts this grass, that person will fall into the Firm Hell’... O Blessed One! At that time, although I had committed that *prāyaścittika* offense, I did not believe there was a retribution for it. Furthermore, I was unable to abandon this mistaken view. When my life ended, I was consequently reborn among the long-lived

nāgas. For this reason, I was given the name Elapatra at that time. At that time, I returned to where the Buddha Kāśyapa was and asked him: ‘O Great Sage, Blessed One! At what time shall I be liberated from this wretched form of an evil *nāga*? When will I be able to regain a human body?’ ... ‘O great *nāga* king! You should know now: after some years, some hundreds of years, some thousands of years, indeed, after some hundreds of thousands of millions of years, a Buddha shall arise in the world. That Buddha's name will be Śākyamuni, the Tathāgata, Arhat, completely perfect awakened one. That Buddha Śākyamuni will then prophesy when you shall regain a human body’ ... O Blessed One! Because I perceived my own transgressions in this way, I reproached myself, and tears fell from my eyes like rain, covering my face. Yet, seeing the Blessed One, I felt joy; that is why I smiled for this very reason. I thought: ‘How extraordinary! How unprecedented! Such is the Dharma that the Buddhas, the Blessed Ones, can act in this way, never speaking with a double tongue’ ... It is exactly as that Buddha said, without any difference. O Blessed One! For this reason, I now ask the Buddha, the Blessed One, once more: When will I be able to escape this *nāga* body? And at what time will I be able to regain a human body?’”

Text notes:

Line 24. *ki puṇu tu ṇagaraya*: There are two corrections in this line. The akṣara *ki* appears to have been written initially as *ku*, before being corrected to *ki* through the addition of an *i*-diacritic, although the original *u*-diacritic remains visible. The reading *ki* is supported by the context, corresponding to Skt *kim*, “why.” The second correction concerns the akṣara *ga*. There is a bold loop that appears on the right side of *ga*, almost forming a complete circle, giving the impression that the scribe first wrote a *kha* then corrected it to *ga*. Throughout the manuscript,

the scribe consistently writes underlined *g* for *ṇaga*. The present form appears to represent a correction made after the initial writing, though without a clear means of restoring the bottom stroke after writing *kha*. Based on differences in ink thickness, the akṣara was likely executed in three stages: first written as *kha*; then supplemented with the left stem and downward stroke; and finally provided with an additional right loop to reinforce the reading as *ga*.



Figure 18. Detail of corrected *ki*.



Figure 17. Detail of corrected *ga*.

apea r[a].[ṣi]: This may be reconstructed as *apea r(*oe)ṣi*. *G apea* is probably related to *apegaṣe* that appears later in the same line, though with the scribal omission of the final akṣara. *G apegade* may tentatively correspond to Skt *apyekadā* from *api* + *ekadā*, “sometimes/at times.” The parallel in the Mahīś Vin reads: “Why is it that you fluctuate so suddenly between joy and sorrow?” (何故須與乍喜乍悲?), which supports an adverbial sense such as “sometimes.” The following word may be read as *r(*oe)ṣi*, corresponding to Skt *rodayasi*, in the second-person singular present form of *√rud*, “to weep.”¹⁴⁷

[a]ś[unī ya va]t[ṣi]: This phrase, *aśunī ya vateṣi*, resembles the phrase in line 15, *aśunī ya vateṣi*. Here, the verb *vateṣi* appears in the second-person singular present form.

From the middle of line 25 through line 28, Elapatra explains the reason for his joy. A close comparison shows that this section agrees primarily with the parallel account preserved in the DhG Vin:

¹⁴⁷ Compare this with *praroemi* in the recto line 15 above.

我身自從迦葉佛聞，而告我言：『却後當有釋迦牟尼佛出現於世，為如來、至真、等正覺。』如今所見如實不異，我作此念：『未曾有，如來智慧所見，如實無二。』以是故，歡喜踊躍不能自勝。

I myself heard from Kāśyapa Buddha, who told me: 'In the future, the Śākyamuni Buddha will appear in the world as a Tathāgata, an Arhat, and a Perfectly Awakened One.' What I see today is truly not different [from those words]. I thought to myself: 'This is unprecedented! That which is seen by the wisdom of the Tathāgata is in accordance with reality and without duality.' For this reason, I am jumping for joy and cannot contain myself."

Other parallels likewise preserve the episode explaining Elapatra's joy and sorrow, though they differ considerably in detail. The Mahīs Vin contains details absent from the DhG Vin and presumably also lacking in the Gāndhārī version. The AbhiNS further expands the narrative into a much longer and more elaborate recension, which does not appear to be reflected in the Gāndhārī text. Accordingly, the following analysis will primarily follow the narrative structure of the DhG Vin.

The Gāndhārī version, however, appears to differ from the DhG Vin in narrative arrangement. In the DhG Vin, Elapatra first explains his sorrow, recounting how he tore the elapatra grass, an act regarded as a violation of the precepts. Only afterward does he explain his joy, namely Kāśyapa Buddha's prediction that he would eventually be released from his *nāga* form during the era of Śākyamuni Buddha. The Gāndhārī version appears to preserve this sequence in reverse order.

Line 25. *kaśavaṣa tasaga[d].[ra]haṣamaṣamu[da] ?*: This can be reconstructed as



Figure 19. Detail of the corrected *sa*.

*kaśavaṣa tasagaḍ(*a)rahaṣamaṣamuda(*sa)*, corresponding to Skt *kāśyapasya tathāgatārahatsamyaksambuddhasya*. The akṣara *ṣa* in *kaśavaṣa* appears to have been corrected from an earlier *ḍa*. At first glance, the akṣara gives the impression of containing a *u*-diacritic at the bottom. However, closer inspection suggests that the scribe initially wrote

ḍa and subsequently added an additional stroke extending from the foot of the akṣara to transform it into *ṣa*. This secondary stroke causes the resulting form to superficially resemble *ṣu*. Since the following word begins with *ta-* (*tasagadāsa*), the correction may reflect anticipatory graphic influence from the subsequent akṣara sequence. The error, therefore, appears more likely to have arisen through visual or written interference during copying rather than through oral or phonological confusion.

The words *kaśavaṣa* and *tasagaḍ(*a)rahaṣamaṣamuda(*ṣa)* are in a genitive case. The case ending only appears at the end, suggesting that *tasagaḍarahaṣamaṣamudaṣa* is written in a compound, consisting of *tasagaḍa*, *araha*, and *ṣamaṣamudaṣa*. The DhG Vin parallel has “I myself heard from the Kāśyapa Buddha” (我身自從迦葉佛聞). The G version here may consist of Elapatra mentioning the speech “of the Kāśyapa.” The AbhiNS has the epithet of Kāśyapa Buddha spelled out in transliteration as 迦葉, 多陀阿伽度, 阿羅訶, 三藐三佛陀, with the order matching the Gāndhārī version.

Line 26. + + + + *ḍe*: This may be reconstructed as *(*paḍigahi)ḍe* based on the repetition in the next line. The space in the manuscript and the akṣara before *ḍe* suggest a resemblance of *hi*. See the text note on the recto line 27 below.

e va ḍe a ṣa: This word or sequence of words is difficult to determine. Based on the following word G *aḥaṇa* (=Skt *atyayena*), a preceding genitive form is expected at this position, and the ending *ṣa* appears to support such a reading. One possibility is *vadeaṣa*, corresponding to Skt *vādasya*, “of speech” in the genitive singular masculine. However, this interpretation leaves the initial *e* in *e va ḍe a ṣa* unexplained, unless the *e* belongs to the preceding word.

aja[eṇ].: This can be reconstructed as *ajaṇ(*a)*, corresponding to P *accayena*/Skt *atyayena*, “with the passing away (of time),” in the instrumental singular masculine. Together with the preceding genitive singular, the phrase appears to express an extended period of time.¹⁴⁸

śakamuṇi: Prior to the reconstruction, the fragment preserving *śakamuṇi* appears in the verso. After the image was corrected, it became clear that the fragment had been flipped. G *śakamuṇi* is in the nominative singular masculine.

upajiṣaḍi: This corresponds to P *uppajjissati*/Skt *utpatsyate*, “he will arise,” in the third-person singular future middle form of *ut* + *√pad*. The parallel in DhG Vin reads: “In the future, the Śākyamuni Buddha will appear in the world as a Tathāgata, an Arhat, and a Perfectly Awakened One” (却後當有釋迦牟尼佛出現於世, 為如來, 至真, 等正覺), which broadly agrees with the Gāndhārī version.

The last few akṣaras near the end of the line are difficult to read due to the misalignment



Figure 20. Detail of illegible akṣara.

of the broken bark, the faintness of the ink, and possible corrections involving overwriting of an earlier erroneous akṣara. One particular akṣara appears to have been heavily corrected through overlapping strokes, making its original form difficult to determine.

Line 27. *paḍigahid[e]*: This is equivalent to Skt *pratigrahitāḥ*, “it was received,” in the masculine singular past passive participle form of *prati* + *√grah*. Similar expressions are found in Pali and Sanskrit sources. For instance:

sammukhā metaṃ bhante bhagavato sutam sammukhā paṭiggahitam. (DN II 115)

saṃmukham me bhadante bhagavato 'ntikāc chrutam saṃmukhamudgrhītam. (Divy 128.18)

¹⁴⁸ Compare similar phrases such as *navānām vā daśānām vā māśānām atyayena sarvā pañca devīśatā prajātāḥ* (Mvu III 10); *atha kho bhagavā sattāhassa accayena tamhā samādhimhā vuṭṭhahitvā Mucalindamūlā yena Rājāyatanaṃ ten' upasaṃkami* (Vin I 3).

From the above instances, the expression *sammukham*, “face to face,” is expected to appear preceding *paḍigahide*. Yet, it seems unlikely here, as there is no more space for this word in this line.

ua[hi]ḍa: This may be equivalent to Skt *upahitam*, “it was presented,” in the nominative singular neuter past passive participle form of *upa* + $\sqrt{dhā}$. This word, along with *paḍigahide*, may refer to the speech, saying, or prediction of the Kāśyapa Buddha to Elapatra.

Line 28. *aḥirio*: This can be taken as equivalent to P *acchariyam*/Skt *āścaryam*, “wondrous,” in the nominative singular neuter, functioning predicatively or exclamatorily. The attested form is *aḥaria* (GD s.v. *aḥaria*).¹⁴⁹ This reading is primarily based on the DhG Vin that reads: “This is unprecedented! That which is seen by the wisdom of the Tathāgata is in accordance with reality and incomparable” (未曾有, 如來智慧所見, 如實無二). Ch 未曾有 is equivalent to Skt *āścaryam*, though literally it means “unprecedented.”¹⁵⁰

[ñ].ṇa[d]. ? /// +: This can be reconstructed as *ñ(*a)ṇad(*aśaṇa)*, corresponding to P *ñāṇadassanam*/Skt *jñānadarśanam*, “knowledge and vision,” in the nominative singular neuter of a *dvandva* compound. The DhG Vin has “that which is seen by the wisdom of the Tathāgata is in accordance with reality and incomparable” (如來智慧所見, 如實無二). In light of this parallel, a reference to the Blessed One, such as *bhayavata* (=Skt *bhagavataḥ*), may be expected elsewhere in the line.

From line 29 onward, Elapatra explains the reason for his sorrow. The parallel account in the DhG Vin reads:

¹⁴⁹ Library of Congress scroll in the verso line 12, see Salomon 2021: 375.

¹⁵⁰ Similar expressions occur in Pali and Sanskrit sources, for example: *acchariyaṃ yāva lūkhāyaṃ gharaṇī* (Vin I 272); *āścariyaṃ yāvan maharddhiko mahāśramano mahānubhāvaḥ* (SbhV I 217).

世尊！我念古昔迦葉佛時，修梵行故犯戒，壞伊羅鉢樹葉，此當有何報應。世尊！我由此業報故，生長壽龍中，如來般涅槃法滅盡後，我乃當轉此龍身，我失彼此二邊利，不得修梵行。以是故，悲泣不能自勝。

O Blessed One! I recall that in the past, during the time of Kāśyapa Buddha, while I was cultivating holy practices, I violated the precepts by damaging the leaves of an elapatra tree, [thinking:] “What kind of retribution will result from this?” O Blessed One! Due to the karmic retribution of this deed, I was born among the long-lived *nāga*. Only after the Tathāgata enters *parinirvāṇa* and the Dharma has completely disappeared will I finally be able to transform this *nāga* body. I have lost the benefits of both sides and am unable to cultivate pure practices. For this reason, I am weeping and cannot restrain my grief.

The Gāndhārī version appears to agree closely with this account, preserving the sequence of Elapatra’s recollection of his past transgression and his reflection on its karmic consequences. Several reconstructed expressions in the Gāndhārī text, including references to karmic fruition, the Buddha’s imminent *parinirvāṇa*, and the eventual transformation of the *nāga* body, correspond closely to the DhG Vin narrative, although the exact wording remains uncertain in places due to the fragmentary condition of the manuscript.

Line 29. *śikṣa* [kh].[d]. ?: This phrase may be reconstructed as *śikṣa kh(*a)d(*i)da*, equivalent to P *sikkhā khaṇḍitā*/Skt *śikṣā khaṇḍitā*, “the training was violated,” in the nominative singular feminine (GD s.v. *śikṣa*; *khaṇḍaga*).¹⁵¹ A chip obscures most of the akṣaras *kh(*a)*, *d(*i)*, and *da*. The left arm of *d(*i)* is obstructed, causing it to resemble *la*, while only the bottom part of *da* remains visible. The reading *kh(*a)d(*i)da* is supported by the passage in the Mvu: *khaṇḍitu śikṣāṃ paramārthadarśino svargā cyuto tīryam upeha kṛcchraṃ* (Mvu III 493). The Mvu preserves a gerund (*khaṇḍitu*), governing the accusative *śikṣāṃ*.¹⁵² The Gāndhārī version appears instead to reflect a past passive participle construction, *śikṣa khaḍiḍa*.¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ This phrase mostly appears in the Sanskrit source, such as *tatraibhiḥ kṣudrānuḥkṣudrāṇi śikṣāpadāni khaṇḍitāni* (Divy 303.8).

¹⁵² Marciniak 2019: 493, n. 24.

¹⁵³ Another attested form of P/Skt *khaṇḍa* is in BC 4 recto line 19.1 as *khaḍaena*. See Schlosser 2016: 153.

[*ela*]/*patra* [*chiṇa*]: The akṣara *e*- in *elapatra* is written in two separate strokes rather than the scribe's usual single continuous stroke. A small dot appears above *la*, causing it to resemble *le*; however, this may merely represent an accidental ink mark rather than an intentional diacritic. This phrase corresponds to Skt *elapatraṃ chinnaṃ*, “*elapatra* [grass] was torn,” in the nominative singular neuter.

The episode in which Elapatra tears the *elapatra* grass appears in most narratives concerning the *nāga*-king Elapatra. It explains both the cause of Elapatra's rebirth as a *nāga* and the origin of his name. The parallel versions describe an event in Elapatra's life when he was a monk under Kāśyapa Buddha. He intentionally grasped and tore off the P *eraka*/Skt *elapatra*/Ch *yī luó* 伊羅 leaf, which is considered a violation of the precept.¹⁵⁴ The parallel version of this story in the Dhp-a reads *erakapattaṃ chijjivā*, and in the Mvu reads *chittvāna patr'eko vanantarasmim yathā śāstāraṃ munino akṛtvā*.¹⁵⁵ The Samādhirāja-sūtra likewise preserves verses describing Elapatra lamenting his former deed:

upagata elapatru nāgarājā parivṛta nāgaśatehi rocamānaḥ
munivara jinu kāśyapaṃ smaranto [svaka upapatti apaśyi akṣaneṣu]
aho ahu puri āsi kāmṣapaprāpto mayi puri cchinnu parittam elapatram
so ahu upapannu akṣaṇasmin na sukaru [dharma vijānitum jinasya]. (Samādhirāja-sūtra 10.69–70)¹⁵⁶

A similar account appears in Gopadatta's Jātakamālā:

¹⁵⁴ The texts do not mention which violation it is to break a grass. However, it is to be understood as a P *pācittiya*/Skt *prāyaścittika*/Ch *bō yī tí* 波逸提 violation that requires expiation to another monk. Cf. Pācittiya 11: “If a monk destroys a plant, he commits an offense requiring confession” (*bhūtagāmapātabyatāya pācittiyan'ti*) (Vin IV 34). The Pali Vin further defines five types of propagations (*bījajātāni*) with their examples, consisting of propagations from roots, stems, joints, cuttings, and seeds (Vin IV 34–5). Although Erakapatta is not explicitly mentioned, it may fall into the propagation from cutting (*aggabījāṃ*) type. The Dhg Vin records that: “If one perceives living grass and trees as grass and trees, and either cuts them down oneself, instructs others to do so, or even boils them, it constitutes an offense requiring confession” (生草木作生草木想, 若自斷, 教他斷, 乃至煮, 波逸提) (T 22 no. 1428, 642a2–3). It is noteworthy that these Vinaya sources are originated from the Śākyamuni Buddha and not necessarily be the rules during the Kāśyapa Buddha. For further discussions on this matter, see Bareau 1963: 229–42.

¹⁵⁵ Marciniak notes that *patr'eko* could be miswritten for *ekapatra* (Marcinak 2019: 493, n. 20).

¹⁵⁶ Dutt 1941: 942. Cf. Vaidya 1961: 64.

*elāpatram avajñayā kila munau cchitvā pramādātmaḥ
pārthagjanyaviśasya vṛttim aśivām udbhāvayan karmaṇā
elāpādapapādapāṭitaśiro dvamacchoṇito
nāgendrah pṛthubhīmabhogapaṭalo nādyāpi nirmucyate (Punyarāśyavadānam of
Gopadatta's Jātakamālā 10.43)¹⁵⁷*

In two sources, AbhiNS and Mahīs Vin, such an act will result in being reborn in the most miserable hell.¹⁵⁸ Other parallels do not offer such an explanation; they only state that Elapatra was reborn as a miserable *nāga*.

Line 30. *ñāṣama*: The writing of this word is clear in the manuscript, though the akṣara *ma* is partially affected by ink smudging. The form is expected to correspond to P/Skt *jānāmi* in the first-person singular present form of √*jñā*, “to consider” (GD s.v. *janadi*). However, the attested form *ñāṣati* appears in the third-person plural future form (=Skt *jñāsyanti*) in RS 19 verso lines 23 and 24.¹⁵⁹ If this is the case, then *ñāṣama* would more naturally correspond to P *ñassāma*/Skt *jñāsyāmaḥ* in the first-person plural future form. Such a future plural form, however, does not fit the context of the present passage. Based on the parallel in the DhG Vin, the narrative reads:

我念古昔迦葉佛時，修梵行故犯戒，壞伊羅鉢樹葉，此當有何報應。

I recall that in the past, during the time of Kāśyapa Buddha, while I was cultivating holy practices, I violated the precepts by damaging the leaves of an elapatra tree, [thinking:] “What kind of retribution will result from this?”

Following the narrative sequence, a first-person singular present form is expected. As noted elsewhere, the scribe occasionally appears to confuse singular and plural first-person

¹⁵⁷ Hanh 1990: 120–1.

¹⁵⁸ AbhiNS mentions that one will be reborn in the “unbreakable hell” (*laógù dìyù* 牢固地獄), whereas Mahīs Vin states that one will be reborn in the “most painful hell” (*zuikǔ dìyù* 最苦地獄).

¹⁵⁹ Lee 2009: 73, 148.

endings. As for the future morphology, it is also possible that the future form is used idiomatically here with a present sense.¹⁶⁰

karma[sa vi]vag[o]: This phrase corresponds to P *kamassa vipako*/Skt *karmasya vipākaḥ*/Ch *bào yìng* 報應, “the fruit of an action.” This is a reflection following the verb *ñāṣama*. The DhG Vin reads: “What kind of retribution will result from this?” (此當有何報應). The Gāndhārī version, *ki imaṣa karmasa vivago bhaviṣaḍi*, “What will be the fruition of this action?” agrees closely with the DhG Vin.¹⁶¹

Following that, the DhG Vin continues “O Blessed One! Due to the karmic retribution of this deed, I was born among the long-lived *nāgas*” (世尊! 我由此業報故, 生長壽龍中). The Gāndhārī version reads: *so ahu bhate taṣa karmaṣ(*a) vi(*vagaḍa)*, “O venerable, I, from the fruition of that action.” The passage is fragmentary, but it appears to introduce the karmic result of Elapatra’s deed. At the beginning of line 31, one would expect a reference to Elapatra’s rebirth as a *nāga*, although the precise wording remains uncertain.

Line 31. *[a] ? ? paraṇi .u ? [bh].yava bhaviṣa[d]i*: This can safely be reconstructed as *a(*jira) paraṇi(*vuḍe) bh(*a)yava bhaviṣaḍi*. G *a(*jira)* corresponds to P/Skt *aciram*, “soon,” in the adverbial form (GD s.v. *cira*). G *paraṇi(*vuḍe)* corresponds to P *parinibbutam*/Skt *parinivṛtam*, “completely entered into *nirvāṇa*,” in the nominative singular neuter (GD s.v. *parinivuda*). The atypical development of *i > a* in the prefix *pari* appears in all occurrences of the word *paraḍaha* (=Skt *pariḍaha*) in RS 20. This expression resembles the Pali passage:

evaṃ vutte bhagavā māraṃ pāpimantaṃ etad avoca “appossukko tvaṃ, pāpima, hohi, na ciraṃ tathāgatassa parinibbānaṃ bhavissati. ito tiṇṇaṃ māsānaṃ accayena tathāgato parinibbāyissatī”ti. (DN II 104)

¹⁶⁰ Compare the usage in the Doṇa Sutta, where the future form of the verb $\sqrt{bhū}$ is understood in context with a present meaning. Allon, citing Whitney (1889: §948a), notes that the future tense can be used in a “presumptive” sense, that is, to express what is assumed or inferred in the present situation. See Allon 2001: 171–4.

¹⁶¹ Cf. *imā devatā imassa kammaṣa vipakena ito cutā tattha upapannā* (AN IV 303); *kasya karmasya vipākena iha Trāyastriṃśabhavane upapanno?* (Mvu III 386).

The Gāndhārī passage similarly appears to describe the imminent *parinirvāṇa* of the Blessed One. The parallel in the DhG Vin reads: “after the Tathāgata enters *parinirvāṇa* and the Dharma has completely disappeared” (如來般涅槃法滅盡後). The Gāndhārī version may originally have continued into the following line with an expression corresponding to “after the Dharma has completely disappeared,” although the exact wording remains unclear due to the fragmentary state of the manuscript. It is also possible that this element was omitted in the Gāndhārī recension.

Line 32. *[via].[v]. .i +*: This may be reconstructed as *vi(*a)v(*ad)i(*da)*, equivalent to Skt *vyāvartitam*, in the nominative singular neuter in the past passive participle form of *vi + ā + √vrt*, “to turn away.” Based on the parallel in the DhG Vin, it corresponds to the phrase “I will finally be able to transform this *nāga* body” (我乃當轉此龍身). Here, G *vi(*a)v(*ad)i(*da)* corresponds to Ch *zhuǎn* 轉, “to transform,” referring to Elapatra’s eventual release from his *nāga* form and return to a human state after Kāśyapa Buddha has entered *parinirvāṇa*. A comparable usage of the verbal form appears in the Sanskrit source:

*yadivijñātam abhaviṣyat, tilaśo 'pi me saṃcūrṇitaśarīreṇānuttarāyāḥ
samyaksambodheścittam vyāvartitam abhaviṣyat* (Divy 32.29).

In this passage, *vyāvartitam* carries the sense of “turned away” or “reversed,” supporting the semantic range of the Gāndhārī form.

Chapter 5: Story of Trivusa and Valia

5.1. Narrative Overview

The story presented on the verso is about the two merchants called Trapusa (P *Tapussa*/Skt *Trapusa*, *Trapuṣa*) and Bhallika (P/Skt *Bhallika*) who happen to pass the place of the Buddha, who has recently attained enlightenment, while on their journey. A deity, who was their previous relative, urges them to offer food to the newly enlightened Buddha for their own benefit. The four directional kings offer a bowl for the Buddha to receive food. Eventually, after they offer food to the Buddha, they receive a blessing from the Buddha and become the followers of the Buddha. This story is preserved in many versions in several different text traditions, as discussed below.

The narrative plot from all the extant versions unfolds roughly as follows:

1. The Buddha is sitting under the Bodhi tree.
2. Two merchants pass by a city.
3. A deity stops the merchants' oxen.
4. A deity informs the merchants of the Buddha's appearance and urges them to offer food.
5. The merchants offer food to the Buddha.
6. The Buddha thinks of how the previous Buddhas received food.
7. The gods of the four directions each provide the Buddha with a bowl.
8. The Buddha initially declines the bowl because of their luxurious material.
9. The Buddha accepts them and combines them into a single bowl.
10. The Buddha recites verses of blessing to the gods.
11. The Buddha accepts the offers from the merchants.
12. The merchants take refuge.

13. The Buddha recites verses of blessing to the merchants.
14. The merchants request a blessing or an object to worship on their return home.
15. The Buddha recites verses of blessing.
16. The Buddha gives them his hair and a fingernail, and instructs them to establish a stupa.
17. The merchants rejoice and leave.

The Gāndhārī version preserves most parts of the story. The two merchants are called Trivṛṣa and Valia. The story begins with a deity urging the merchants to offer food to the Buddha. The merchants go to the Bodhi tree where the Buddha is seated. Having approached the Buddha, they offer a rice cake and a lump of honey. The Buddha accepts the offer, and the merchants take refuge. Afterward, the Buddha recited a single verse of blessing. Then, the four directional gods (*caturmahārāja*) approached the Buddha to offer an alms bowl.¹⁶² The order of events in this version differs from the others in that the Buddha receives the bowl after the merchants' offers are made.

5.2. Extant Versions

The parallels of this story in detail appear in the following texts:¹⁶³

1. Mahāvagga Vinaya I 3–4 and its commentary, Sp V 959–61.
2. Nidānakathā of Jātaka-aṭṭhakathā (Ja) I 80–1.
3. Commentary of AN I 26, Mp I 382–4.
4. Commentary of Bhalliya Theragāthā, Th-a I 49–51.
5. Catuspariṣat-sūtra (CPS) 435–38.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² Allon 2007b: 18; Allon 2009: 11.

¹⁶³ Here, I list the text individually, arranged from the Pali, Sanskrit, and Chinese languages. For the arrangement based on their school affiliation, see Allon 2009: 10–1.

¹⁶⁴ Waldschmidt 1952–62.

6. Saṅghabhedavastu (SbhV) I 122–4.¹⁶⁵
7. Mahāvastu (Mvu) III 387–421.¹⁶⁶
8. Lalitavistara (Lal) 276–85.¹⁶⁷
9. Chinese translation of Saṅghabhedavastu, *Gēnběn shuō yíqiè yǒubù pínàiyé pò sēng shì* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶破僧事, translated by Yijing (義淨) between 700–711 CE (T 24 no. 1450, 125a23–c10).
10. Chinese Mahīśāsaka Vinaya (Mahīs Vin), *Mishāsè bù héxī wǔ fēn lǜ* 彌沙塞部和醯五分律, translated by Buddhajīva (佛陀什) in collaboration with Zhú Dàoshēng (竺道生) between 423–424 CE (T 22 no. 1421, 103a8–b10).
11. Chinese Dharmaguptaka Vinaya (DhG Vin), *Sì fēn lǜ* 四分律, translated by Buddhayaśas (佛陀耶舍) in collaboration with Zhú Fóniàn (竺佛念) in 408 CE (T 22 no. 1428, 781c11–785c27).
12. Chinese *Abhiniṣkramaṇasūtra (AbhiNS), *Fó běnxíng jí jīng* 佛本行集經, translated by Jñānagupta (*Shénà juéduō* 闍那崛多) between 587–591 CE (T 30 no. 190, 801a11–803b11).
13. Chinese translation of Lalitavistara (PYJ), *Pǔ yào jīng* 普曜經, translated by Dharmarakṣa (竺法護) in 308 CE (T 3 no. 186, 526b13–528a26).

¹⁶⁵ Gnoli 1977: 122–4. Also preserved in the Tibetan translation. For an English translation of the Tibetan version, see Rockhill 1884: 34.

¹⁶⁶ Marcinak 2019, 387–421; cf. Senart 1882–97: 302–11. For the relationship between Mahāvastu and the Mahāsāṃghika Lokottaravāda Vinaya, see Tournier 2012. For an English translation, see Jones 1956: 290–8.

¹⁶⁷ Vaidya 1958: 276–85; Leffman 1902–8: 381.3–386.2. Also preserved in the Tibetan translation, see Waldschmidt 1951 and Lamotte 1988. For the recent scholarship on Lalitavistara, see Silk 2022. Lalitavistara is categorized as either a Buddha’s hagiography (Silk 2022: 267) or a Mahāyāna sūtra (84000 Introduction).

14. Chinese translation of Lalitavistara (VMS), **Vaipulya-mahāvīyūha-sūtra*, *Fāngguǎng dà zhuāngyán jīng* 方廣大莊嚴經, translated by Divākara (地婆訶羅) in 683 CE (T 3 no. 187, 601c8–602c27).
15. Chinese *Tàizǐ ruìyìng běnqǐ jīng* (太子瑞應本起經), translated by Zhi Qian (支謙) between 222–228 CE (T 3 no. 185, 479a19–b23).
16. Chinese *Guòqù Xiànzài Yīnguǒ Jīng* 過去現在因果經, translated by Guṇabhadra (求那跋陀羅) in 435–443 CE (T 3 no. 189, 643b8–c27).
17. Chinese *Zhòngxǔ Móhēdì Jīng* 眾許摩訶帝經, translated by Fǎxián (法賢) in 1001 CE (T 3 no. 191, 951b10–952a10).
18. The new Gāndhārī (G) version, Robert Senior Collection fragment 24 verso (designated RS 24 verso).

From the versions above, only six are from Vinayas (1, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11), and the rest are from commentaries and individual sūtras. Therefore, the story cannot be classified as primarily a Vinaya narrative or as an exclusively sūtra; it circulated flexibly across genres.

In addition, there are shorter allusions, not full narratives, in individual texts as follows:

1. Asvaghosa's Buddhacarita XIV 104–5.¹⁶⁸
2. Aśokavādāna of the Divyāvadāna.¹⁶⁹
3. Yaśomitra's Sphuṭārthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā.¹⁷⁰
4. Chinese translation of Buddhacarita, *Fó suǒxíng zàn* 佛所行讚, translated by Dharmakṣema (曇無讖) between 414–426 CE (T 4 no. 192, 28c10–5).

¹⁶⁸ Johnston 1935: 216–7.

¹⁶⁹ Mukhopadhyaya 1963: 87.

¹⁷⁰ Wogihara 1932–6: 378.

5. Chinese *Mahāvaiṣṭya-mahāsaṃnipāta-sūtra (MVMS), *Dà fāngděng dà jí jīng* 大方等大集經, translated by Dharmakṣema (曇無讖) between 414–426 CE (T 13 no. 397, 343a13–5).
6. Chinese *Xīuxíng běnqǐ jīng* (修行本起經), translated by Zhú Dàlì (竺大力) in collaboration with Kāng Mèngxiáng (康孟詳) in 197 CE (T 3 no. 184, 472b13–5).
7. Chinese *Zhōng běnqǐ jīng* (中本起經), translated by Tán Guǒ (曇果) in collaboration with Kāng mèngxiáng (康孟詳) in 207 CE (T 4 no. 196, 147c6–9).
8. Chinese *Dà fāngbiàn fó bāoēn jīng* (大方便佛報恩經), translated between 25–220 CE by unknown translator(s) (T 3 no. 156, 157a14–7).
9. Xuanzang's (玄奘) travelogue, *Buddhist Records of the Western World* (*Dàtáng xīyù jì* 大唐西域記), written in 646 CE (T 51 no. 2087, 873a2–13).¹⁷¹
10. The Khotanese manuscript mentions the story of Trapusa and Bhallika in passing as part of the Buddha's biography.¹⁷²

The story also appears in early Buddhist visual culture. In particular, scenes of the four directional gods offering bowls to the Buddha are depicted in Gandhāran reliefs, sometimes together with the two merchants and sometimes without them. These visual representations suggest the narrative's popularity in northwestern Buddhist communities in Gāndhāra.¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ For an English translation, see Beal 1884: 46–7.

¹⁷² Leumann 1933–36: 331. Cf. Bailey 1946: 786.

¹⁷³ For a recent visual analysis of these scenes, see Sirisawad 2023.

Table 7. Narrative summary of the story of Trapusa and Bhallika compared with the parallels and partial parallels

| | RS 24 | DhG Vin | Vin | SbhV | Mvu | Lal | Mahis Vin | AbhiNS | VMS | PYJ |
|--|-------|---------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----------|--------|-----|-----|
| Seven days after the enlightenment, the Buddha is sitting under the {Bodhi} / [Rājāyatana] / (Tārāyaṇa) / *Kṣīrikā tree. | {✓} | {✓} | [✓] | ✓ | *✓ | (✓) | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Two merchant leaders, along with their followers, pass by the city where the Buddha resides, [while returning to the northern region]. | | ✓ | [✓] | ✓ | [✓] | [✓] | ✓ | [✓] | [✓] | ✓ |
| A deity stops the merchants' bulls. | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| A deity informs the merchants of the Buddha's appearance and urges them to offer food. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| The merchants visits the Buddha and are amazed by the appearance of the Buddha | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| The merchants offer foods to the Buddha. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| The Buddha accepts the offers from the merchants out of compassion. | ✓ | | | | | | | | | |
| The merchants take refuge in the Buddha and Dharma, and become <i>upāsakas</i> . | ✓ | | | | | | | | | |
| The Buddha recites a verse(s) of blessing to the merchants. | ✓ | | | | | | | | | |
| The Buddha thinks of how the previous Buddhas received foods. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| The Buddha realizes that the previous Buddhas received foods with a bowl. | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| A deity tells the Buddha that the previous Buddhas received foods with a bowl. | | | | ✓ | | | | | | |

| | RS 24 | verso | DhG Vin | Vin | SbhV | Mvu | Lal | Mahis Vin | AbhiNS | VMS | PYJ |
|--|-------|-------|---------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----------|--------|-----|-----|
| The four directional gods read the Buddha's mind and each provides the Buddha with a stone bowl. | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| The four directional gods discuss on which bowl to give to the Buddha. | | | | | | | ✓ | | | | ✓ |
| The Buddha declines the bowl because of their luxurious material. | | | | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| The Buddha accepts each stone bowl from four directional gods [and combines them into a single bowl]. | | | [✓] | ✓ | [✓] | [✓] | [✓] | [✓] | [✓] | [✓] | [✓] |
| The Buddha recites verses of blessing to the gods. | | | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| The Buddha accepts the offers from the merchants out of compassion. | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| The merchants take refuge in the Buddha and Dharma / [Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha], and become <i>upāsakas</i> . | | | | ✓ | [✓] | | | ✓ | [✓] | | |
| The Buddha recites a verse(s) of blessing to the merchants. | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| The merchants take refuge in the Buddha / [Buddha and Dharma] / {Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha} and become <i>upāsakas</i> . | | | [✓] | | | {✓} | [✓] | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| The merchants rejoice and leave. | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | |
| The merchants request a relic to worship on their return home, and the Buddha gives them his hair and fingernail, and instructs them to establish a stūpa. | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |

aviṣabudha ta ga m. + + + + + + [12] + + + + + + + + (*piḍake)ṇa ya p(*a)divadeṣa ta
bhaviṣaḍi (*dr)i(*garatro) + + + + + +

Translation:

[8] Trivusa ... with the brother, Valia ... Trivasa and Valia ... [9] ... out of compassion, desiring their welfare, seeking benefit, (*he approached the two merchants), Trivusa and Valia. [10] (*Having approached), he said this to the two merchants, Trivusa and Valia: “(*O merchant, O merchant! This), by the Blessed One ... [11] ... utmost complete perfect enlightenment, fully awakened that ... [12] ... Offer him (*with almsfood); that will be (*for a long time) ...

Parallels:

tena kho pana samayena tapussa bhallikā vāṇijā ukkalā ta desa addhānamaggappaṭipannā honti. atha kho tapussabhallikāna vāṇijāna ñātisālohitā devatā tapussabhallike vāṇije etadavoca—“aya, mārisā, bhagavā rājāyatanaṃ viharati paṭhamābhisambuddho; gacchatha ta bhagavanta manthena ca madhupiṇḍikāya ca patimānetha; ta vo bhavissati dīgharatta hitāya sukhāyā”ti. (Vin I 4)

At that time, two merchants named Tapussa and Bhallika, coming from Ukkalā, were traveling along the main highway. Then, a deity, who had been a blood relation of the merchants Tapussa and Bhallika, spoke to them, saying: "Sirs, the Blessed One is currently staying at the foot of the Rājāyatana tree, having recently achieved full awakening. Go and offer the Blessed One barley gruel and honey balls; that will lead to your long-term welfare and happiness."

*tena khalu samayena trapuṣabhallikau vaṇijau pañcamātraiḥ śakaṭaśataiḥ sārddham
 anuvyavaharamāṇau, tasminn eva mārge adhvapratipannāv abhūtām. atha
 trapuṣabhallikayor vaṇijor anyatamāyāḥ purāṇamitrāmātyajñātisālohitāyāḥ devatāyāḥ etad
 abhavat... atha sā devatā sarvaṃ karvaṭakam udāreṇāvabhāsenā sphāritvā trapuṣabhallikau
 vaṇijāv idam avocat: vaṇijau vaṇijau ayaṃ buddho bhagavān uribilvāyāṃ viharati nadyā
 nairāñjanāyās tīre bodhimūle acirābhisaṃbuddho vimuktiprītisukhapratisaṃvedī; saptāham
 ekaparyamkenātināmayati; nainaṃ kaścit piṇḍakena pratipādayati; taṃ yuvāṃ
 tatprathamataḥ piṇḍakena pratipādayatam; tad yuvayor bhaviṣyati dīrgharātram arthāya
 hitāya sukhāya; ityuktvā sā devatā tatraivāntarhitā. (SbhV I 122)*

At that time, the two merchants Trapuṣa and Bhallika, who were traveling for trade with approximately five hundred wagons, had set out upon that very same road. Then it occurred to a certain deity, who had been an old friend, companion, relative, and blood-relation of the two merchants Trapuṣa and Bhallika... Then that deity, having suffused the entire caravan with a magnificent light, spoke thus to the two merchants, Trapuṣa and Bhallika: "Merchants, merchants! This Buddha, the Blessed One, is staying at Uruvilvā on the bank of the river Nairāñjanā at the foot of the Bodhi tree. Having recently attained complete enlightenment, he is experiencing the joy and bliss of liberation. He has passed seven days in a single meditative posture, and yet no one has presented him with any alms-food. You two should first present him with an offering of alms. That will lead to your long-term welfare, benefit, and happiness." Having spoken these words, the deity vanished on the spot.

時有二賈客兄弟二人：一名瓜、二名優波離，將五百乘車載財寶，去菩提樹不遠而過。時樹神篤信於佛，曾與此二賈客舊知識，欲令彼得度，即往至賈人所語言：「汝等

知不？釋迦文佛・如來・等正覺，於七日中具足諸法。於七日中未有所食，汝等可以蜜麩奉獻如來，令汝等長夜得利善安隱快樂。」 (DhG Vin at T 22 no. 1428, 781c15–22)

At that moment, two brothers who were merchants—one named Gourd and the other named Bhallika—were passing not far from the Bodhi tree, leading five hundred wagons laden with treasures. Then a tree deity, who had profound faith in the Buddha and was an old acquaintance of these two merchants, wished to lead them to salvation. The deity went to where the merchants were and said to them: "Do you all not know? The Buddha Śākyamuni, the Tathāgata, the Perfectly Awakened One, has perfected all dharmas within these seven days. For seven days, he has not eaten. You should offer honey and grain to the Tathāgata; this will bring you benefit, goodness, tranquility, and happiness through the long night."

時有五百賈客，乘五百乘車，中有二大人：一名離調、二名波利。... 彼神於空中，語言：「汝等莫怖，汝等莫怖！今佛世尊初成大道，靜坐七日，從定起遊行，坐彼樹下，未有獻食者。汝奉上麩蜜，長夜獲安！」 (Mahīś Vin at T 22 no. 1421, 103a11–5)

At that time, there were five hundred merchants traveling with five hundred wagons. Among them were two great men: the first named Li Wei and the second named Bo Li... The deity then spoke from the air, saying: "Do not be afraid! Do not be afraid! The Blessed Buddha has just attained the Great Way. After sitting in silence for seven days, he arose from meditation to travel and is now sitting beneath that tree. No one has yet offered him food. If you present him with grain and honey, you shall obtain lasting peace!"

Text notes:

Line 8. *sabhatra*: The reading in line 8 is mostly insecure. G *sabhatra* could be P *sabhrātā*/Skt *sabhrātā*, “together with his brother.” The standard Gāndhārī spelling of this word is *bhrada*. Here, there is a rhotic metathesis where the *-r-* switches position. G *bhratra* is attested twice in a manuscript from Xinjiang (GD s.v. *bhrada*). The Chinese parallel, DhG Vin, explicitly mentions the two merchants as brothers (兄弟).

trivaṣa: This refers to the merchant Trivusa in a variant spelling with *va* instead of *vu*. The reading of *va* is relatively secure in the infrared image. Elsewhere in the manuscript, however, the name appears consistently as *trivusa*. Another occurrence of the variant spelling *trivaṣa* is in verso line 24.

Line 9. *aṇua[pa] arthakama hidaṣi*: The legible words in line 9 start at the end of the thoughts that occurred to the deity. It corresponds to Skt *anukāmpam arthakāmam hitaiṣinam*, “out of compassion, desiring their welfare, seeking benefit,” all in accusative forms. G *aṇuapa* reflects the weakening and elision of the intervocalic velar consonant in OIA *anukāmpa* > *aṇuapa*. In contrast, the velar stop is preserved in G *arthakama*. G *hidaṣi* corresponds to P *hitesin*/Skt *hitaiṣin* in the accusative form. Comparable expressions occur in several P and Skt texts:

bhagavatā mayam āvuso paṇāmitā atthakāmena hitesinā anukampakena anukampaṃ upādāya. (Ud 25)¹⁷⁴

śṛṇu kuladhīte ime tena bhagavatā tathāgatenārhatā samyaksambuddhena arthakāmena hitaiṣinā anukampakena anukampāṃ upādāya. (Bhikṣūṇī-Vinaya 48, ed. Roth 1970)

The parallel versions in Pali Vin and SbhV, however, employ different expressions. The Pali Vin reads *hitāya sukhāyā*, while SbhV has *arthāya hitāya sukhāya*, both in the dative singular. None of these parallels fully agree in wording, word order, or case usage.

¹⁷⁴ Similar phrase also appears in AN III 5, 37; IV 265–8.

? *vuṣavalia* ? ? ? : In this line, the names and occupation of the main characters appear as (**tri*)*vuṣavalia* (**vaṇia*) clearly, though it is likely first mentioned in the damaged lines above. There are four extant versions in Sanskrit, and there are three different spellings for the first main character: *trapuṣa*, *tripuṣa*, *trapusa*; and all have the same spelling for *bhallika*. The names are preserved in G as the compound *trivṣa-valia*. The form reflects the expected weakening of intervocalic *p* > *v* and *bh* > *v*. Although *-bh-* is often orthographically retained at compound boundaries in Gandhārī as a historical spelling,¹⁷⁵ the present form instead preserves the weakened pronunciation in writing.¹⁷⁶

The meaning and etymology of these names are far from certain, as most dictionaries state that it is the name of a merchant. The DPPN does not explain the etymology of the name. Instead, it mostly explains Trapusa and Bhallika as the merchants of Ukkala and their related stories from various sources (DPPN s.v. *tapassu*; *bhallika*). For Skt *trapuṣa*, MW has *trapu* as “tin;” *trapuṣī* as a kind of cucumber; *tripuṣā* as a kind of dark-blossomed herbal plant called Convolvulus Turpethum. The PTSD has *tipusa* as a species of cucumber. DP lists *tapūsa* as “tin,” but it points back to the Sanskrit lexicon *trapuṣa* or *trapusa*. Since there is no information in most dictionaries, I resort to the Chinese parallels of this story.

The Chinese translations and/or transliterations for Skt *Trapusa*, from the oldest to the recent, are as follows:

1. PYJ transliterates *tí wèi* 提謂.
2. DhG Vin translates as a kind of “gourd” (*guā* 瓜).

¹⁷⁵ Silverlock 2015: 239.

¹⁷⁶ The merchants also appear in the Khotanese manuscript E 25.271 as *Tṛəṽṣysa-Va[l]lyō*, showing the weakening of *bh* > *v*: *Tṛəṽṣysa-Va[l]lyō-ṣa pəṇḍəṽātu pajāṣṭe, Brahmānə gyastī ājīṣṭə dātu*. Leumann translates: “Von Traṇuṣa und Bhall(ik)a sammelte er Almosenspeise ein. Der Gott Brahman bat ihn um das Gesetz (für die Menschen). Die Kaufleute Traṇuṣa und Bhallika boten dem Buddha nach dem Bodhi-Erlebnis die erste Speise und wurden so seine ersten Laienjünger” (Leumann 1933–6: 331).

3. MVMS transliterates *tí wèi* 提胃.
4. Mahīś Vin transliterates *lí wèi* 離謂.
5. AbhiNS transliterates *dì lí fū suō* 帝梨富娑, with the gloss saying it means “cucumber” (*hú guā* 胡瓜).¹⁷⁷
6. VMS transliterates *dì lǚ fù pó* 帝履富婆.
7. Yijing’s translation of SbhV renders this name as “cucumber” (*huáng guā* 黃菰).

The Chinese phonetic approximations provide evidence for reconstructing the underlying Indic spelling of the name. AbhiNS and VMS preserve similar pronunciations, plausibly pointing to a form like *trivusa*. MVMS omits the *r* in the initial cluster *tri-*, yet its rendering of *wèi* 胃 adequately approximates Indic *v-*, suggesting an underlying form close to *tiv-*. The anomaly is Mahīś Vin, where the initial dental is dropped, producing a reading closer to *riv-*.¹⁷⁸ Further, the last character in VMS is *pó* 婆, whereas we would expect *suō* 娑. Given the visual similarity between these characters, this is likely a Chinese scribal error.¹⁷⁹ Taken together, the Chinese transliteration most consistently points to an Indic form *trivusa*, which corresponds closely to the G spelling *trivusa* and is equivalent to the P *tipusa*. The PTSD lists *tipusa* as a type of cucumber, consistent with the semantic translations of this name in the DhG Vin, AbhiNS, and Yijing’s SbhV. Hence, the C, G, and Skt versions that use *trivusa* or *tripusa* (P *tipusa*) might reflect the MIA form of the name. In contrast, *trapusa* and the like may represent a later Sanskritization or standardization, which was subsequently echoed in Pali as *tapussa* and the like.

¹⁷⁷ Chinese character 胡瓜 is the old usage of a modern “cucumber” (黃瓜), literally means the gourd of/from Central Asia.

¹⁷⁸ André Bareau (1963) states this corresponds to the Sanskrit *ripu*, in which the Indian manuscript must have contained the name “*ripu(sa)*” due to the scribal error (111).

¹⁷⁹ Another possibility is that it may come from a modern printing error.

Yijing's "Sanskrit Thousand-Character Text" (梵語千字文)¹⁸⁰ records the word "trapusa" (𑖦𑖩𑖰𑖩) in Siddham script as "cucumber" (黃菰). This suggests that the eighth-century manuscript he consulted, most plausibly SbhV, had adopted the Sanskritized form *trapusa*. Yet, despite these phonetic shifts over time, from *trivusa* to *trapusa*, the semantic meaning, "cucumber," remains stable throughout the entire transmission history.¹⁸¹

For the second main character, the name appears as P *bhallaka*, *bhalluka* and Skt *bhallika*, *bhalliya*. The Skt *bhallika*, or *bhallikā*, means a kind of nut or cashew plant (MW s.v. *bhallika*). The P *bhalluka* means "bear" but from a later source than our texts here (DP s.v. *bhalluka*). In Sanskrit, *bhalla* means "auspicious" or "favorable," as the Tibetan translation renders it.¹⁸² Moreover, the P *bhallaka* (from the Bhalla people) is rendered as a kind of copper from Piśāca country (PTSD s.v. *bhallaka*). It is also defined as a "metal" (DP s.v. *bhallaka*).

Among the Chinese versions, only two provide a translation for this name. AbhiNS transliterates the name as *bá lí jiā* 跋梨迦 and glosses "a bar of metal or copper" (*jīn tǐng* 金挺);¹⁸³ Yijing renders "village" (村落). The other four merely transliterate the name:

¹⁸⁰ *Fànyǔ qiānzì wén* 梵語千字文, written by Yijing from 635–713, contains Sanskrit to Chinese lexicons like a dictionary but with a focus in Buddhist vocabularies useful for translation. In the preface, Yijing says, "For the sake of those who wish to travel to the Western Regions, I have composed this as a model for learning. Below each Sanskrit sound, I have added the corresponding Chinese character. Where no such character exists [in Chinese], I have used phonetic transcription to correct the sound. All of the terms included here are essential expressions encountered along the way; once one has mastered these, the rest of the language becomes accessible. This differs from the traditional Thousand-Character Text. If one also studies Siddham and reads the Sanskrit originals, then within one or two years one will be able to undertake translation" (為欲向西國人。作學語樣。仍各註中。梵音下題漢字。其無字者。以音正之。並是當途要字。但學得此則餘語皆通。不同舊千字文。若兼悉曇章讀梵本。一兩年間即堪翻譯矣) (T 55 no. 2133A, 1190a8–21).

¹⁸¹ Subsequent Chinese works in the following centuries generally followed the transliteration and translation above. For instance, Pu Rui (普瑞)'s compilation during the Yuan dynasty, 華嚴懸談會玄記 (X 8 no. 236), uses the transliteration similar to MVMS and quotes AbhiNS for "cucumber" translation. Xu Fa (續法)'s compilation, 賢首五教儀 (X 58 no. 1024), during the Qing dynasty, further quotes X8 for both translation and transliteration. Hence, from the earliest Chinese translation, Dhg Vin, in the early fifth century until Pu Rui in the fourteenth century, the meaning of the name *trapusa* is "cucumber."

¹⁸² Bareau 1963: 112.

¹⁸³ 金 does not necessarily mean "gold," but can also mean "metal" in general (金屬), or copper (銅).

Dharmaguptaka Vinaya has *yōu pó lí* 優波離; Mahīś Vin and MVMS have *bō lì* 波利; VMS has *pó lǚ* 婆履. All the Chinese phonetic approximations plausibly point to the Indic form like *bhalli(ka)*. In the DhG Vin, however, the initial vowel *u-* is added, making the pronunciation something like *ubhalli(ka)*, which was probably a scribal error.¹⁸⁴ AbhiNS rendering the name as “metal bar” (金挺) aligns well with the meanings attested for *bhallaka* in Pali dictionaries mentioned above. However, Yijing’s rendering as “village” (村落) suggests that he did not understand the semantic value of the word. Instead, he appears to have analyzed *bhalla* with the suffix *-ika* as a toponym and demonym, meaning someone from a place (village) called Bhalla, or a Bhalla villager. Since this location was unknown to him, the semantic interpretation was reduced simply to “village.”¹⁸⁵ This is supported by the absence of “village” (村落) entry in Yijing’s “Sanskrit Thousand-Character Text.” Jñānagupta, in his glossing of AbhiNS, acknowledges the difficulty in translating these names. He notes: “Previous translations transcribed the name as *tí wèi* 提謂 and *bō lì* 波利.”¹⁸⁶ This is likely a matter of standard Indian pronunciation and the local vernacular (literally, “Brahmanical of Chu and Xia States”).¹⁸⁷ It is uncertain which is correct. In this text, the names of the two merchant leaders are not significantly distorted.”¹⁸⁸ These observations reveal the translators’ uncertainty in rendering unfamiliar Indic personal names within the constraints of Chinese phonology and semantic expectations.

¹⁸⁴ Bareau 1963: 111.

¹⁸⁵ For other possibilities, see Bareau 1963: 113.

¹⁸⁶ The Old and Middle Chinese pronunciations of these names are as follows: 提謂 **dei ywt- > diei jwei*; 波利 **pa ljiŋi- > pwâ lji* (Coblin 1983: 254).

¹⁸⁷ The expression 婆羅門楚夏 reflects the author’s attempt to analogize India’s standard Brahmanical pronunciations with the dialectal divergences between Chu and Xia in Warring States China. Cf. T 36 no. 1736, 35a8–12; T 33 no. 1717, 929a28–b1.

¹⁸⁸ 前代譯稱提謂波利，此蓋婆羅門楚夏耶，未知孰是？斯經二商主名非深失 (T 3 no. 190, 802b3–4).

Therefore, if we take the semantic values of *trapusa* and *bhallika* from the Chinese translations, the etymology of these names might have come from the items they carry for trade: cucumbers and metals from the Bhalla region. Alternatively, Xuanzang's account of this story took place in the towns called *tí wèi* 提謂 and *bō lì* 波利, where the merchants Trapusa and Bhallika built stupas containing the Buddha's hair and nails, which point to the names of their places of origin.¹⁸⁹

The places of origin attributed to the two merchants vary considerably across the different textual traditions. In the Mvu, the merchants are from Ukkala town in the northern region (*ukkalāto adhiṣṭhānāto trapuso ca bhalliko ca*), and they were traveling passed that road where the Buddha dwells from the south (*dakṣiṇāpathāto... tena mārgeṇa āgacchanti*). It implies that they were returning northward to their homeland after conducting business in the south. This is reinforced by the detail that they were transporting “five hundred loads” (*pañcahi dhuraśatehi*), suggesting they had acquired merchandise along the way. Similarly, Lal has the two merchants on the way back home from the south to the north after being fully laden with goods (*dakṣiṇāpathād uttarāpatham gacchete sma mahatā sārthena pañcabhir dhuraśataiḥ suparipūrṇaiḥ*), but without mentioning the northern region as Ukkala. The VMS further supports this pattern by stating that they were from North India (從北天竺，有二商主).

The Pali versions, by contrast, state that the two merchants were traveling from the Ukkalā region to the middle country (*majjhimadesa*), where the Buddha resided at the time.¹⁹⁰ This phrasing leaves open whether they were returning home to Ukkalā or departing from it. BHSD and DPPN identify *Ukkalā* as located in Orissa (modern Odisha), an eastern Indian state

¹⁸⁹ 大城西北五十餘里至提謂城，城北四十餘里有波利城。城中各有一窣堵波 (T 51 no. 2087, 873a2).

¹⁹⁰ *ukkalājanapadā majjhimadesam gacchantā* (Ja I 80); *ukkalā ta desa addhānamaggappaṭipannā* (Vin I 4).

on the Bay of Bengal, as their place of origin.¹⁹¹ If this is the case, the merchants in the Pali tradition would be understood as departing from their homeland in the east and heading northward, crossing Rājagṛha.¹⁹²

Xuanzang's travelogue states that the stupas of Buddha's hairs and nails brought home by the two merchants were located in the country called *Fú hē* 縛喝, which Samuel Beal identifies with Balkh.¹⁹³ Xuanzang's text merely states that "taking these [relics], the merchants were about to return to their country" (二長者將還本國). Beal notes that "their own country was Suvarṇabhūmi or Burma."¹⁹⁴ Lamotte translates the same line as "[h]aving returned to Bactria."¹⁹⁵ Hence, the sources present two broad possibilities regarding the merchants' origins: a northwestern provenance, Bactria or Ukkala as understood in the Sanskrit and Chinese sources; or a southeastern provenance, Orissa or Suvarṇabhūmi (Burma), as suggested by the Pali and its commentarial tradition.¹⁹⁶

Line 10. v. ? ? ? [*ṇia*].: This can be reconstructed as *v(*aṇiava)ṇi(*a)*, corresponds to P/Skt *vāṇijāḥ-vāṇijāḥ*, "O merchant, merchant!" in the vocative plural masculine. This expression marks the beginning of the deity's speech addressed to the two merchants. The Pali Vin has *mārisā*, "O sirs!" in the vocative plural masculine, whereas SbhV has *vaṇijau* in vocative dual masculine. The Mvu reads: *mā bhāyatha vāṇijā*, "Do not be afraid, O merchants!" Such an expression also occurs in the Mahīś Vin (汝等莫怖, 汝等莫怖), AbhiNS (汝等商人, 勿生恐怖),

¹⁹¹ Th-a I 50 records that they are from a town called pokkharavatī: *amhākaṃ pana bhagavato kāle pokkharavatīnagare satthavāhassa puttā bhātaro hutvā nibbattā*.

¹⁹² Th-a mentions that Trapusa and Bhallika were from Pokkharavatī, a town in Ukkalā.

¹⁹³ Beal 1884: 46.

¹⁹⁴ Beal 1884: 47, n. 162.

¹⁹⁵ Lamotte 1988: 66.

¹⁹⁶ Allon 2009: 14, n. 36; Bareau 1963: 113.

and VMS (汝諸商人勿懷恐懼). DhG Vin, however, preserves neither “merchants” nor “do not be afraid,” but instead reads: “Do you all not know?” (汝等知不).

Line 11. *[aṇutarāṣa]maṣaboṣi [aviṣabudha]*: This corresponds to Skt *anuttarasammasambodhiḥ abhisambuddhaḥ*, “utmost complete perfect enlightenment, fully awakened,” both in nominative singular forms. Note that there is a weakening in the word OIA *bodhi* > *boṣi*¹⁹⁷ and *abhi* > *avi*,¹⁹⁸ but the intervocalic *-dh-* is preserved in G *aviṣabudha*, as it is typical for the word *budha* in Gāndhārī. The akṣara *dha* is faint in the manuscript, but its shape is consistent with *dha* and is confirmed by the infrared image.

Line 12. *[p].[ḍi]va[de]ṣa*: This can be reconstructed as *p(*a)ḍivadeṣa*, corresponding to P *paṭipādettha*/Skt *pratipādayata*, in causative imperative 2nd plural, from *prati* + *√pad*, meaning “to give, to present” (BHSD s.v. *pratipādayati*). The change of *t* > *ḍ* from *prati* > *paḍi-* is influenced by the preceding *-r-*, which is also a distinct feature of the RS collection.¹⁹⁹

[i] ? + +: Based on the parallels, this can be safely reconstructed as *(*dr)i(*garatro)*, corresponding to Skt *dīrgharātram*, used adverbially as “for a long time.” The word is attested in RS 12 (*drigaratro*) and RS 20 (*drigaratre*), respectively.²⁰⁰ The extant versions in SbhV read: *tad yuvayor bhaviṣyati dīrgharātram arthāya hitāya sukhāya*, while P Vin has *ta vo bhavissati dīrgharatta hitāya sukhāyā*. DhG Vin also has a similar expression: “this will bring you benefit, goodness, tranquility, and happiness through the long night” (令汝等長夜得利, 善安隱, 快樂). Accordingly, the following words may have read *(*arthe hīde suhae)*, “for the welfare, benefit, and happiness” or a similar expression, although other formulations remain possible.

¹⁹⁷ The intervocalic *-dh-* is spelled as *-ṣ-* in the word-medial position (Silverlock 2015: 237).

¹⁹⁸ Silverlock (2015) notes that the original OIA *-bh-* is preserved as *-bh-* at word boundaries and it weakens to *-v-* inside a word (239).

¹⁹⁹ Silverlock 2015: 235–6.

²⁰⁰ RS 20 Suhadukha-sūtra line 25–6 (Marino 2017: 152). RS 12 verso line 59 (Silverlock 2015: 371).

The merchants visit the Buddha and are amazed by the appearance of the Buddha (Lines 13 – 18)

Edition:

[13] + + + + + /// ? ? ? .i a. a. [ṇi a] + + ta [ṣ]. .e ? + + + + + + + + + + + [14] + + + + +
 /// ? ? .[oṣ].[r]ukṣa[mu]la yeṇa bhaya[va] teṇa ua[ṣakrami] .[u] ? ? ? + + + + [15] + + + + + ///
 [ṇia] bhaya[va]ta duridei pa[ṣa]ḍi[o] paṣaḍaṇia śa[ṭahidri śatamaṇaṣ]. [16] + + + ///
 [damaṣaprata] śamaṣa[prata] paramadamaṣa śama[ṣa]prata guto [jidi] ? ? [ṇa] ? ? ? ? [17] + +
 + /// ? .uḍ. /// + + + + + [vi]praṣaṇo aṇega drispaṇa bhayava [cīdo pra] ? ? ? /// + + + + + [18]
 + + + + + /// ? teṇa uāṣa ? ? ? uāṣakra ? ? bhayavad. [p].ḍ. vadi ? eka ? ? ? ? ?

Reconstruction:

[13] + + + + + ? ? ? .i a. a. ṇi a + + taṣ(*a) .e ? + + + + + + + + + + + [14] + + +
 + + ? ? (*b)oṣ(*i)rukṣamula yeṇa bhayava teṇa uāṣakrami (*uāṣakramita trivu) [15]
 (*śavalia va)ṇia bhayavata duridei paṣaḍio paṣaḍaṇia śaṭahidri śatamaṇaṣ(*a) [16]
 (*utama)damaṣaprata śamaṣaprata paramadamaṣaśamaṣaprata guto jidi(*dria)
 ṇa(*ga) ? ? ? [17] (*iva acha uḍagaraḍa) vipraṣaṇo <*aṇavilo> drispaṇa bhayava cīdo
 pra(*saṇa) ? + + + + + [18] (*yeṇa bhayava) teṇa uāṣa(*kramiṣu) uāṣakra(*mita)
 bhayavad(*a) p(*a)ḍ(*a) vadi(*ta) eka(*mata aṭaṣu)

Translation:

[13] ... [14] ... At the foot of the (*Bodhi) tree, they approached the Blessed One. (*Having approached), [15] the two merchants, Trivusa and Valia, saw the Blessed One from a distance, who was serene, pleasing, with peaceful senses and a tranquil mind, [16] who has attained the highest self-restraint, who has achieved tranquility, and who has reached the supreme self-restraint and tranquility, guarded, whose (*senses) are conquered, (*a nāga) ...

[17] (*like a pool of water, clear), serene, and <*translucent>. Having seen the Blessed One, the mind (*became serene) ... [18] (*They approached the Blessed One was. Having) approached, (*having) bowed to the Blessed One's (*feet), (*they stood to) one (*side).

cf. BL 12 + 14 lines 6–8 (Allon 2001, 154):

[6] (**prasadiu* [7] *prasada*)*ṇi śatidhri śatamaṇas(*a) ° utamadamasasāmasapratu °*
*p(*a)r(*a)m(*a ???* [8] *datu) ghutu vudidhrīo ṇasu rada ṇam iva ° achu aṇavela*
*vip(*ra)s(*a)ṇ(*a) ° (*???)*

[6] [his appearance] (*fair, [7] pleasing), his faculties calm, his mind calm, having attained the highest training and calm ..., [8] a protector, (*trained), controlled, with faculties restrained, like a clear, translucent, serene pond. ...

Parallels:

atha kho tapussabhallikā vāṇijā manthaṇca madhupiṇḍikaṇca ādāya yena bhagavā
tenupasaṃkamisū, upasaṃkamitvā bhagavanta abhivādetvā ekamanta aṭṭhasu. (Vin I 4)

Then, the merchants Tapussa and Bhallika took the rice cake and honey balls and approached the Blessed One. Having approached and paid their respects, they stood to one side.

...te paśyanti sma tathāgataṃ vaiśvānaramiva pradīptaṃ dvātriṃśanmahāpuruṣa-lakṣaṇaiḥ
samalaṃkṛtaṃ acirotitaṃ iva dinakaraṃ śriyā daidīpyamānam. (Lal 277)

...they saw the Tathāgata burning like a sacrificial fire, adorned with the thirty-two marks of a Great Man, and blazing with splendor like the sun just risen.

爾時兄弟二人，聞樹神語已歡喜，即持蜜麩往詣道樹。遙見如來顏貌殊異，諸根寂定最上調伏，如被調象無有卒暴，如水澄靜無有塵穢，見已，發歡喜心。於如來所前至佛所，頭面禮足在一面立。(DhG Vin at T 22 no. 1428, 781c22–7)

The two brothers were delighted to hear the tree deity's words. They took the honey and grain and went to the tree of enlightenment. From a distance, they saw the Tathāgata's extraordinary appearance; his faculties were serene and perfectly disciplined, like a tamed elephant without any wildness, or like water that is clear, still, and free from any impurity. Upon seeing him, they were filled with joy. They approached the Tathāgata, bowed their heads at the Buddha's feet, and stood to one side.

眾人歡喜，即和麩蜜，俱詣樹下，遙見世尊，姿容挺特，諸根寂定，有三十二大人之相，圓光一尋，猶若金山。(Mahīś Vin at T 22 no. 1421, 103a19–20)

The group was filled with joy. They mixed the grain and honey together and went to the tree. From a distance, they beheld the Blessed One; his appearance was exceptionally magnificent, and his faculties were serene and composed. He possessed the thirty-two marks of a great being, and a halo of light extending one fathom surrounded him like a mountain of gold.

而彼二商，即各將麩酪蜜和搏，共諸商人往詣佛所。既到彼已，時二商主，遙見世尊，可憙端正，世間無比，乃至猶如虛空眾星，莊嚴身體諸相，見已心大敬重，清淨信向至世尊前，到已即便頂禮佛足，却住一面。(AbhiNS at T 3 no. 190, 801b18–22)

Then, the two merchants each took rice cake, curd, and honey mixed into balls. Together with the other merchants, they went to visit the Buddha's place. Once they arrived there, the two

merchant chiefs saw the Blessed One from afar. He was pleasing and upright, peerless in all the world, even like the stars across the space, adorning his body with various marks. Having seen him, their hearts filled with great reverence; with pure faith, they approached the Blessed One. Having arrived, they immediately prostrated at the Buddha's feet and then stood to one side.

Text notes:

Line 14. *[oṣ].[r]ukṣa[mu]la*: This can be safely reconstructed as *(*b)oṣ(*i)rukṣamula*, equivalent to P *bodhirukkhamūle*/Skt *bodhivṛkṣamūle*, in singular locative, “at the root of the Bodhi tree.” All extant versions have the Buddha seated under a tree, yet they differ in the specific tree. Only DhG Vin placed the Buddha under the “Bodhi tree” (*dào shù* 道樹).²⁰¹ This detail, again, shows a similarity and association between the RS collection and the Dharmaguptaka school.²⁰²

yeṇa bhaya[va] teṇa ua[ṣakrami] .[u] ? ? ? + +: This phrase is reconstructed as *yeṇa bhayava teṇa uaṣakrami* (**uaṣakramita*), corresponding to Skt *yena bhagavān tena upasaṃkrami upasaṃkramitvā*. The phrase *yena* + subject, *tena* + verb is common in both BHS and Pali as part of the approach formula, meaning “where... there...” The verb *uaṣakrami* commonly corresponds to BHS *upasaṃkrami*, “he approached,” aorist 3rd singular,²⁰³ from *upa* + *saṃ* + *√kram*, meaning “to approach, to go” (BHSD s.v. *upasaṃkramati*; MW s.v.

²⁰¹ For a detailed comparison, see Allon 2009: 11–2.

²⁰² Trees recur prominently throughout Buddhist biographical literature. As Donald Lopez notes, major events in the Buddha's life repeatedly occur beneath trees: his birth in Lumbinī, childhood meditation beneath a *jambu* tree, enlightenment beneath the Bodhi tree, and the seven weeks following enlightenment spent beneath successive trees. Such motifs reflect the religious importance of forests, trees, and local spirits in ancient Indian religious culture. See Lopez 2025: 111–2.

²⁰³ BHSG §32.17.

upasaṃkram).²⁰⁴ However, since the subjects here are the two merchants, a plural form would be expected. Hence, G *uaṣakrami* may alternatively correspond to BHS *upasaṃkramensuḥ*, aorist 3rd plural, “they went.”²⁰⁵

As for the destination of the movement, the object of the *yena ... tena ...* formula is most often a person, especially the Blessed One (*bhagavān*), though in some cases it may also refer to a place. RS 12 line 11 shows an instance of movement toward a place, (**gosigasalavaṇadage*), “the Grove of the Cow-Horn Śāla-tree Forest.”²⁰⁶ The Pali Vin and AbhiNS parallels of the present story describe movement toward the Blessed One, whereas DhG Vin refers instead to “the tree of enlightenment” (往詣道樹), and Mahīś Vin to “under the tree” (詣樹下). The G version here presents both place and person: (**b*)oṣ(**i*)rukṣamula yeṇa bhayava teṇa uaṣakrami, “at the foot of (**Bodhi*) tree, where the Blessed One was, there they went.”

In the verso line 18, *uaṣa(*kamiṣu)* is used as an equivalent more closely to BHS *upasaṃkramensuḥ* in aorist 3rd plural form. Paleographically, the akṣara after *ua[ṣakrami]* in line 14 may initially appear to support a reading *-ṣu*. However, closer inspection suggests that it is instead the vowel *u-* belonging to the following word, (**uaṣakramita*). G *uaṣakramita* appears consistently throughout the RS collections as an equivalent of Skt *upasaṃkramitvā*, “having approached,” a gerund form frequently occurring after the *yena... tena...* formula and commonly followed by gestures of reverence toward the Buddha.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ The expression appears elsewhere in the RS collections. RS 17 recto line 18: [*y*]eṇa aīṣpa tiṣe teṇa uaṣakrami; RS 20 line 1: *y(*e)ṇa bhayavad(*a) t(*e)ṇa uasakam(*i)* (Marino 2017: 152). RS 12 recto line 11: (**yeṇa gosigasalavaṇadage*) teṇa uasakrami (Silverlock 2015, 373). All these instances present G *uaṣakrami* in the third-person singular aorist form, equivalent to BHS *upasaṃkrami*.

²⁰⁵ BHSG §32.95.

²⁰⁶ Silverlock 2015: 420–2.

²⁰⁷ See RS 17 line 13, RS 17 line 1 (Marino 2017: 152), RS 19 line 17 (Silverlock 2015: 374).

Line 15. *bhaya[va]ta duridei pa[śa]di[o] paśaḍaṇia śa[tahidri] [śatamaṇaś].*: This is reconstructed as *bhayavata duridei paśaḍio paśaḍaṇia śatahidri śatamaṇaś(*a)*, corresponding to Skt *bhagavantam dūrataḥ prāsādikam prasādanīyaṃ śāntendriyaṃ śāntamanasam*. “[Having seen] the Blessed One from a distance, serene, pleasing, with peaceful senses and a tranquil mind.” These expressions all modify G *bhayavata*/Skt *bhagavantam* in the accusative singular. The governing gerund appears in line 17 as *drispaṇa*, “having seen” (see below). Thus, before approaching the Buddha, the merchants first saw him from a distance. The description of the Buddha extends from line 15 through line 17. This line describes the Buddha as “serene (*paśaḍio*), pleasing (*paśaḍaṇia*), whose senses are peaceful (*śatahidri*), and whose mind is tranquil (*śatamaṇaśa*),” which also appears in Mvu.²⁰⁸

Line 16. + + + /// [*damaśaprata*] *śamaśa[prata]* *paramadamaśaśama[śa]prata*: This can

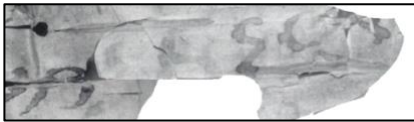


Figure 21. Detail of *damaśaprata* before *śamaśaprata*.

be reconstructed as *(*utama)damaśaprata śamaśaprata paramadamaśaśamaśaprata*, corresponding to Skt *uttama-damatha-prāptaṃ samatha-prāptaṃ parama-damatha-*

śamatha-praptaṃ, “who has attained the highest self-restraint, who has achieved tranquility, and who has reached the supreme self-restraint and tranquility.” The reading [*damaśaprata*] is based on the fragment Ac, which belongs to the beginning of line 16. Note that the last akṣara *śa* in *paramadamaśa* is corrected from *sa* to *śa* by adding one stroke to form a leftward footmark.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ Cf. *prāsādikam prasādanīyaṃ ca śāntendriyaṃ śāntamānaśam* (Mvu III 549–50); *prāsādikam prasādanīyaṃ śāntendriyaṃ śāntamānaśo* (Mvu III 525).

²⁰⁹ For corrections involving a single akṣara, the scribe usually rewrites directly over the erroneous sign. In the present case, the scribe appears to have modified the akṣara *sa* into *śa* by adding a leftward stroke at the base of the letter. The underlying akṣara *sa*, however, is itself irregular: the second curved stroke is positioned unusually far from the first. This may suggest that the scribe initially intended to write *da*, then altered it to *sa* by adding an additional short curved stroke near the end of the akṣara, and finally corrected it again to *śa*. Cf. Glass 2004: 105; Lee 2009: 45.



Figure 22. Correction
of *sa* to *ṣa*

Mark Allon's initial reconstruction of this line is

(**utamadamaṣa*)*śamaṣaprat*(**e*) *paramadamaṣaśamaṣaprata*.²¹⁰ The basis

of his reconstruction is the similar formula found in RS 2²¹¹ line 59

(*utamadamaṣaśamaṣaprate*) and BL 12 + 14 line 7

(*utamadamaṣaśamaṣapratu*).²¹² In all cases, they are compounds that consist

of four words: *utama*, *damaṣa*, *śamaṣa*, *prate/pratu*. The difference with the new reconstruction here, after the fragment Ac is placed in its appropriate spot in line 16, is in the word *prata*. In other words, the beginning of line 16 here reads (**utama*)*damaṣaprata śamaṣaprata*, with the repetition of *prata* in two compounds. These expressions appear in Mvu as follows:

uttama-dama-samatha-prāptaṃ parama-dama-śamatha-prāptaṃ. (Mvu III 550)

uttama-dama-śamatha-pārami-prāpto. (Mvu III 525)

The first instance of Mvu has the word in two compounds, while the second instance shows it in a single compound. The G version has the expression in three compounds: *utama-damaṣa-prata*, *śamaṣa-prata*, and *parama-damaṣa-śamaṣa-prata*. Skt *dama*, “restraint” (MV s.v. *dama*), appears in BHS as *damatha*, “restraint” (BHSD s.v. *damatha*), or G *damaṣa*. The Chinese parallels have different expressions.

DhG Vin: 顏貌殊異，諸根寂定，最上調伏 (extraordinary appearance, his faculties were serene, and perfectly restrained).

Mahīś Vin : 姿容挺特，諸根寂定，有三十二大人之相 (exceptionally magnificent, his faculties were serene, and possessing the thirty-two marks of a great being).

AbhiNS: 可憙端正，世間無比 (pleasing and upright, peerless in all the world).

²¹⁰ Allon 2009: 12.

²¹¹ For the initial study of RS 2, see Allon 2024.

²¹² Allon 2009: 16, n. 22. See also Allon 2001: 154–62.

DhG Vin seems to be closer to the G version in which 顏貌殊異 could correspond to *paṣaḍio* and *paṣaḍaṇia*, 諸根寂定 to *śatahidri*, and 最上調伏 to *utama/parama damaṣa prata*.

Lines 16–17. *guto [jidi] ? ? [ṇa] ? ? ? ? + + + /// ? .ud. /// + + + /// [vi]praṣaṇo aṇega:*

This section preserves a simile with multiple possible reconstructions. The small fragment Ri that has the remnant of “? .ud.” belongs to the beginning of line 17, as confirmed by its alignment with the recto. The lighter color of this fragment, in contrast to the normally darker surface of the verso, may result from the peeling away of the outer bark layer at this point. With this fragment in place, the earlier reconstruction, *guto jidi(*dria) ṇa(*ga rada iva acha aṇavila) vipraṣaṇo* becomes less likely, since a word containing *ud-* is now expected in this position.²¹³

The sequence *guto [jidi] ? ? [ṇa] ?* can be safely reconstructed as *guto jidi(*dria) ṇa(*ga)*. Although the akṣaras remain unclear, their visible traces are compatible with this reading. The phrase corresponds to Skt *guptaṃ jitendriyaṃ nāgaṃ*, “guarded, whose senses are conquered, a nāga,”²¹⁴ all in accusative singular referring to the Buddha. The Mvu preserves a similar expression: *gupto nāgo jitendriyo* (III.525). Compare also RS 2 verso line 68: *guta jididrio*, and BL 12 + 14 line 8: *ghutu vudidhrio*,²¹⁵ corresponding respectively to P *gutta*/Skt *gupta* and P *saṃvutindriya*/Skt *jitendriya*. The akṣaras following *ṇaga* remain uncertain. In the infrared image, their shapes resemble *ṇiṣiḍo* (“seated” or “situated”), though other interpretations remain possible.

The words at the beginning of line 17 before *[vi]praṣaṇo* may tentatively be reconstructed as *(*iva acha uḍagaraḍa)*, though the word order may differ. G *uḍagaraḍa* is based on P *udakarahado accho* (AN I 9), where *udaka-rahado* means “a pool of water.” The

²¹³ See Allon 2009: 12.

²¹⁴ I preserve the word *nāga* without translation, although in reference to the Buddha, *nāga* here likely means “elephant” rather than “snake.”

²¹⁵ Allon 2001: 154.

available space in the manuscript, however, makes the exact restoration uncertain. Another possibility is (**iva acha udapatro*) corresponding to P *udapatto accho* (SN V 125; AN III 236), where *uda-patto* means “a bowl of water.”²¹⁶

The next words are [*vi*]*praṣaṇo aṇega*. While *vipraṣaṇo*, “serene,” is straightforward, *aṇega* is problematic if interpreted as corresponding to P/Skt *aneka* (“numerous”), since such a meaning appears contextually unsuitable. I agree with Allon’s suggestion that *aṇega* is likely a mistake for *aṇavilo* (=Skt *anāvila*), “translucent”.²¹⁷ This interpretation is supported by parallels in Pali, Sanskrit, and other RS manuscripts. The Pali sources read *vippasanno anāvilo* (AN I 9; S V 125; A III 236), the Mvu has *anāvilo viprasanno* (III.525), RS 2 verso line 69 reads *vipraṣaṇa aṇavilo*, and BL 12 + 14 line 8 preserves *achu aṇavela vip(*ra)s(*a)ṇ(*a)*. Unless the simile in the present manuscript is unrelated to water imagery, the reading *aṇega* remains difficult to justify.

The Chinese parallels preserve somewhat different imagery. The AbhiNS compares the Buddha “like the stars across the space, adorning his body with various marks” (猶如虛空, 滿於星宿). Mahīś Vin describes “a halo of light extending one fathom surrounded him like a mountain of gold” (圓光一尋, 猶若金山). DhG Vin presents two similes, “like a tamed elephant without any wildness, or like water that is clear, still, and free from any impurity” (如被調象無有卒暴, 如水澄靜無有塵穢). Hence, the Gāndhārī version here again is closer to the Dharmaguptaka school with two similes: a restrained *nāga* and a serene body of water.

drispaṇa: This is the governing verb for the preceding accusatives, corresponding to P *disvāna*, “having seen,” the gerund of √*drś*.²¹⁸ Another attested gerund form from √*drś* is *drispa*,

²¹⁶ Cf. Allon 2001: 160.

²¹⁷ Allon 2009: 16, n. 22.

²¹⁸ Silverlock 2015: 268.

corresponding to Skt *dr̥ṣṭvā* (RS 5 lines 10 and 12).²¹⁹ It undergoes a phonological change from *ṣṭv* > *sp* in *drispa*. G *drispaṇa* is the variant of *drispa* in a frozen form.²²⁰

Line 18. *uaṣa* ? ? ? : This can be safely reconstructed as *uaṣa*(**kramiṣu*), corresponding to BHS *upasaṃkramensuh*, “they approached,” aorist 3rd plural. The break cuts through the middle of the akṣaras. Yet, the infrared image shows *ṣu* in the last akṣara of this word. The formula of movement is used twice: first, in line 14 above, the merchants go to the Buddha seated beneath the Bodhi tree, and behold his appearance from afar. Second, in the present line, they approach the Buddha directly and pay homage to him.

eka ? ? ? ? ? : Based on the parallel in another RS scroll, this can be reconstructed as *eka*(**mata aṭaṣu*), “they stood to one side.” The G *aṭaṣu* corresponds to P *aṭṭhasu*/BHS *asthāsu*,²²¹ in the third-person plural aorist verb form of *ā* + *√sthā*, “to stand near.” The RS 19 verso lines 20–21 reads: *yeṇa bhayava teṇa uasaḁami uasakamita bhayava paḁa vadita ekamata aṭaṣi ekamata aṭiḁe*.²²² Meihuang Lee notes that the first letter *a* in G *aṭaṣi* is an *ā*-prefix rather than the aorist augment.²²³ Here, since the subject is the two merchants, the plural verb form *asthāsu* is expected.

The merchants offer food to the Buddha (Lines 18 – 20)

Edition:

[18] + + + + [19] ? ? ? [travuṣa]valia vaṇia bhayavaḁa ma[th]. ? masu[piḁi]a ḁa uaṇame[ṣ].

id. bh.t. bh. ? ? + + + [20] ḁa maṣupidi[a] [ḁ]. paḁigiṇa a[n].[apa uad]. ? ☉

²¹⁹ Glass 2007: 136.

²²⁰ Cf. Silverlock 2015: 260–1.

²²¹ BHSG: 236.

²²² Lee 2009: 73.

²²³ Lee 2009: 141. Cf. Silverlock 2015: 271.

Reconstruction:

[18] (**ekamata*) [19] (**aṭito*) *travusaḥvalia vaṇia bhayavaḍa math(*a ca) masupiḍia ca*
*uaṇameṣ(*i) id(*a) bh(*a)t(*e) bh(*ayavaḍa matha)* [20] *ca maṣupiḍia c(*a) paḍiḡa*
*aṇ(*u)apa uad(*ae) ☉*

Translation:

[18] [19] (*Standing to one side), the two merchants, (*Trivusa) and Valia, offered rice cakes and honey balls to the Blessed One, [saying]: "O venerable! This (*rice cakes) and honey balls (*is for the Blessed One). [20] May you accept it out of compassion!" ☉

Parallels:

ekamanta tḥitā kho tapussabhallikā vāṇijā bhagavantam etadavocum— “paṭiggaṇhātu no, bhante, bhagavā manthaṇca madhupiṇḍikaṇca, ya amhāka assa dīgharatta hitāya sukhāyā”ti. (Vin I 4)

Standing there, they addressed the Blessed One: "O Venerable, may the Blessed One accept these rice cakes and honey balls, so that it may be for our enduring benefit and joy."

ekāntasthitau trapusaḥballikau vaṇijāv idam avocatām: “ihāvābhyām bhadanta bhagavantam uddiṣya prabhūtam madhu ca manthās ca ānītāḥ; tām bhagavān pratigṛhṇātv anukampām upādāya iti.” (SbhV I 123)

Standing there, the two merchants, Trapuṣa and Bhallika, addressed the Blessed One as follows: "O Venerable, we have brought here a great quantity of honey and rice cakes for the Blessed One. May the Blessed One accept these out of compassion."

時二人白世尊言：「今奉獻蜜麩，慈愍納受。」 (DhG Vin at T 22 no. 1428, 781c27–28)

At that time, the two men addressed the Blessed One, saying: “We now offer this honey and grain; please accept it out of compassion.”

Text notes:

Lines 18–19. + + + + ? ? ? : This may be tentatively reconstructed as (**ekamata aṭito*), “standing on one side.” While (**ekamata*) at the end of line 18 is relatively secure, (**aṭito*) remains problematic. Fragment Zc, which joins the beginning of line 19, preserves only the lower portions of the akṣaras. The third akṣara appears to show the base of ta with a possible o-diacritic, supporting the reading *to*; however, the form could also be interpreted as *ya*, with the upper-right portion lost. Furthermore, a small ink trace survives beneath the presumed *ṭi* at the lower edge of the fragment, though it does not correspond to the alignment of the writing in the following line. The last two akṣaras on fragment Zc read *triva*, which joins neatly with the first akṣara on the main fragment to form *trivaṣa*, a variant spelling of *trivṣa*.²²⁴ The G (**aṭito*) may represent an irregular or mistaken spelling for (**aṭita*), corresponding to P *ṭhitā*/Skt *sthitāḥ*, “standing,” in the plural past passive participle of *√sthā*. RS 21 verso line 21 has *ekamata aṭiḍe* in the singular past passive participle form.²²⁵

Line 19. *ma[th]. ? masu[piḍi]a ḥa*: These words are the food offered by the merchants.



Figure 23. Detail of a dot between *ma* and *th*.

They can be safely reconstructed as *math(*a ḥa) masupiḍia ḥa*, corresponding to Skt *mantham ca madhupiṇḍikam ca*. Both *matha* and *masupiḍia* are in the accusative singular masculine. There is a small dot between *ma* and *tha*. It could represent a remnant of ink from the

right arm of *tha*, although this is unlikely, since *tha* is not normally written with a long horizontal

²²⁴ Another instance of the spelling *trivaṣa* is in the verso line 8.

²²⁵ Lee 2009: 73.

stroke. More likely, it is a stray ink mark or accidental ink drop made by the scribe before writing *tha*.

The food offered by the merchants varies across the extant versions. However, *madhu*, “honey,” appears consistently in all versions. The offerings listed in all versions can be summarized as follows.

Table 8. Food offered in Indic and Chinese texts

| Food | Indic Text | Food | Chinese Text |
|----------------|--------------|------------|-----------------------|
| <i>madhu</i> | All versions | 蜜 | All versions |
| <i>mantha</i> | Vin, SbhV | 麩
酪 (漿) | All except VMS
VMS |
| <i>sarpis</i> | Mvu | 酥 | Ch SbhV, AbhiNS |
| <i>tarpaṇa</i> | Mvu, Lal | 乳糜 | VMS |
| <i>ikṣu</i> | Lal | 甘蔗 | VMS |

mantha should be read as *mantha* rather than *manthā*, deriving from the root $\sqrt{\text{math}}$ or $\sqrt{\text{manth}}$, “to stir or whirl round,” especially in the sense of churning milk into butter. MW defines *mantha* as “mixed beverage (usually parched barley-meal stirred round in milk); a churning-stick.” PTSD understands *mantha* as “a churning stick, a sort of rice-cake,” treating it as equivalent to P *satthu*/Skt *saktu* (barley-meal).²²⁶ Consequently, *mantha* may refer either to a “barley-milk drink” or to a “rice cake,” which are very different; the former is liquid, and the latter is dry. The semantic ambiguity is reflected in English translations. Ria Kloppenborg translates *mantha* as “milk,” noting that it is “more precisely a kind of milk-drink (barley mixed with milk).”²²⁷ Nicholas Jayawickrama, however, interprets it as “rice cake.”²²⁸ John Strong has “a sweetened rice dish.”²²⁹

²²⁶ *Mahāvagga* commentary mentions that “with *mantha* and honey-ball means with loose (unbound) flour. Having mixed with clarified butter, honey, molasses, and the like, and also with compacted (bound) flour” (*manthena ca madhupiṇḍikāya cāti abaddhasattunā ca sappimadhuphāṇitādīhi yojetvā baddhasattunā ca*) (Sp V 960).

²²⁷ Kloppenborg 1973: 8, 100.

²²⁸ Jayawickrama 1990: 107.

²²⁹ Strong 2001: 78.

In the Chinese parallels, the best candidate for the equivalent of *mantha* is *chǎo* 麪, a type of dry food made by roasting rice and wheat, then grinding them into flour. The DDB translates as “broken dry rice” made from wheat, rice, and other grains (DDB s.v. 麪). Yijing translates as *luò jiāng chǎo* 酪漿麪, which is particularly revealing. The first two characters, *luò jiāng* 酪漿, glossed in the DDB as “churned milk,” refer to a dairy product, while *chǎo* 麪 denotes roasted grain meal. By combining both terms, Yijing appears to register the semantic ambiguity of *mantha* and resolves it by including both possible meanings, milk and grain flour, within a single translation. His rendering suggests uncertainty about the precise referent and also an awareness that the Indic term encompassed multiple culinary forms not easily mapped onto Chinese categories. Further, Beal translates it as “wheat,” while in another work, he renders it as “cakes.”²³⁰ These variations—from *mantha* as rice cake or barley-milk drink to Chinese *chǎo* 麪 as wheat or cakes—highlight the difficulty faced by translators when representing a food that may not have existed in the same form across regions, may no longer exist, or may exist differently today.

In light of the Indic lexical evidence, the narrative context of traveling merchants, and the consistent Chinese rendering of the term as *chǎo* 麪, a roasted grain powder, the most plausible interpretation of *mantha* in this passage is a dry, portable ration similar to P *sattu/saktu*. While some Sanskrit sources use *mantha* to denote a barley-milk drink, such a liquid preparation is contextually unlikely here, as it would require immediate consumption and access to fresh milk. Thus, *mantha* in this episode should be understood primarily as a form of “roasted grain meal, barley-meal, or rice cake.”

²³⁰ Beal 1884: 47; Beal 1875: 240.

The food mentioned in the extant versions can be summarized as follows.

Table 9. Summary of the food offered in the extant versions

| Food | Chinese equivalent | English translation |
|----------------|--------------------|---|
| <i>madhu</i> | 蜜 | honey |
| <i>mantha</i> | 麩
酪漿 | rice cake, roasted grain meal
churned milk |
| <i>sarpis</i> | 酥 | clarified butter |
| <i>tarpaṇa</i> | 乳糜 | food, refreshment, milk-porridge |
| <i>ikṣu</i> | 甘蔗 | sugar cane |

Among these items, *madhu* and *ikṣu* are the most secure identifications, as honey and sugar cane remained stable across Indic and Chinese traditions. Skt *sarpis* is likewise relatively straightforward, related to a dairy product. Skt *tarpaṇa*, however, is less specific, from a broad sense of “food” or “refreshment” to “milk porridge,” making the correspondence functional rather than strictly lexical. The most challenging term is *mantha*, reflecting the ambiguity of a food that likely varied across regions and historical periods.

uaṇame[ś].: This can be reconstructed as *uaṇameṣ(*i)*, corresponding to P *upanāmesuṃ*, “they offered,” in the third-person plural aorist of *upa* + $\sqrt{nam}$ (BHSD s.v. *upanāmayati*). The ending *-ṣi* here may reflect a reduced plural ending. Compare *uaṣakrami* in the verso lines 14 and 30, which is singular in form but used with the plural subject.²³¹

Line 20. *paḍiḡiṇa*: This word is equivalent to P *paṭiggaṇha*/Skt *pratigṛhāṇa*, “accept,” in the second-person singular imperative of *prati* + $\sqrt{grah}$. The parallel version in SbHV has *paṭiggaṇhātu*, in the third-person singular imperative verb form. The word P *paṭiggaṇha* is attested in several Pali and Sanskrit sources.²³²

²³¹ See also text note on *gachami* in the verso line 10 above.

²³² Cf. *satasahassassa vayaṃ datvā kārāpito mayā. tavaṭṭhāya mahāsetu, paṭiggaṇha mahāmune* (Tha Ap II 344); *sītaṃ uṇhaṃ vihanantaṃ vātātapanivāraṇaṃ. paṭiggaṇha imaṃ chattaṃ, phassayissāmi nibbutiṃ* (Tha Ap II 405); *ettakaṃ yeva te āyu vacanakālo bhavissati; paṭiggaṇha mayā dinne vare dasa varuttame* (Cp 79); *tatra bhagavānāyusmantaṃ mahāmaudgalyāyanamāmantrayate: pratigṛhāṇa mahāmaudgalyāyana tathāgatasyaṭyayikapīṇḍapātā* (Divy 31.5).

a[n].[apa uad]. ?: This can safely be reconstructed as *aṇ(*u)apa uad(*ae)*, corresponding to P *anukampam upādāya*/Skt *anukampām upādāya*, literally “having taken compassion [as the reason],” often translated idiomatically as “out of compassion.” This expression is common in Buddhist literature. The intervocalic *ka* and *pa* in *anuapa* and *uadae* are elided.²³³

Hence, the whole reconstructed sentence of lines 18–20 is (**ekamata aṭito*) *travusaṇḍaṇḍa vaṇḍa bhayavaḍa math(*a ca) masupiḍa ca uanames(*i) id(*a) bh(*a)t(*e) bh(*ayavaḍa matha) ca masupiḍa c(*a) paḍiḍiṇa aṇ(*u)apa uad(*ae)*, “May you accept this rice cakes and honey balls for the Blessed One out of compassion.” The SbV reads *tān bhagavān pratigrhṇātv anukampām upādāya iti*, in which it uses the imperative third-person singular form of *prati* + *√grah*, with *bhagavān* as the subject, meaning “may the Blessed One accept them out of compassion.” The DhG Vin has “[out of] compassion, accept [it]” (慈愍納受), which is idiomatically closer to the Gāndhārī version.

The mark ☉: Unlike the apparently accidental ink trace between *ma* and *tha* in line 19,



Figure 24. Detail of the scribal mark in the interlinear position.

the mark of a circle with a dot inside in the interlinear position seems at first sight to serve a deliberate function, although the exact purpose remains unclear. The mark occurs precisely at the point where the narrative sequence diverges from the extant parallels. In the parallel versions,

immediately after the merchants present their offering, the four directional gods present bowls to the Buddha so that he may receive the offering. In the present Gāndhārī version, however, the bowl episode appears near the end of the manuscript in lines 27–30. The narrative proceeds

²³³ Silverlock 2015: 230, 238.

directly from the merchants' offering to the Buddha's acceptance, followed by the merchants taking refuge and the Buddha blessing them.

Several explanations are possible. The mark may have been added after the completion of the manuscript, during the copying process, or immediately after the preceding word. If added later, it could suggest that the scribe recognized a disruption in the narrative sequence but was unable or unwilling to revise the text directly. If inserted during copying, the mark may indicate awareness of an alternative narrative order, whether from memory or from another exemplar, while preserving the sequence represented in the present manuscript. At the same time, the subsequent narrative appears difficult to reconcile internally, since the Buddha reflects on how he should receive the merchants' offering only after the offering has already been accepted in the preceding lines. This inconsistency may point more strongly toward some form of displacement, conflation, or textual disruption in the transmission of the episode. Nevertheless, the evidence does not permit a definitive conclusion as to whether the present sequence ultimately reflects scribal error, inherited textual corruption, or the preservation of a partially conflated recension.

The Buddha accepts the offering and instructs them to take refuge (Lines 20 – 1)

Edition:

[20] [p].[dī] ? [a].[ṣi] bhayava[d]. ? ? ? ? [21] ṇa aṇuapa [uaḍae] asa o bhayava
triv[ṣav].lia vaṇia eḍaḍ=aya eṣa [tuspa v].[ṇi]a budh. ś. ? ? ? + + + +

Reconstruction:

[20] p(*a)dī(*gae)ṣi bhayavad(*a) ? ? ? ? [21] ṇa aṇuapa uaḍae asa o bhayava
trivusav(*a)lia vaṇia eḍaḍ aya eṣa tuspa v(*a)ṇia budh(*a) ś(*araṇa gacha dharma ca)

Translation:

[20] (*It was accepted) by the Blessed One ... [21] out of compassion. Then, the Blessed One spoke these words to the two merchants, Trivusa and Valia: "O merchant! (*May you go) to the Buddha (*and Dharma for refuge)!"

Parallels:

tatra bhagavatā trapuṣabhallikayor vaṇijor antikāt piṇḍapātaḥ pratigṛhīto hitāya prāṇinām iti; tatra bhagavān trapuṣabhallikau vaṇijāv idam avocat: etau yuvāṃ vaṇijau buddhaṃ śaraṇaṃ gacchatām; dharmaṃ śaraṇaṃ gacchatām; yo 'py asau bhaviṣyaty anāgate 'dhvani saṃgho nāma tam api śaraṇaṃ gacchatām. (SbhV I 124)

There, the Blessed One accepted an offering of alms from the merchants Trapuṣa and Bhallika for the sake of the welfare of all living beings. Then, the Blessed One spoke thus to the two merchants, Trapuṣa and Bhallika: "You two merchants go for refuge to the Buddha; go for refuge to the Dharma; and go for refuge also to that which will arise in the future, known as the Saṃgha."

汝等賈人！今可歸依佛、歸依法。(DhG Vin at T 22 no. 1428, 782a10)

O merchants! You all should now take refuge in the Buddha and take refuge in the Dharma."

受已，語言：「汝等當歸依佛，歸依法！」(Mahīś Vin at T 22 no. 1421, 103a27–28)

Having received it, he said to them: "You should take refuge in the Buddha and take refuge in the Dharma."

Text notes:

Line 20. *[p].[ḍi] ? [a].[ṣi]*: This can be reconstructed as *p(*a)ḍi(*gae)ṣi*, corresponding to P *paṭiggaheṣi*/BHS *pratyagraheṣi*,²³⁴ in the third-person singular aorist of *prati* + √*grah*. The form is attested mostly in the Pali sources, with two occurrences in the Mvu, such as *vardhāpaye jayena phalāni upanāmaye Asitanāmo; pratyagraheṣi rājā “svāgataṃ bhagavato” ti ca avoca* (Mvu II 51–2).²³⁵

Line 21. *budh. ś. ? ? ? + + + +*: This is the point at which the Buddha instructs the merchants to take refuge and may be reconstructed as *budh(*a)ś(*araṇa gacha dharma ca)*. The legible akṣaras show up to *śa*, while traces of ink are consistent with *ra*, *ṇa*, and *ga* before the manuscript breaks off. Based on the repetition in verso line 22, and since there is enough space in the line, the reconstruction (**dharma ca*) is expected. The Chinese parallels, DhG Vin and Mahīś Vin, have a two-refuge formula (歸依佛, 歸依法) similar to the present Gāndhārī version.

The merchants take refuge in the Buddha and Dharma, and become *upāsakas* (Lines 22 – 23)

Edition:

[22] eṣa vae bhat[e] bhayava śaraṇa gachama dha[r]ma [ca] uāsea me bhate [bh].[y]. ? + ? ?

/// + + + + + + + [23] ? ? ? ? śaraṇa gaḍ[o] ida ca [o vaṇa paḍ]. ? ? ? ? ḍiaṇa

śa[raṇag].[ḍ].ṇa ya + + + + +

Reconstruction:

[22] eṣa vae bhate bhayava śaraṇa gachama dharma ca uāsea me bhate bh(*a)y(*ava dhareṣi

ajavagreṇa yavajiva) [23] (*praṇueḍa) śaraṇa gaḍo ida ca o vaṇa paḍ(*ama) ? ? ? ḍiaṇa

śar(*a)ṇ(*a)g(*a)ḍ(*a)ṇa ya + + + + +

²³⁴ BHSG §32.63.

²³⁵ See also Mvu II 142.

Translation:

[22] “O venerable! We all go to the Blessed One and to the Dharma for refuge. O venerable! May (*the Blessed One) accept us as lay followers, from today on, as long as we live,) [23] (*as long as we breathe), as ones gone to refuge!” Then, the first among ? who had gone to the refuge ...

Parallels:

“ete maya, bhante, bhagavanta saraṇa gacchāma dhammañca, upāsake no bhagavā dhāretu ajjatagge pāṇupete saraṇa gate”ti. te ca loke paṭhama upāsakā ahesu dhevācikā. (Vin I 4)

"O Venerable, we go to the Blessed One and the Dhamma for refuge. May the Blessed One accept us as lay followers who have taken refuge from this day forward for as long as life lasts." Thus, they became the first lay followers in the world to take refuge through the twofold formula.

etāv āvāṃ bhadanta buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāvah, dharmaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāvah, yo 'py asau bhaviṣyaty anāgate 'dhvani saṃgho nāma tam api saraṇaṃ gacchāvah. (SbhV I 123)

[The two merchants said:] “O Venerable, we two take refuge in the Buddha, and we take refuge in the Dharma; we also take refuge in that which will arise in the future as the community known as the Saṃgha.”

即受佛教，言：「大德！我今歸依佛、歸依法。」是為優婆塞中最初受二歸依，是賈客兄弟二人為首。(DhG Vin at T 22 no. 1428, 782a10–1)

They immediately followed the Buddha's instruction, saying: “O Great Virtuous One! We now take refuge in the Buddha and take refuge in the Dharma.” These were the very first among lay followers to receive the two refuges, led by these two merchant brothers.

Text notes:

Line 22. *eṣa vae bhat[e] bhayava śaraṇa gachama dha[r]ma [ca]*: This is the point at which the two merchants take refuge in the Buddha and Dharma. This expression is similar to the recto line 10, but with minor differences. Here, the word *gachama* is used, corresponding to P *gacchāma*/Skt *gacchāmaḥ*, in the first-person plural present form. Furthermore, there is only a twofold refuge, the Buddha and Dharma, in this story, rather than threefold as in the story of Elapatra and Nala, since the community of monks had yet to be established in this episode of Trivusa and Valia. This expression agrees closely with the Pali and DhG Vin versions of this story. The Pali Vin has *ete maya, bhante, bhagavanta saraṇa gacchāma dhammañca*, which corresponds closely to the G *eṣa vae bhate bhayava śaraṇa gachama dharma ca*. The DhG Vin reads “O Great Virtuous One (*bhadanta*)! We now take refuge in the Buddha and take refuge in the Dharma” (大德! 我今歸依佛, 歸依法). The SbhV, on the other hand, has an addition of the future Saṃgha, *yo 'py asau bhaviṣyaty anāgate 'dhvani saṃgho nāma tam api śaraṇaṃ gacchāvaḥ*, making the conversion formula into threefold rather than twofold.

There are three types of refuge in the narrative throughout the parallel versions: single refuge, twofold refuge, and threefold refuge. For the standard threefold refuge, namely refuge to the Buddha, Dharma, and the future Saṃgha, it appears in SbhV, CPS, Mvu, and AbhiNS.²³⁶ For the twofold refuge, there are Lal, Mahīś Vin, DhG Vin, and all the Pali versions. The single

²³⁶ In addition to threefold refuge, the merchants also receive the five precepts in T 30 no. 190.

refuge, merely to the Buddha, happens in VMS. Additionally, in Yijing's SbhV, the merchants do not seek refuge.

On the formula for taking refuge, almost all Pali and Sanskrit versions use the standard formula of something like Skt *śaraṇam gacchāva/gacchāvaḥ/gatā* in imperative, present, or past passive participle form of $\sqrt{\text{gam}}$. The Lal has *śaraṇam prapannāḥ* (they come for refuge), using the root *pra* + $\sqrt{\text{pad}}$, “to come” (MW s.v. *prapanna*). Similarly, almost all Chinese versions use the standard formula *guī yī* (歸依). PYJ has the expression, “Joining palms, they took refuge. Together, they offered their very bodies and lives to the Tathāgata” (叉手自歸共持身命奉上如來).²³⁷

Lines 22–23. *uāsea me bhate [bh].[y]. ? + + + + + ? + ? śaraṇa gad[o]*: This phrase can be reconstructed as *uāsea me bhate bh(*a)y(*ava dharei ajavagreṇa yavajīva praṇueḍo) śaraṇa gaḍo* based on the appearance in the recto lines 10–11. The parallel in the Pali Vin has a similar expression: *upāsake no bhagavā dhāretu ajjatagge pāṇupete saraṇa gate*. The Sanskrit source has *upāsakaṃ ca māṃ dhāraya adyāgreṇa yāvajjīvaṃ prāṇopetaṃ śaraṇāgatam abhiprasannaṃ* (SbhV I 141). The Gāndhārī version agrees closely with the Sanskrit source, as both preserve three adverbial expressions: “from today on” (*adyāgreṇa*), “throughout one’s life” (*yāvajjīvaṃ*), and “for as long as breath lasts” (*prāṇopetaṃ*).²³⁸ The Pali parallel lacks *yāvajjīvaṃ*, while the Chinese parallels of this story do not preserve these expressions.²³⁹ Yet, a similar refuge formula appears elsewhere, for example:

²³⁷ T 3, no. 186, 527a24. Although it does not specifically say to whom they take refuge, I understand it to be with the Buddha from the following sentence, in which they offer their lives to the Buddha.

²³⁸ Compare similar expression with RS 20.1: [10] *eśao bha(*te) gedam(*a) ś(*a)r(*a)ṇo gachami dharma ja bhikhu-śaga ja uasao me bhi goḍama dharei aja-v-agreṇa yava-jīva p(*r)añueḍa* [11] *śaraṇa gaḍe*. Cf. Marino 2017: 153.

²³⁹ Allon notes that the inclusion of *yāvajjīvaṃ* and *abhiprasannaṃ* in the Sanskrit is typical expansion throughout the Sanskrit sources (Allon 2001: 98).

世尊，我今再自歸佛法及比丘眾。唯願世尊受我為優婆塞，從今日始，終身自歸，乃至命盡。(MĀ 12 at T 1 no. 26, 435a9–11)

The three expressions correspond roughly to the Sanskrit or Pali formulations: 從今日始 (*adyāgreṇa*), 終身自歸 (*yāvajjīvaṃ*), 乃至命盡 (*prāṇopetaṃ*).

Here, again, the word *G me* is used for the first-person accusative plural form, corresponding to Skt *asmān*, or perhaps its enclitic form, *naḥ* (=P *no*). However, there is no phonological or morphological change that can be explained from *naḥ* > *me*. This, again, points to the confusion and instability between the first-person endings.

The sequence of the two merchants taking refuge differs across the textual traditions. The refuge in SbhV and CPS occurs before the verse, whereas Mvu and Lal occur after the verse, near the end of the story, with Lal following the prediction of Buddhahood (*vyākaraṇa*) of the merchants. In the Pali versions, they all appear at the end. The Chinese versions also vary: Yijing's SbhV and AbhiNS occur before the verse; DhG Vin occurs after the verse; PYJ and VMS occur at the very end of the story, after the prediction of Buddhahood of the merchants.

[*paḍ*]. ?: This may be reconstructed as *paḍ(*ama)*, corresponding to P *paṭhama*/Skt *prathamāḥ*, “the first,” in the adverbial form.²⁴⁰ The first akṣara *pa* is clearly legible, while the second akṣara *ḍ(*a)* preserves only the right portion of the stroke. The final akṣara (**ma*) is lost due to a hole in the bark. The reconstruction is based on the parallel in the Pali Vin and the DhG Vin. The Vin reads *te ca loke paṭhama upāsakā ahesu dhevācikā*, whereas the DhG Vin has 是為優婆塞中最初受二歸依, 是賈客兄弟二人為首. The *G paḍama* is attested in the RS 12 recto line 31. The shift from *th* > *ḍ* is parallel to the change from *prati* > *paḍi*.²⁴¹ Hence, the rest of the

²⁴⁰ Another attested form is *paḍhama* (GD s.v. *paḍhama*).

²⁴¹ Silverlock 2015: 370, 237.

illegible portions may have been about the two merchants as the first lay followers to take refuge in the Buddha and Dharma

The Buddha recites a verse of blessing to the merchants (Lines 23 – 25)

Edition:

[23] + [24] [yava] trivaṣavalia vaṇia [a]meṇa aṇumodaṇeṇa ◇ aṇamoḍi yam=atha ? ? [ḍi]
daṇa ? ? ? [25] viśa[ḍi] su[hatha] d[iaḍi] daṇa ta suha[e] bha[vi]śaḍi

Reconstruction:

[23] (*bha) [24] yava trivaṣavalia vaṇia ameṇa aṇumodaṇeṇa aṇamoḍi yam atha (*dia)ḍi
daṇa (*tam athae bha) [25] viśaḍi suhatha diaḍi daṇa ta suhae bhaviśaḍi

Translation:

[23] [24] (*The Blessed One) expressed approval of the two merchants, Trivasa and Valia, with this gratification: “The purpose for which a gift is (*given, that will be for the benefit).
[25] A gift is given for the sake of happiness, that will be for happiness.”

Parallels:

*atha bhagavāṃs trapuṣbhallikayor vaṇijos tad dānam anayā abhyanumodanayā
abhyanumodate:*

yadartham dīyate dānam tadarthāya bhaviṣyati;

sukhārtham dīyate dānam tat sukhāya bhaviṣyati. (SbhV I 124)

Then, the Blessed One expressed his appreciation for the gift from the two merchants, Trapuṣa and Bhallika, with this verse of rejoicing:

“The purpose for which a gift is given, that will be for the benefit.

A gift is given for the sake of happiness, that will be for happiness.”

受彼賈人麯蜜已，以此勸喻，而開化之。即呪願言：

所為布施者，必獲其利義；若為樂故施，後必得安樂。(DhG Vin at T 22 no. 1428, 782a5–9)

After he had accepted the offering, he spoke to them with words of encouragement to guide and transform them. He then pronounced this blessing:

“One who performs generosity will certainly attain its benefits; if one gives for the sake of happiness, one shall certainly attain happiness.”

Text notes:

Line 24. *[a]meṇa*: This word corresponds to the Skt *anena*, the demonstrative pronoun in the instrumental singular. However, the form G *ameṇa* is otherwise unattested (see GD s.v. *aya*). The expected form is *imeṇa*. The initial akṣara *a* is written adjacent to a lenticel in the bark at the point where the horizontal *i*-diacritic is expected to appear. As a result, no visible trace of the *i*-stroke can be detected, even in the infrared image. Hence, I preserve the reading *ameṇa*.



Figure 25.
Detail of *ṇu*.

aṇumodaṇeṇa ∅ *aṇamoḍi*: A large knot in the bark appears between *aṇumodaṇeṇa* and

aṇamoḍi, and the scribe avoided the knot. G *aṇumodaṇeṇa* corresponds to P/Skt *anumodanena*, “with gratification,” in the instrumental singular masculine.

Furthermore, G *aṇamoḍi* corresponds to P/BHS *anumodi*, “he expressed approval,” in the third-person singular aorist of *anu* + $\sqrt{\text{mud}}$ (MW s.v.

anumud).²⁴² It is unclear whether the scribe intended to write *aṇu*- and *aṇa*- interchangeably. In *aṇumodaṇeṇa*, the first *ṇu* is written with a vowel marker whose loop does not fully close, raising

²⁴² BHS §29.14.

the possibility that the akṣara could alternatively be read as *ṇa*. If so, both forms may have originally been written as *aṇamodaṇeṇa* and *aṇamoḍi* respectively.

Lines 24–25. *yam=atha ? ? [ḍi] daṇa ? ? ? ? viśa[ḍi] su[hatha] d[iḍi] daṇa ta suha[e] bha[vi]śaḍi*: This is the verse spoken by the Buddha as a blessing to the merchants’ offering. Based on the close parallel with the SbV, this can be safely reconstructed as *yam atha (*dia)ḍi daṇa (*tam athae bha)viśaḍi suhatha diḍi daṇa ta suhae bhaviśaḍi*. The fragment where the last akṣaras *viśaḍi* in *bhaviśaḍi* initially appears in the recto prior to the reconstruction. After the image was corrected, however, it became clear that the fragment had been flipped. Once reoriented, the readings at this position on both the recto and verso aligned correctly.²⁴³

The G *atha* corresponds to P *attham*/Skt *artham*, “purpose,” in the accusative singular masculine. The most commonly attested Gāndhārī forms of this word are *aṭha* and *artha* (GD s.v. *aṭha*). In the present manuscript, the akṣara *tha* is clearly visible, and there is no trace of a preconsonantal *r*. The form *atha*, corresponding to Skt *artha*, is also attested in the Gāndhārī Dharmapada, verses 265, 266, 282, and 336.²⁴⁴ A similar form appears in the compound *suhatha*, equivalent to Skt *sukhārtham*, “for the sake of happiness,” in the accusative singular masculine. The scribe, therefore, appears to write *atha* consistently, reflecting a MIA development closer to P *attha* than the Skt *artha*.

The G *diḍi* corresponds to Skt *dīyate*, “is given,” in the third-person singular present passive form of $\sqrt{dā}$. The passive suffix *-ya* is elided, and the ending takes the present tense active ending *-ḍi*.²⁴⁵ The elision of *ya* also occurs in *bhaviśaḍi*, “it will be,” corresponding to Skt

²⁴³ See text notes on the recto line 26 on *śakamuṇi*.

²⁴⁴ See Brough 1962: 76–7 (§18b).

²⁴⁵ The elision of of intervocalic *-y-* is not attested in RS scrolls so far. See Lee 2009: 69; Cox 2025: 229–30.

bhaviṣyati, in the third-person singular future form of $\sqrt{bhū}$. The original $\text{ṣy} > \text{ś}$ undergoes palatalization.²⁴⁶

This verse agrees closely with the parallel in SbhV that reads:

*yadartham dīyate dānaṃ tadarthāya bhaviṣyati;
sukhārtham dīyate dānaṃ tat sukhāya bhaviṣyati.*

The purpose for which a gift is given, that will be for the benefit.
A gift is given for the sake of happiness, that will be for happiness

The DhG Vin verse is

所為布施者，必獲其利義；若為樂故施，後必得安樂。²⁴⁷

One who performs generosity will certainly attain its benefits; if one gives for the sake of happiness, one shall certainly attain happiness.

Only the Pali version of this story lacks verses, whereas the Sanskrit and Chinese parallels have verses of varying lengths and content.²⁴⁸ The present Gāndhārī version preserves only one verse, similar to the SbhV and DhG Vin versions.

The Buddha resorts to meditation (Lines 25 – 27)

Edition:

[25] aṣa u bhayava trivṣa ? ? ? vaṇi ? ? [26] [ṇ]. [a].[ṇ].mo[d̪].[ṇ].[ṇ]. aṇamoḍa[īta] taspīd=i
boṣimaḍamul. s.t.a. ? /// + + + [27] lakeṇa ṇi[ṣiḍi] vimutas[uha]pi[ḍi]ṣabi[ḍi]

Reconstruction:

aṣa u bhayava trivṣa(*valia) vaṇi(*a e) [26] ṇ(*a) (*a)ṇ(*u)moḍ(*a)ṇ(*e)ṇ(*a) aṇamoḍaīta
taspīd i boṣimaḍamul(*o) s(*a)t(*a aha ekapa) [27] lakeṇa ṇiṣiḍi vimutasuhapiḍiṣabiḍi

Translation:

²⁴⁶ Cox 2025: 300; Allon 2001: 94; Salomon 2008: 126.

²⁴⁷ The Chinese SbhV is similar to DhG Vin with only a minor difference. Chinese SbhV has 必獲其義利 with the last two characters reversed.

²⁴⁸ For comparison of different verses from different sources, see Allon 2009: 12–3.

Then, the Blessed One, to the two merchants, Trivusa and (*Valia), [26] having rejoiced (*with gratification), at that very foot of the seat of enlightenment, (*for seven days), [27] seated in a (*single) meditative posture, experiencing the joy and happiness of liberation.

Parallels:

rājāyatanaṃ sattāha ekapallamaṃkena nisīdi vimuttisukhapāṭisavedī. (Vin I 3)

Having arrived at the foot of the Rājāyatana tree, he sat in a single cross-legged posture for seven days, experiencing the bliss of liberation.

vimuktiprītisukhasaṃvedī buddho bhagavān saptāhaṃ ekaparyamaṃkena atināmayati. (SbhV I 122)

The Buddha, the Blessed One, experienced the joy and bliss of liberation while remaining in a single meditative posture for seven days.

即於菩提樹下結加趺坐，七日不動，受解脫樂。(DhG Vin at T 22 no. 1428, 781c12–3)

He sat cross-legged beneath the Bodhi tree, remaining motionless for seven days while experiencing the bliss of liberation.

爾時世尊說此偈已，更為賈人說種種妙法，示教利喜已，復至一樹下食麩蜜。食麩蜜已，復結跏趺坐，入定七日，受解脫樂。(Mahīś Vin at T 22 no. 1421, 103b7–8)

When the Blessed One had finished reciting this verse, he further preached various aspects of the sublime Dharma to the merchants. Having instructed, benefited, and gladdened them, he went beneath another tree to eat the grain and honey. After eating, he sat again in the lotus

position and entered meditative concentration for seven days, experiencing the bliss of liberation.

Text notes:

Line 25. *aṣa u*: This is equivalent to P *atha kho*/Skt *atha khalu* (see GD s.v. *kho* for a different form of *khalu*). The top portion of *aṣa* was originally flipped on the recto before the reconstruction.

Line 26. *boṣimaḍamul*.: The last akṣara shows the half top of *la* with the half bottom of the akṣara break off in the manuscript. After the bottom fragment is placed in its correct position, it shows the *o*-diacritic. Thus, the reconstruction is *boṣimaḍamul(*o)*, corresponding to P/Skt *bodhimaṇḍamūle*, in the locative singular neuter. The term *bodhimaṇḍa* mostly occurs in the *Jātaka* and *Buddhavaṃsa* in Pali sources, but it appears in many Sanskrit sources. G *bodhimaḍa* appears in the Bajaur Collection.²⁴⁹ P/Skt *maṇḍa* means the “best part,” and in the case of *bodhimaṇḍa*, it means the “essence of enlightenment” or the “best place of enlightenment” (PTSD, BHSD s.v. *maṇḍa*). Idiomatically, this term can be translated as “the seat of enlightenment,” referring to a certain spot where the Buddha realized the ultimate truth.²⁵⁰ In the verso line 14, it mentions *(*b)os(*i)rukṣamula*, as the place where the Buddha sits.

s.t.a. ?: This may tentatively be reconstructed as *s(*a)t(*aaha)*, corresponding to P *sattāham*/Skt *saptāham*, “for seven days,” in the accusative singular neuter, but used adverbially. The akṣara *s(*a)* is written with its lower stroke curled upward in a manner resembling the *u*-diacritic. It is unclear whether the reading should be interpreted as *su* or merely as *sa* with a flourish to the footmark. The attested Gāndhārī spelling of *saptāham* is normally *sataha* (GD s.v.

²⁴⁹ BC 4 recto line 17, see Schlosser 2022: 169–70.

²⁵⁰ For the specific meaning in the Gāndhārī Mahāyāna sūtra, see Schlosser 2022: 170.

sataha). There is one instance, however, in the Gāndhārī Bhadrakalpika-sūtra that reads *sataaśiti* (=Skt *saptāśiti*), “eighty-seven.”²⁵¹ Although this is a different compound, it exhibits a comparable *sandhi* development. By contrast, G *sataaha* does not undergo sandhi between *sapta* and *āhan* but maintains the word division.

A similar expression appears in the Pali source as follows.

*atha kho bhagavā bodhirukkhāmūle sattāhaṃ ekapallāṅkena nisīdi
vimuttisukhapaṭisaṃvedī* (Vin I 1).

Then, the Blessed One sat at the foot of the tree of awakening for seven days in a single posture, experiencing the bliss of liberation.

The expression *sattāhaṃ* followed by *ekapallāṅkena nisīdi* is expected in the present context. It remains unclear whether any word originally followed *s(*a)t(*aaha)*, since the manuscript breaks off at this point, and the area appears to coincide with a knot in the bark.

Line 27. *vimutas[uha]pi[dī]sabi[dī]*: This phrase is equivalent to Skt *vimukta-sukha-prīti-saṃvedī*, “experiencing the joy and happiness of liberation,” in the nominative singular masculine compound referring to the Blessed One mentioned in the verso line 25. The final member of the compound, *sabi[dī]*, corresponds to Skt *saṃvedī*, “experiencing,” derived from *saṃvedin* (BHSD s.v. *saṃvedin*). While the interchange of *v* and *b* is a common phonological feature in Gāndhārī, the alteration of *i* and *e* is frequently attested as an orthographic phenomenon.²⁵² The Pali parallel has *vimutti-sukha-paṭisavedī*, whereas SbhV has *vimukti-prīti-sukha-saṃvedī*. Hence, the Gāndhārī version agrees more closely with the SbhV than with the Pali Vin.

All the parallels place this expression at the beginning, except for the Mahīś Vin, which also preserves it both at the beginning and again at the end. However, only the SbhV and DhG

²⁵¹ Baums et al 2016: 233.

²⁵² Glass 2007: 111–2; Silverlock 2015: 220, 239.

Vin explicitly mention the Bodhi tree, whereas the other parallels refer to another tree or to another unspecified tree.²⁵³

The Buddha thinks of how the previous Buddhas received food (Lines 27–28)

Edition:

[27] asa bhayava ? ? ? ? .u ? ? ? [28] ? [v]usa[va]liaṇa matha ca masu[piḍ].a ca pa[d].getse

Reconstruction:

[27] *asa bhayava(*ḍa eda ahuṣi kaṣa)* [28] *(*tri)vusavaliaṇa matha ca masupiḍ(*i)a ca paḍ(*i)getse*

Translation:

[27] Then, (*this occurred to) the Blessed One: “(*How) [28] will I receive the rice cake and honey balls of Trivusa and Valia?”

Parallels:

atha kho bhagavato etadahosi—“na kho tathāgatā hatthesu paṭiggaṇhanti. kimhi nu kho aha paṭiggaṇheyya manthaṇca madhupiṇḍikaṇcā”ti? (Vin I 4)

Then this thought occurred to the Blessed One: "Tathāgatas do not receive offerings directly into their hands. In what, then, should I receive this rice cake and honey ball?"

atha bhagavata etad abhavat: na mama pratirūpaṃ syād yad ahaṃ pāṇau piṇḍapātaṃ pratigrhṇīyāṃ, tadyathā anyatīrthikaḥ; yanv ahaṃ samanvāhareyam kutra pūrvakaiḥ samyaksambuddhaiḥ piṇḍapātaḥ pratigrhīto hitāya prāṇinām iti. (SbhV I 123)

²⁵³ Cf Allon 2009: 11–2.

Then the following thought occurred to the Blessed One: "It would not be fitting for me to accept alms with my hands, as do the non-Buddhist ascetics. Instead, I should reflect upon how the previous perfectly awakened Buddhas accepted almsfood for the benefit of sentient beings?"

時世尊復作如是念：「今此二人奉獻蜜麩，當以何器受之？」(DhG Vin at T 22 no. 1428, 781c28–9)

Then the Blessed One thought to himself: "Since these two are now offering me honey and rice cake, what kind of vessel should I use to receive it?"

Text notes:

The middle portion of line 27, beginning with *asa bhayava*, is likely intended to connect with the middle of the verso line 20 following the scribal mark ☉. Between *sabidi* and *asa*, there is an obstructed space that may have contained another connecting mark corresponding to the previous one, although this cannot be established with certainty, since it may simply represent the end of the *i*-diacritic of the akṣara *ḍi*.

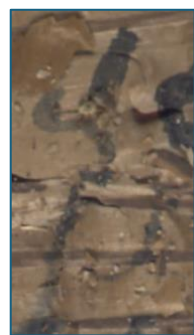


Figure 26. Detail of *tse*.

Line 28. *pa[d].getse*: This can be reconstructed as *paḍ(*i)getse*, corresponding to Skt *pratigrahīṣye*, "I will receive," in the first-person singular future form in the middle ending of *prati* + *√grah*. The conjunct *tse* is attested elsewhere in RS collections, as well as in the Bajaur and British Library collections.²⁵⁴ In the hand of the RS scribe, however, there is often little distinction between the

²⁵⁴ See Melzer 2020: 13; Salomon 2008: 94.

conjuncts *tsa* and *spa*.²⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the present context favors the reading *paḍ(*i)getse* rather than *paḍ(*i)gespe*.

The Pali, Sanskrit, and Chinese DhG Vin parallels preserve a similar passage in which the Buddha reflects on how he should receive the merchants' offering. The Pali Vin reads: *kimhi nu kho ahaṃ paṭiggaṇheyya manthaṇca madhupiṇḍikaṇca*, while the DhG Vin has: "With what kind of vessel should I receive it?" (當以何器受之). The SbhV reads: *yanv ahaṃ samanvāhareyaṃ kutra pūrvakaiḥ samyaksambuddhaiḥ piṇḍapātaḥ pratigṛhīto hitāya prāṇinām*. The Pali employs the first-person singular optative form *paṭiggaṇheyya*, similar in sense to the DhG Vin version (當 ... 受). The Gandhārī version, by contrast, uses a first-person singular future form.

Nevertheless, all three versions share the underlying idea that it would be inappropriate for the Buddha to receive the offering directly with his hands. The Mahīś Vin differs slightly in presenting the Buddha as already aware that a bowl is required.²⁵⁶

The placement of the episode concerning the Buddha's reflection on how he should receive the merchants' offering differs significantly in the present Gandhārī version from the extant parallels. Whereas the other versions place the episode before the Buddha's acceptance of the merchants' offering, the present manuscript introduces the reflection only after the offering has already been accepted and the Buddha has resorted to meditation. Thus, the sequence may reflect some form of displacement, conflation, or textual disruption in the transmission of the episode. In this regard, the interlinear scribal mark ⊙ discussed above may be connected to this displacement, since it occurs precisely at the point where the narrative sequence diverges from the extant parallels.

²⁵⁵ Salomon 2008: 362.

²⁵⁶ For discussion of the differing interpretations and narrative developments preserved in the Chinese Vinaya parallels, see Bareau 1963: 116–20.

The concern regarding the proper manner of receiving alms appears to reflect broader Indian ascetic conventions surrounding bowls, utensils, and food reception. Brahmanical ascetic regulations likewise discuss acceptable begging vessels and modes of receiving food, including eating from the hand, leaf containers, wooden bowls, clay bowls, or gourds. The narrative emphasis on the Buddha's need for a bowl before formally accepting the merchants' offering may therefore reflect broader renunciant ideals concerning ascetic discipline and mendicant identity, while also perhaps reflecting an emerging Buddhist tendency to define distinctive norms of mendicant conduct in relation to other ascetic traditions.²⁵⁷

The four directional each provides the Buddha with a stone bowl (Lines 28 – 30)

Edition:

[28] asa ца ? ? ? ? ? ? [29] vaḍa ceḍaṣa [yeva c].ḍaṣa pari[vi]tarke a[ña ца] catvari [še] ?
 patra atra ? ? ? ? ? [30] rukṣamulo yeṇa bhayava teṇa [u]aṣa[kra]mi ///

Reconstruction:

[28] asa ца(*tvaro maharaya bhaya) [29] vaḍa ceḍaṣa yeva c(*e)ḍaṣa parivitarke aña ца
 catvari še(*la)patra atra ? ? ? ? ? [30] rukṣamulo yeṇa bhayava teṇa uṣakrami

Translation:

[28] Then, (*the Four Great Kings) [29] having known the thoughts (*of the Blessed One)
 with (*their very own) minds, the four (*stone) bowls, here ... [30] At the foot of a tree, they
 approached the Blessed One.

Parallels:

²⁵⁷ See Olivelle 2005: 148–51, especially the prescriptions regarding ascetic bowls, begging practices, and receiving food by hand, leaf-cone, or bowl. See also Olivelle 1999, especially Āpastamba 1.3.25–4.12; Gautama 17.1–38; Baudhāyana 2.18.4–27; Vasiṣṭha 14.1–48, on food regulations, utensils, and ascetic conduct.

atha kho cattāro mahārājāno bhagavato cetasā cetoparivitakkamaññāya catuddisā cattāro selamaye patte bhagavato upanāmesu—“idha, bhante, bhagavā paṭiggaṇhātu manthañca madhupiṇḍikañcā”ti. paṭiggahesi bhagavā paccagghe selamaye patte manthañca madhupiṇḍikañca, paṭiggahetvā paribhuñji. (Vin I 4)

Then the Four Great Kings, having known the Blessed One's thought with their own minds, presented four bowls made of stones from the four directions to the Blessed One, saying: "O Venerable, may the Blessed One accept the gruel and honey in these." The Blessed One accepted the fresh stone bowls along with the gruel and honey balls, and after receiving them, he ate.

atha catvāro mahārājā bhagavataḥ pātreṇa pātrakāryam utpannam iti veditvā anyatamasmāt pāṣāṇaparvatāc catvāri śailamayāni pātrāṇy amanuṣyakṛtāny amanuṣyaniṣṭhitāny acchāni śucīni niṣpratigandhāny ādāya, yena bhagavāṃs tenopasaṃkrāntāḥ. (SbhV I 123)

Then the Four Great Kings, having understood that a need for a bowl had arisen for the Blessed One, took four stone bowls from a certain rocky mountain. These bowls, fashioned by non-humans and finished by non-human hands, were translucent, pure, and devoid of any odor. Having brought them, they approached the Blessed One.

時四天王立在左右，知佛所念，往至四方，各各人取一石鉢，奉上世尊，白言：「願以此鉢受彼賈人麴蜜。」 (DhG Vin at T 22 no. 1428, 782a2–4)

At that moment, the Four Heavenly Kings, who were standing nearby, knew the Buddha's thoughts. They went to the four directions, and each took a stone bowl to present to the

Blessed One, saying: “May you use these bowls to receive the merchants’ offering of grain and honey.”

四天王知佛意，各取一自然香淨石鉢，以奉世尊，白言：「惟願哀納我等此器，受賈人施！」 (Mahīś Vin at T 22 no. 1421, 103a23–5)

The Four Heavenly Kings, perceiving the Buddha's intention, each took a stone bowl—spontaneously produced, fragrant, and pure—and offered them to the Blessed One, saying: "We pray that you compassionately accept these vessels from us and receive the merchants' offering."

Text notes:

Line 28. *ḥa* ? ? ? ? ? : Based on the parallel versions, this is supposed to be the place where the four directional gods appear. So, this phrase is reconstructed as *ḥa*(**tvaro maharaya*), corresponding to P *cattāro mahārājāno*/Skt *catvāro mahārājā*/Ch 四天王, “Four Great Kings,” in the nominative plural masculine. The phrase is attested mainly in the inscription (GD s.v. *maharaya*).²⁵⁸

Lines 28–29. (**bhaya*)*vaḍa ḥeḍaṣa* [*yeva c*].*ḍaṣa pari*[*vi*]*tarke a*[*ñā*]: This can be reconstructed as (**bhaya*)*vaḍa ḥeḍaṣa yeva c*(**e*)*ḍaṣa parivitarke añā*, equivalent to P *bhagavato cetasā eva cetoparivitakkam aññāya*/Skt *bhagavataḥ cetasā eva cetasaḥ parvitarkam ājñāya*. The phrase is similar to the Pali Vin *bhagavato cetasā cetoparivitakkamaññāya*, “having known the Blessed One's thought with their own minds.” The three consecutive akṣaras *yeva ce* are difficult to read in the manuscript. The akṣara *ye* may originally have been written as *ṣa*. Above

²⁵⁸ See also Salomon 2022a: 274.

the base akṣara *ya*, there is a long vertical stroke, possibly intended as an *e*-diacritic. The following akṣara *va* overlaps with the next akṣara *ce* and does not resemble the scribe's usual form of *va*, appearing instead closer to *ya/śa*. The akṣara *ce* has several irregular strokes; notably, the middle portion of *ca* has an additional downward rightward stroke, possibly resulting from repeated corrections. However, despite the paleographical difficulties, the reading *yeva c(*e)ḍaṣa* remains comparatively secure on contextual grounds. Alternatively, the supposed *yeva* may represent two erroneous akṣaras subsequently crossed out by the scribe. The repetition of *ceḍaṣa* *ceḍaṣa* is also attested in RS 12 lines 59–60, which Silverlock interprets either as a “dittographic error” or as a form of “emphasis.”²⁵⁹ If the reading of *yeva* as P/Skt *eva* is correct, then repetition here is more likely emphatic rather than erroneous, meaning “with their very own minds.”²⁶⁰

G *aña* corresponds to P *aññāya*/Skt *ājñāya*, “having known,” in the gerund form of *ā* + $\sqrt{jñā}$. In most Gāndhārī manuscripts, *aña* more commonly corresponds to Skt *anya*, “another” (GD s.v. *aṃña*). In the present case, the initial *a*- represents the prefix *ā*- attached to the root *ñā* (=Skt $\sqrt{jñā}$). A comparable formation appears in *añanino*, corresponding to Skt *ajñāniṣu*, “among the unwise,” where the initial *a*- instead represents the negative prefix *a*- attached to the same root.²⁶¹



Figure 28. Detail of correction from *ga* to *ye*.



Figure 27. Detail of the overlapping *va* and *ce*.

²⁵⁹ Silverlock 2015: 545, 554.

²⁶⁰ Cf. BHSD s.v. *parivitarka*.

²⁶¹ Butcher 2020: 234–5

catvari [śe] ? patra: This can be safely reconstructed as *catvari śe(*la)patra*, corresponding to Skt *catvāri śailapātrāṇi*, “four stone bowls,” in the accusative plural neuter. The compound *śelapatra* is a *tatpuruṣa* compound in which *śela* modifies *patra*. The Pali Vin has *cattāro selamaye patte*, while the SbhV reads *catvāri śailamayāni pātrāṇi*, both meaning “four bowls made of stones.” The expected verb should denote an action such as “to bring” or “to present.” The Pali Vin has *upanāmesu*, “they presented;” while the SbhV reads *ādāya*, “having taken,” and both DhG Vin and Mahīś Vin use *qǔ* 取, “to bring.” The story in the verso ends with the four directional gods approaching the Buddha, who is staying under a tree.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The narratives in RS 24 preserve a rare witness to the circulation of early Buddhist biographical narratives in Gāndhārī. Although fragmentary, the manuscript provides important evidence of the popularity of the two narratives, as attested by their wide circulation across Vinaya, sūtras, and commentaries. The Gāndhārī versions of the Elapatra and Nala story and the Trivusa and Valia narrative reveal both shared narrative foundations and significant variations across traditions.

The study has argued that these narratives are best understood not as fixed components of a fully standardized Buddha biography, but as relatively independent narrative units that circulated in different genres. In several Vinaya traditions, especially in miscellaneous sections preceding the establishment of formal monastic regulations, these episodes appear in connection with ordination and the formation of Saṅgha. Later biographical sūtras reorganized many of the same materials into increasingly continuous and expanded accounts of the Buddha's life. The evidence from RS 24 suggests that such processes of compilation and stabilization were still fluid during the period of the Gāndhāran manuscripts.

Although RS 24 shows close affinities with the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya, important differences remain. In particular, the story of Trivusa and Valia in the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya continues with an extended account concerning the establishment of relics, a feature also preserved in the Mahāvastu and the *Abhiniṣkramaṇasūtra, but absent from the extant Gāndhārī version. In the parallel versions, the episode of the four directional gods offering bowls to the Buddha appears in the middle of the narrative sequence, after which the Buddha receives the offering and withdraws for meditation. In RS 24, however, the bowl episode appears at the end of the extant manuscript and is marked at its expected position by scribal symbols whose exact

function remains uncertain. This may suggest that the bowl episode has been displaced from its original position, in which case the Gāndhārī version may have concluded with the Buddha withdrawing to meditation without continuing to the relic narrative. Nevertheless, because of the fragmentary condition of the manuscript, the possibility that the story originally continued further cannot be excluded. Even if the extant Gāndhārī version ended at this point, the shorter and less systematized form of the narrative preserved in RS 24 may reflect an earlier stage prior to the expanded biographical compilations represented in later traditions. The story of Elapatra and Nala preserved on the recto, by contrast, agrees closely with the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya in terms of narrative arrangement and several textual details.

Much remains uncertain. The fragmentary condition of the manuscript limits reconstruction in several places, and questions concerning sectarian affiliation and textual history cannot always be resolved with certainty. Even so, RS 24 preserves valuable evidence for the study of early Buddhist biographical narratives in Gāndhāra, found prior to the emergence of the more extensive and systematized Buddha biographies known in later Buddhist literature.

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Appendix 1: The Parallels of the Story of Elapatra and Nala (RS 24 recto)

Pali Parallel: Dhp-a III 230–6

*kiccho manussapaṭilābhoti imaṃ dhammadesanaṃ satthā bārāṇasiyaṃ upanissāya
sattasirīsakarukkhamaṃle viharanto erakapattaṃ nāma nāgarājaṃ ārabba kathesi.*

*so kira pubbe kassapabuddhasāsane daharabhikkhu hutvā gaṃgāya nāvaṃ abhiruyha
gacchanto ekasmiṃ erakagumbe erakapattaṃ gahetvā nāvāya vegasā gacchamānāyapi na
muñci, erakapattaṃ chijjivā gataṃ. so “appamattakaṃ etan”ti āpattiṃ adesevā vīsati
vassasahassāni araṇṇe samaṇadhammaṃ katvāpi maraṇakāle erakapattena gīvāya gahito viya
āpattiṃ desetukāmopi aññaṃ bhikkhuṃ apassamāno “aparissuddhaṃ me sīlan”ti
uppannavippaṭisāro tato cavitvā ekarukkhadoṇikanāvappamāno nāgarājā hutvā nibbatti,
erakapattottevassa nāmaṃ ahosi. so nibbattakkhaṇeyeva attabhāvaṃ oloketvā “ettakaṃ nāma
kālaṃ samaṇadhammaṃ katvā ahetukayoniyaṃ maṇḍūkabhakkhaṭṭhāne nibbattomhī”ti
vippaṭisārī ahosi.*

*so aparabhāge ekaṃ dhītaraṃ labhivā majjhe gaṃgāya udakapiṭṭhe mahantaṃ phalaṃ
ukkipitvā dhītaraṃ tasmim̐ ṭhapetvā naccāpetvā gāyāpesi. evaṃ kirassa ahosi — “addhā ahaṃ
idha iminā upāyena buddhe uppanne tassa uppannabhāvaṃ suṇissāmī”ti. yo me gītassa
paṭigītaṃ āharati, tassa mahantena nāgabhavanena saddhiṃ dhītaraṃ dassāmīti
anvaḍḍhamāsaṃ uposathadivase taṃ dhītaraṃ phaṇe ṭhapesi. sā tattha ṭhitā naccantī —*

“kiṃsu adhippatī rājā, kiṃsu rājā rajjissaro.

kathaṃsu virajo hoti, kathaṃ bāloti vuccatī”ti. —

*imaṃ gītaṃ gāyati. sakalajambudīpavāsino “nāgamāṇavikaṃ gaṇhissāmā”ti gantvā
attano attano paññābalena paṭigītaṃ katvā gāyanti. sā taṃ paṭikkhipati. tassā anvaḍḍhamāsaṃ
phaṇe ṭhatvā evaṃ gāyantiyāva ekaṃ buddhantaraṃ vītivattaṃ. atha amhākaṃ satthā loke
uppajjitvā ekadivasaṃ paccūsakāle lokaṃ volokento erakapattaṃ ādiṃ katvā uttaramāṇavaṃ
nāma attano ñāṇajālassa anto pavitṭhaṃ disvā “kiṃ nu kho bhavissatī”ti āvajjento “ajja
erakapattassa dhītaraṃ phaṇe ṭhapetvā naccāpanadivaso, ayaṃ uttaramāṇavo mayā dinnam̐
paṭigītaṃ gaṇhantova sotāpanno hutvā taṃ ādāya nāgarājassa santikaṃ gamissatī. so taṃ sutvā
‘buddho uppanno’ti ñatvā mama santikaṃ āgamissatī, ahaṃ tasmim̐ āgate mahāsamāgame
gāthaṃ kathessāmī, gāthāpariyosāne caturāsītiyā pāṇasahassānaṃ dhammābhisamayo
bhavissatī”ti addasa. so tattha gantvā bārāṇasito avidūre satta sirīsakarukkhā atthi, tesu ekassa
mūle nisīdi. jambudīpavāsino gītapaṭigītaṃ ādāya sannipatiṃsu. satthā avidūre ṭhāne
gacchantam̐ uttaramāṇavaṃ disvā “ehi, uttarā”ti āha. “kiṃ, bhante”ti? “ito tāva ehī”ti. atha
naṃ āgantvā vanditvā nisinnaṃ āha “kahaṃ gacchasī”ti? “erakapattassa dhītu
gāyanaṭṭhānan”ti. “jānāsi pana gītapaṭigītan”ti? “jānāmi, bhante”ti. “vadehi tāva nan”ti? atha
naṃ attano jānananiyāmeneva vadantaṃ “na uttaraṃ etaṃ paṭigītaṃ, ahaṃ te paṭigītaṃ
dassāmī, ādāya naṃ gamissasī”ti. “sādhū, bhante”ti. atha naṃ satthā, uttara, tvam̐
nāgamāṇavikāya gītakāle —*

“chadvārādhippatī rājā, rajjamāno rajjissaro.

arajjaṃ virajo hoti, rajjaṃ bāloti vuccatī”ti. —

imaṃ paṭigītaṃ gāyeyyāsīti āha.

*māṇavikāya gītassa attho — kiṃsu adhippatī rājāti kiṃ adhippati rājā nāma hoti? kiṃsu
rājā rajjissaroti kathaṃ pana rājā rajjissaro nāma hoti? kathaṃsu virajo hotīti kathaṃ nu kho so
rājā virajo nāma hotīti?*

paṭigītaṣṣa pana attho — chadvārādhīppatī rājāti yo channaṃ dvārānaṃ adhippati, ekadvārepi rūpādīhi anabhibhūto, ayaṃ rājā nāma. rājjamāno rājjissaroti yo pana tesu ārammaṇesu rājjati, so rājjamāno rājjissaro nāma. arājjanti arājjamāno pana virājo nāma hoti. rājjanti rājjamāno bāloti vuccatīti.

evamassa satthā paṭigītaṃ datvā, uttara, tayā imasmiṃ gīte gāyite imassa gītassa imaṃ paṭigītaṃ gāyissati —

“kenassu vuyhati bālo, kathaṃ nudati paṇḍito.

yogakkhemī kathaṃ hoti, taṃ me akkhāhi pucchito”ti.

athassa tvaṃ idaṃ paṭigītaṃ gāyeyyāsi —

“oghena vuyhati bālo, yogā nudati paṇḍito.

sabbayogavisamyutto, yogakkhemīti vuccatī”ti.

tassattho — “kāmoghādīnā catubbidhena oghena bālo vuyhati, taṃ oghaṃ paṇḍito sammappadhānasamkhātena yogena nudati. so sabbehi kāmayogādīhi visamyutto yogakkhemī nāma vuccatī”ti.

uttaro imaṃ paṭigītaṃ gaṇhantova sotāpattiphale patiṭṭhahi. so sotāpanno hutvā taṃ gāthaṃ ādāya gantvā, “ambho, mayā gītaṃ paṭigītaṃ āhaṃ, okāsaṃ me dethā”ti vatvā nirantaraṃ ṭhitassa mahājanassa jaṇṇunā akkamanto agamāsi. nāgamāṇavikā pitu phaṇe ṭhatvā naccamānā “kiṃsu adhippati rājā”ti gītaṃ gāyati? uttaro “chadvārādhīppatī rājā”ti paṭigītaṃ gāyī. puna nāgamāṇavikā “kenassu vuyhati”ti tassa gītaṃ gāyati? athassa paṭigītaṃ gāyanto uttaro “oghena vuyhati”ti imaṃ gāthamāha. nāgarājā taṃ sutvāva buddhassa uppannabhāvaṃ ñatvā “mayā ekaṃ buddhantaṃ evarūpaṃ padaṃ nāma na sutapubbaṃ, uppanno vata, bho, loke buddho”ti tuṭṭhamānaso naṃguṭṭhena udakaṃ pahari, mahāvīciyo uṭṭhahimsu, ubho tīrāni bhijjimsu. ito cito ca usabhamatte ṭhāne manussā udaye nimujjimsu. so ettakaṃ mahājanaṃ phaṇe ṭhapetvā ukkhipitvā thale patiṭṭhapesi. so uttaraṃ upasamkamitvā “kahaṃ, sāmī, satthā”ti pucchi. “ekasmiṃ rukkhamaṇe nisinnā, mahārājā”ti. so “ehi, sāmī, gacchāmā”ti uttarena saddhiṃ agamāsi. mahājanopi tena saddhiṃyeva gato. nāgarājā gantvā chabbaṇṇaramāsinaṃ antaraṃ pavisitvā satthāraṃ vanditvā rodamāno aṭṭhāsi. atha naṃ satthā āha — “kiṃ idaṃ, mahārājā”ti? “ahaṃ, bhante, tumhādisassa buddhassa sāvako hutvā vīsati vassasahassāni samaṇadhammaṃ akāsiṃ, sopi maṃ samaṇadhammo niddhāretuṃ nāsakki. appamattakaṃ erakapattachindanamattaṃ nissāya ahetukaṇṭhasandhiṃ gahetvā urena parisakkanatṭhāne nibbattosmi, ekaṃ buddhantaṃ neva manussattaṃ labhāmi, na saddhammassavanaṃ, na tumhādisassa buddhassa dassanaṃ”ti satthā tassa kathaṃ sutvā, “mahārāja, manussattaṃ nāma dullabhameva, tathā saddhammassavanaṃ, tathā buddhuppādo, idaṃ kicchena kasirena labbhatī”ti vatvā dhammaṃ desento imaṃ gāthamāha —

“kiccho manussapaṭilābho, kicchaṃ maccāna jīvitaṃ.

kicchaṃ saddhammassavanaṃ, kiccho buddhānamuppādo”ti.

tassattho — mahantena hi vāyāmena mahantena kusalena laddhattā manussattapaṭilābho nāma kiccho dullabho. nirantaraṃ kasikammādīni katvā jīvitaṃ vuttim ghaṭanato pi paritattṭhāyitāyapi maccānaṃ jīvitaṃ kicchaṃ. anekesupi kappesu dhammadesakassa puggalassa dullabhatāya saddhammassavanampi kicchaṃ. mahantena vāyāmena abhinīhārassa samijjhanato samiddhābhinihārassa ca anekehi kappakoṭisahashehi dullabhuppādato buddhānaṃ uppādopi kicchoyeva, ativiya dullabhoti.

desanāvasāne caturāsītiyā pānasahassānaṃ dhammābhisamayo ahosi. nāgarājāpi taṃdivasaṃ sotāpattiphalaṃ labheyya, tiracchānagatatā pana nālattha. so yesu paṭisandhigahaṇatacajahanavissatṭhaniddokkamanasajātīyāmethunasevanacutisamkhātesu

pañcasu thānesu nāgasarīrameva gahetvā kilamanti, tesu akilamanabhāvaṃ patvā māṇavarūpeneva vicarituṃ labhatīti.

The Teacher, while staying near Baranasi at the foot of a seven-leaf Sirīsa tree, spoke this teaching regarding the *nāga* king named Erakapatta.

It is said that in the past, during the dispensation of Kassapa Buddha, having become a young monk, having boarded a boat on the Ganges, he was traveling along. In a thicket of eraka, having grasped an eraka leaf, even while the boat was moving swiftly, he did not let go. Having torn the eraka leaf, he went away. Having not confessed the offense, he [thought]: "This is a minor matter," even having practiced the ascetic life in the forest for twenty thousand years. At the moment of death, [it is] as if seized by the throat by that eraka leaf. Although wishing to confess the offense, not seeing another monk, [he died] with remorse arisen, [thinking]: "My morality is impure." Having passed away from there, he was reborn as a *nāga* king, having the size of a canoe made from a single tree trunk. His name was Erakapatta. Immediately at the moment of rebirth, having looked at himself, he became remorseful, [thinking]: "Having practiced the ascetic life for such an amount of time, I have been reborn in a causeless womb, in a place whose foods are frogs."

Later, he had a daughter. He would raise a great hood in the middle of the Ganges on the surface of the water, place his daughter upon it, and have her dance and sing. He thought to himself, "Surely, by this means, when a Buddha appears in the world, I shall hear of his arising." Every fortnight, on the uposatha day, he placed his daughter on his hood and she, while dancing there, would sing:

"Who is the king who is a supreme lord? Who is a king who is a master of passion?
How does one become free from dust? And who is called a fool?"

She sang this song, and people from all over Jambudvīpa, hoping to win the *nāga* maiden, would come and sing counter-verses composed by their own wisdom. However, she rejected them all. In this manner, she sang on his hood every fortnight for the duration of an entire interval between Buddhas. Then our Teacher, having appeared in the world, was surveying the world one day at dawn. Starting with Erakapatta, he saw a young man named Uttara who had entered the net of his knowledge. Reflecting on what would happen, he saw: "Today is the day Erakapatta's daughter dances on his hood. This young man Uttara, upon receiving the counter-verse from me, will become a stream-enterer and go to the *nāga* king. Hearing it, the *nāga* will know a Buddha has arisen and come to me. When he arrives, I will speak a verse in that great assembly, and at the conclusion, eighty-four thousand beings will achieve the realization of the Truth." The people of Jambudvīpa gathered with their counter-verses. The Teacher, seeing Uttara passing nearby, said, "Come, Uttara." "What is it, O Venerable?" "Come here for a moment." When he approached, paid respects, and sat down, the Buddha asked, "Where are you going?" "To the place where Erakapatta's daughter sings." "Do you know the counter-verse?" "I know it, O Venerable." "Then tell it to me." When he spoke it according to his own understanding, the Buddha said, "Uttara, that is not the correct answer. I will give you the counter-verse; take it and go." "Very well, O Venerable!" Then the Teacher said, "Uttara, when the *nāga* maiden sings, you should sing this response:

'The king who rules the six gates is the supreme lord; the one who is attached is the master of passion.

The one unattached is free from dust; the one who clings is called a fool."

He said, "Sing this response."

The meaning of the maiden's song is: "What kind of king is the supreme lord? What kind of king is the master of passion? How is one free from dust? How is one called a fool?"

The meaning of the response is: "The king of the six doors" refers to one who is the master of the six sense-doors, who is not overcome by forms and other objects even at a single door; he is truly a king. "The master of passion" is one who delights in those sense-objects. He who does not delight in them is "free from dust." He who delights in them is called a "fool." After the Teacher gave him this response, he said, "Uttara, when she sings this song, you shall sing this response to it:

'By what is the fool carried away, and how does the wise man cast it off?

How does one become a person who is secure from bondage? Answer me this, as you are questioned.'

Then you should sing this reply to her:

'The fool is carried away by the flood, but the wise man casts it off through application.

One who is detached from all bonds is called free from bondage.'

The meaning is: the fool is swept away by the fourfold flood, such as the flood of sensual desire. The wise man casts off that flood through the application of the right efforts. Being free from all attachments like sensual desire, he is called free from bondage."

Just as Uttara was receiving this response, he was established in the fruit of stream-entry. Having become a stream-enterer, he took that verse and went back. He announced, "O Friends, I have brought the response to the song! Give me space!" and then proceeded to walk over the knees of the crowd standing closely together. The daughter of the *nāga* king, standing on her father's hood and dancing, sang the song: "Who is the sovereign king?" Uttara sang back the response: "The king who rules the six gates." Then the *nāga* maiden sang the song: "By what is one carried away?" Singing the reply to her, Uttara spoke this verse: "One is carried away by the flood." As soon as the *nāga* king heard this, he knew that a Buddha had appeared. Thinking, "In a whole interval between Buddhas, I have never before heard such a word; indeed, a Buddha has arisen in the world!" his heart was filled with joy. He struck the water with his tail, causing great waves to rise and breaking both banks. In that place, people were submerged in the water for the distance of an *usabha*. He placed that vast multitude of people on his hood, lifted them up, and set them on dry land. He approached Uttara and asked, "Master, where is the Teacher?" "He is sitting at the foot of a certain tree, O Great King." "Come, Master, let us go," he said, and went along with Uttara. The great crowd followed him as well. The *nāga* king went and entered the aura of the six-colored rays, prostrated before the Teacher, and stood there weeping. Then the Teacher said to him, "What is this, O Great King?" "O Venerable, having been a disciple of a Buddha like you, I practiced the ascetic path for twenty thousand years, yet even that practice was unable to deliver me. Because of a slight matter, merely snapping a blade of eraka grass, I took a rootless rebirth and was born in this state where I must crawl on my belly. For an entire buddhāntara, I have neither obtained a human birth, nor heard the True Dharma, nor seen a Buddha like you." Hearing his words, the Teacher said, "O Great King, it is indeed rare to obtain human birth; likewise, hearing the True Dharma and the arising of a Buddha are rare. These are attained only with great difficulty and hardship."

He then taught the Dharma by speaking this verse:

"Hard is it to acquire birth as a human; rare is the life of mortals.

Hard is the opportunity to hear the True Dharma, and rare is the arising of the Buddhas."

The meaning is: because it is acquired through great exertion and great merit, obtaining human status is difficult and rare. Even as they maintain their livelihood through constant work

like farming, the life of mortals is difficult due to its brief duration. Because a person who teaches the Dharma is rare even across many eons, hearing the True Dharma is also hard. And because it is accomplished through great effort in making the initial vow and because it happens only after many hundreds of thousands of tens of millions of eons, the arising of Buddhas is also difficult and exceedingly rare.

At the conclusion of the teaching, eighty-four thousand living beings attained the realization of the Truth. The *nāga* king might also have attained the fruit of stream-entry that day, but he could not because of his birth as an animal. However, having reached a state of relief from the suffering of the *nāga* body in the five circumstances where they must assume their serpent form: at birth, when shedding their skin, when sleeping, when mating with their own kind, and at death. He was able to wander at will in the form of a young man.

Chinese Parallels

DhG Vin (*Sì fēn lǜ* 四分律) fascicle 32 translated by Buddhayaśas (佛陀耶舍) in collaboration with Zhú Fóniàn (竺佛念) in 408 CE (T 22 no. 1428, 791a6–792c15).

爾時世尊遊波羅捺國。時伊羅鉢羅龍王，自出恒河水所居宮，手執金鉢盛滿銀粟、銀鉢盛滿金粟，將諸龍女，八日、十四日、十五日而說此偈：

「何者王中上？染者與染等，云何得無垢？何者名為愚？

何者流所漂？得何名為智？云何流不流，而名為解脫？」

龍王言：「若有宣暢此偈義者，我當持金鉢盛銀粟、銀鉢盛金粟，及所將龍女，盡當與之。我求如來等正覺。」時眾人大集，或有人往觀金鉢銀粟、銀鉢金粟，或有往觀諸龍女者，或有往欲與龍王分別偈義者。

爾時有一梵志，名那羅陀，住波羅捺城側，少垢利根多智聰明。時那羅陀出波羅捺城，詣龍王所，到已語龍王言：「汝今說偈，我欲與汝廣演其義。」爾時伊羅鉢羅龍王即以偈向那羅陀說言：

「何者王中上？染者與染等，云何得無垢？何者名為愚？

何者流所漂？得何名為智？云何流不流，而名為解脫？」

龍王言：「若有宣暢分別此偈義者，我當持金鉢盛銀粟、銀鉢盛金粟，及所將龍女，盡當與之，我求如來等正覺。」

時那羅陀梵志語伊羅鉢龍王言：「且止龍王。却後七日當廣演此偈義。」時那羅陀梵志誦此偈通利，還入波羅捺城，復作是念：「此中何者高才大德沙門婆羅門，我當以此偈問之。」復作是念：「此不蘭迦葉，眾中長大為人師導，眾人宗仰名稱遠聞，所知如海多人供養，我今宜可往彼問此偈義耶？」時那羅陀梵志往至迦葉所，以此偈與不蘭迦葉說。時迦葉聞此偈實不知，即蹙眉瞋目、出惡音聲、努項脈脹、瞋恚熾盛不答。彼即捨去，作是念：「今當更於何處求沙門婆羅門而問此偈義？」中路復作是念：「末伽梨耆奢離、阿夷頭翅舍欽婆羅、牟提侈婆休迦梅延、訕若毘羅吒子、尼提子等，在於眾中為師首，眾人宗仰名稱遠聞，所知如海多人供養，我今宜可往彼問此偈義。」

時那羅陀梵志往至末伽梨、尼乾子等所，以此偈向說。彼聞此偈實不知，即蹙眉瞋目、出惡音聲、努項脈脹、瞋恚熾盛不能答。見已即復捨去，復作是念：「更於何處求沙門婆羅門而問此義耶？」即念言：「此大沙門瞿曇，在大眾中為師首，眾人宗仰名稱遠聞，所知如海多人供養，我今宜可往彼問此偈義。」

復作是念：「餘有沙門婆羅門耆年出家學久，猶尚不能解此偈義，況此沙門瞿曇年尚幼稚出家日淺，豈能解耶？」復作是念：「年雖幼稚亦不可輕，亦有年少出家學道得阿羅漢神足自由者，我今當往詣彼沙門問此偈義。」

時那羅陀梵志出波羅捺城，往詣仙人鹿苑所，到已舉手與如來共相問訊，在一面坐，白世尊言：「欲有所問，若沙門瞿曇聽者我當相問。」佛言：「梵志！汝欲有問隨意。」時那羅陀復生此念：「我見彼諸沙門婆羅門，無有賜我顏色，不與我解，亦不言隨所問，今所見者甚為奇特。」爾時梵志即以偈向佛說：

「何者王中上？染者與染等，云何得無垢？何者名為愚？

何者流所漂？得何名為智？云何流不流，而名為解脫？」

爾時世尊以偈報那羅陀梵志言：

「第六王為上。染者與染等，不染則無垢。染者謂之愚。

愚者流所漂，能滅者為智。能捨一切流，天及於世間，

不與流相應，不為死所惑。能以念為主，諸流得解脫。」

爾時那羅陀，從如來聞此偈，善諷誦讀已，即從坐起禮世尊足遶三匝而去，還入波羅捺城。時伊羅鉢龍王七日後自出龍宮，將諸龍女，持金鉢盛銀粟、銀鉢盛金粟而來，并說此偈：

「何者王中上？染者與染等，何者名無垢？何者名為愚？

何者流所漂？得何名為智？云何流不流，而名為解脫？」

若有能演說此偈義者，當以此金鉢盛銀粟、銀鉢盛金粟，及所將龍女，盡當與之，欲求無上正真等正覺。爾時多有人眾聚會，或有看金鉢盛銀粟者，或有看銀鉢盛金粟者，或有看龍女者，或有欲聽那羅陀梵志解說偈義者。

爾時那羅陀梵志出波羅捺城，往詣伊羅鉢龍王宮，語龍王言：「所論偈者一一說之，吾當與汝分別解義。」時龍王即以此偈向那羅陀說：

「何者王中上？染者與染等，何者名無垢？何者名為愚？

何者流所漂？得何名為智？云何流不流，而名為解脫？」

時那羅陀復以偈報龍王言：

「第六王為上。染者與染等，不染則無垢。染者謂之愚。

愚者流所漂，能滅者為智。能捨一切流，天及於世間，

不與流相應，不為死所惑。能以念為主，諸流得解脫。」

時伊羅鉢龍王問言：「云何梵志，汝自有此智而說耶？為從沙門婆羅門聞而說耶？」報言：「龍王！我無此智說，今有沙門瞿曇釋子出家學道，成無上正真等正覺，從彼聞而說。」時龍王便作是念：「釋迦文如來、至真、等正覺，已出現於世耶？已出現於世耶？」即問那羅陀言：「今日如來為在何處住？」報言：「今近在仙人鹿苑住。」時龍王語那羅陀：「可共至仙人鹿苑所，禮如來至真等正覺。」

時那羅陀及龍王將八萬四千眾前後圍遶，往仙人鹿苑，到世尊所，到已禮世尊足，在一面立。那羅陀共相問訊，在一面坐，八萬四千眾，或有禮如來足在一面立者，或有擎拳共相問訊在一面坐者，或有向如來自稱姓名而在一面坐者，或叉手視如來在一面坐者，或有默然不語在一面坐者。八萬四千眾已坐定，世尊漸次為說勝法，勸令發歡喜心。所謂法者，布施持戒生天之法，呵欲不淨、讚歎出離為樂。

時那羅陀及八萬四千眾，即於座上諸塵垢盡得法眼淨，見法得法成就諸法得果證，前白佛言：「我等自今歸依佛法僧，唯願世尊聽為優婆塞，盡形壽不殺生乃至不飲酒。」

時伊羅鉢龍王悲泣不能自勝，或時踊躍歡喜。時那羅陀語龍王言：「今者悲泣，為惜金鉢盛銀粟、銀鉢盛金粟，及龍女等，而悲泣耶？」龍王報言：「我不以此諸物故悲泣。那羅陀當知！汝今取金鉢盛銀粟、銀鉢盛金粟，應取無苦。若須波羅捺城中剎利女、婆羅門女、居士女、工師女者，我當勸令與。何以故？那羅陀！汝不能與龍女共會。」

那羅陀報龍王言：「金鉢盛銀粟、銀鉢盛金粟我不須，龍女亦不須，我今欲於如來所修梵行。」爾時那羅陀梵志，見法得法成就諸法自知得果證，前白佛言：「唯然世尊！我今欲於如來所出家修梵行。」佛言：「來比丘！於我法中快修梵行盡苦源，即名受具足戒。」如先所見重觀察已，有漏心解脫，無礙解脫智生。時世間有一百一十一阿羅漢，佛為一百一十二。

爾時世尊告龍王言：「汝何故悲泣不能自勝耶？」時龍王白佛言：「世尊！我念古昔迦葉佛時，修梵行故犯戒，壞伊羅鉢樹葉，此當有何報應。世尊！我由此業報故，生長壽龍中，如來般涅槃法滅盡後，我乃當轉此龍身，我失彼此二邊利，不得修梵行。以是故，悲泣不能自勝。」

爾時世尊復問龍王言：「汝以何緣復歡喜耶？」龍王白佛言：「我身自從迦葉佛聞，而告我言：『却後當有釋迦牟尼佛出現於世，為如來、至真、等正覺。』如今所見如實不異，我作此念：『未曾有，如來智慧所見，如實無二。』以是故，歡喜踊躍不能自勝。」

佛告龍王：「汝今歸依佛法僧。」答言：「如是！我今歸依佛法僧。」是為畜生最初受三自歸，伊羅鉢龍王為首。

At that time, the Blessed One was traveling through the country of Vārāṇasī. Then, the *nāga* king Elapatra emerged from his palace within the waters of the Ganges River. Holding a golden bowl filled with silver grain and a silver bowl filled with golden grain, and accompanied by a multitude of *nāga* maidens, he spoke these verses on the eighth, fourteenth, and fifteenth days of the month:

"Who is the most excellent among kings? How are the defiled and defilement equal?

How does one attain the state of being stainless? Who is it that is called a fool?

Who is swept away by the current? By attaining what is one called wise? How does one not drift with the flow, and is called liberation?"

The *nāga* king said: "If there is anyone who can proclaim and explain the meaning of this verse, I shall present them with golden bowls filled with silver grains and silver bowls filled with golden grains, as well as the accompanying *nāga* maidens; I will give them everything. I seek the Tathāgata, the Perfectly Awakened One." At that time, a great crowd gathered. Some people went to see the golden bowls with silver grains and the silver bowls with golden grains, while others went to see the *nāga* maidens. There were also those who came wishing to analyze the meaning of the verse with the *nāga* king.

At that time, there was a brahmin named Narada who lived near the city of Vārāṇasī. He had few defilements, sharp faculties, and was profoundly wise and intelligent. Narada left the city of Vārāṇasī and went to the *nāga* king's dwelling. Having arrived, he said to the *nāga* king: "Speak your verse now, for I wish to explain its meaning to you in detail." Then, the *nāga*-king Elapatra addressed Narada with this verse:

"Who is the most excellent among kings? How are the defiled and defilement equal?

How does one attain the state of being stainless? Who is it that is called a fool?

Who is swept away by the current? By attaining what is one called wise? How does one not drift with the flow, and is called liberation?"

The *nāga* king said: "If there is anyone who can proclaim and explain the meaning of this verse, I shall present them with golden bowls filled with silver grains and silver bowls filled with golden grains, as well as the accompanying *nāga* maidens; I will give them everything. I seek the Tathāgata, the Perfectly Awakened One."

Then the brahmin Narada said to the *nāga*-king Elapatra: "Wait for a moment, O *nāga*-king! After seven days have passed, I shall explain the meaning of this verse in detail." At that time, the brahmin Narada memorized this verse until he was proficient in it and returned to the city of Vārāṇasī. He then thought to himself: "Who among the śramaṇas and brāhmaṇas here possesses great talent and virtue? I should go and ask them about this verse." He thought further: "This Pūraṇa-kāśyapa is a senior among the multitude and a teacher to many; he is respected by

the masses, his fame is heard far and wide, his knowledge is vast as the ocean, and he receives many offerings. Should I go to him now to ask about the meaning of this verse?" Then the brahmin Narada went to the place where Kāśyapa was and recited this verse to him. When Kāśyapa heard the verse, he truly did not understand it; he immediately knit his brows and glared angrily, his voice became harsh, the veins in his neck bulged, and he was filled with burning indignation, unable to answer. Narada then left him and thought: "Where else should I go now to find a śramaṇa or brāhmaṇa to ask about the meaning of this verse?" While on the road, he thought again: "Maskari Gośālīputra, Ajita Keśakambala, Kakuda Kātyāyana, Sañjaya Vairāṭīputra, and the Nirgrantha Jñātiputra —these are all leaders within their communities and teachers of men. They are respected by the masses, their fame is heard far and wide, their knowledge is vast as the ocean, and they receive many offerings. I should go to them now and ask the meaning of this verse."

At that time, the brahmin Narada went to the places where Maskarī, Nirgrantha Jñātiputra, and the others were staying, and he addressed them with this verse. Upon hearing it, they truly did not understand its meaning. They knit their brows and glared angrily, their voice became harsh, the veins in his neck bulged, and they were filled with burning indignation, unable to answer. Seeing this, he abandoned them and departed. He then thought to himself: "Where else can I seek out śramaṇas or brāhmaṇas to ask about the meaning of this verse?" He reflected: "This Great Śramaṇa Gautama serves as the leader of a great assembly; he is respected by the multitudes and his fame has spread far and wide. His knowledge is vast like the ocean and he receives offerings from many people. I should go to him now and ask about the meaning of this verse."

Then he thought again: "Other śramaṇas and brāhmaṇas who are seniors, having renounced the world long ago and trained for a long time, were still unable to comprehend the meaning of this verse. How then could this Śramaṇa Gautama, who is still young and has only recently left home, be able to understand it?" Yet he thought once more: "Though he is young, he should not be despised. There are those who leave home at an early age to practice the path and attain arhatship, gaining spiritual powers and mastery. I shall go to that śramaṇa now and inquire about the meaning of this verse."

Then the brahmin Narada left the city of Vārāṇasī and went to the Seers' Deer Park. Having arrived, he raised his hands to exchange greetings with the Tathāgata and sat to one side. He said to the Blessed One: "I wish to ask a question. If the Śramaṇa Gautama allows it, I shall inquire." The Buddha replied: "O Brahmin, you may ask whatever you wish." At that moment, Narada thought again: "I have seen those other śramaṇas and brāhmaṇas; none showed me a pleasant countenance, none provided me an explanation, nor did they tell me to ask whatever I liked. What I see now is truly extraordinary." Then the brahmin [Narada] addressed the Buddha with the verse:

"Who is the most excellent among kings? How are the defiled and defilement equal?

How does one attain the state of being stainless? Who is it that is called a fool?

Who is swept away by the current? By attaining what is one called wise? How does one not drift with the flow, and is called liberation?"

Then, the Blessed One replied to the brahmin Narada with the verse:

"The sixth king is the most supreme. The defiled are equal to defilement; one who is undefiled is without stain. The defiled are called fools.

Fools are swept away by the torrents; those able to extinguish them are the wise. Able to abandon all torrents, among the gods and in the world,

They do not associate with the torrents and are not deluded by death. Able to make mindfulness their master, they attain liberation from all torrents."

At that time, Narada, having heard these verses from the Tathāgata and having skillfully chanted and recited them, immediately rose from his seat, bowed at the Blessed One's feet, circumambulated him three times, and departed, returning to the city of Vārāṇasī. Seven days later, the *nāga*-king Elapatra emerged from his *nāga* palace, bringing many *nāga* maidens and carrying a golden bowl filled with silver grain and a silver bowl filled with golden grain. He then recited these verses:

"Who is the most excellent among kings? How are the defiled and defilement equal?
How does one attain the state of being stainless? Who is it that is called a fool?
Who is swept away by the current? By attaining what is one called wise? How does one
not drift with the flow, and is called liberation?"

He declared that if anyone could expound the meaning of these verses, he would give them the golden bowl filled with silver grain, the silver bowl filled with golden grain, and all the *nāga* maidens he brought, as he sought the utmost, completely perfect enlightenment. At that time, a great crowd had gathered. Some were looking at the golden bowl filled with silver grain, others at the silver bowl filled with golden grain, others at the *nāga* maidens, and some wished to hear the brahmin Narada explain the meaning of the verses.

Then the brahmin Narada went out from the city of Vārāṇasī to the palace of the *nāga*-king Elapatra and said to the *nāga* king: "Recite each of the verses in question one by one, and I shall distinguish and explain their meaning for you." The Naga King then recited these verses to Narada:

"Who is the most excellent among kings? How are the defiled and defilement equal?
How does one attain the state of being stainless? Who is it that is called a fool?
Who is swept away by the current? By attaining what is one called wise? How does one
not drift with the flow, and is called liberation?"

Then Narada replied to the *nāga* king with these verses:

"The sixth king is the most supreme. The defiled are equal to defilement; one who is undefiled is without stain. The defiled are called fools.

Fools are swept away by the torrents; those able to extinguish them are the wise. Able to abandon all torrents, among the gods and in the world,

They do not associate with the torrents and are not deluded by death. Able to make mindfulness their master, they attain liberation from all torrents."

Then, the *nāga*-king Elapatra asked: "How is it, O Brahmin, did this wisdom originate from within yourself, or did you hear it from a śramaṇa or a brāhmaṇa?" [Narada] replied: "O *nāga* king! I do not possess such wisdom myself. Now, there is the ascetic Gautama, a son of the Śākyas, who left home to practice the path and has achieved utmost, completely perfect enlightenment. It was from him that I heard these words." Then the *nāga* king thought to himself: "Has the Śākyamuni, the Tathāgata, the Worthy One, the Perfectly Awakened One, truly appeared in the world? Has he indeed appeared in the world?" He then asked Narada: "Where is the Tathāgata residing today?" [He] answered: "He is currently staying nearby at the Seers' Deer Park." The *nāga* king then said to Narada: "Let us go together to the Seers' Deer Park to pay our respects to the Tathāgata, the Worthy One, the Perfectly Awakened One!"

Then, Narada and the *nāga* king, surrounded by a retinue of eighty-four thousand, went to the Seers' Deer Park. Upon reaching the place where the Blessed One was, they bowed their heads at the feet of the Blessed One and stood to one side. Narada and the others exchanged

greetings and sat to one side. Among the eighty-four thousand beings, some bowed at the feet of the Tathāgata and remained standing to one side. Some raised their joined hands in greeting and then sat to one side. Some announced their own names and clans to the Tathāgata and then sat to one side. Some folded their hands, gazing at the Tathāgata, and then sat to one side. Some remained silent, without talking, and sat to one side. After the eighty-four thousand beings had sat down, the Blessed One gradually expounded the excellent teaching to them, encouraging them and causing them to rejoice. The teaching consists of giving, morality, and ways of being reborn in the heavens; rebuking the impurity of sensual desires; praising renunciation as happiness.

At that time, Nārada and eighty-four thousand beings, right there in their seats, became free of all dust and defilement, attaining the purity of Dharma-eye, seeing the Dharma, and attaining the Dharma. They perfected all teachings and realized the fruits [of the path]. [They] addressed the Buddha, saying: "From this day forth, we take refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. May the Blessed One accept us as lay followers. For as long as we live, we will not kill, up to the consumption of intoxicants."

At that time, the *nāga*-king Elapatra wept with grief and was unable to control himself, and then he leaped with happiness. Narada then addressed the *nāga* king, saying: "Are you weeping now because you do not want to lose the golden bowls filled with silver grain, the silver bowls filled with golden grain, and the *nāga* maidens?" The *nāga* king replied: "I am not weeping because of any of these things. O Narada, you should know! You may now take the golden bowls filled with silver grain and the silver bowls filled with golden grain; you should accept them without distress. If you need a *kṣatriya* woman, a *brāhmaṇa* woman, a *vaiśya* woman, or a *śūdra* woman from within the city of Vārāṇasī, I shall urge them to be given to you. Why is that? O Narada! You are unable to consort with *nāga* maidens." Nārada answered the *nāga* king: "I have no need for golden bowls filled with silver grain or silver bowls filled with golden grain, nor do I have any need for *nāga* maidens. I now wish to practice holy conduct under the Tathāgata."

At that time, the brahmin Narada, after seeing and attaining the Dharma, completing all Dharma, and knowing that he had already realized the fruition, spoke to the Buddha, saying: "Please, O Blessed One! I now want to go forth and practice the holy conduct under the Tathāgata." The Buddha said: "Come, O monk! Cultivate the holy practices within my teaching to bring an end to the source of suffering, and this shall be known as receiving full ordination." Having examined this once more as previously witnessed, the mind was liberated from all defilements, and the wisdom of unobstructed liberation arose. At that time, there were one hundred and eleven arhats in the world, and the Buddha was the one hundred and twelfth.

Then, the Blessed One addressed the *nāga* king, saying: "For what reason do you weep with grief and was unable to control himself?" Then the *nāga* king addressed the Buddha, saying: "O Blessed One! I recall that in the past, during the time of Kāśyapa Buddha, while I was cultivating holy practices, I violated the precepts by damaging the leaves of an elapatra tree, [thinking:] 'What kind of retribution will result from this?' O Blessed One! Due to the karmic retribution of this deed, I was born among the long-lived *nāga*. Only after the Tathāgata enters *parinirvāṇa* and the Dharma has completely disappeared will I finally be able to transform this *nāga* body. I have lost the benefits of both sides and am unable to cultivate pure practices. For this reason, I am weeping and cannot restrain my grief."

Then, the Blessed One further questioned the *nāga* king: "For what reason are you so full of joy?" The *nāga* king addressed the Buddha, saying: "I myself heard from the Kāśyapa

Buddha, who told me: 'In the future, the Śākyamuni Buddha will appear in the world as a Tathāgata, an Arhat, and a Perfectly Awakened One.' What I see today is truly not different [from those words]. I thought to myself: 'This is unprecedented! That which is seen by the wisdom of the Tathāgata is in accordance with reality and incomparable.' For this reason, I leaped with happiness and am unable to control myself."

The Buddha told the *nāga* king: "You should now take refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṃgha." [He] replied: "So be it! I now take refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṃgha." This was the first time an animal received the three refuges, led by the *nāga*-king Elapatra.

Mahīś Vin (*Mishāsè bù héxī wǔ fēn lǜ* 彌沙塞部和醯五分律) fascicle 15 translated by Buddhajīva (佛陀什) in collaboration with Zhú Dàoshēng (竺道生) between 423–424 CE (T 22 no. 1421, 106a6–107a15)

相師阿夷知菩薩成佛，當在波羅捺國，仙人鹿苑中，轉于法輪，又念：「我命過後，諸弟子中那羅摩納，當紹繼我。我之供養悉當屬彼，彼必貪著，無復憶佛出興世意。我今寧可於鹿苑邊，為立舍宅，教令日日三念：『佛當出世！若出世時，汝當於彼淨修梵行！』」念已，即為立宅，如念教之。阿夷不久便命過，那羅果得供養，貪著心深，都不復憶佛當出世。

時伊羅鉢龍王，作是念：「昔迦葉佛記我：『於當來過百千萬億歲，釋迦牟尼佛出現於世，佛當記汝脫龍身時。』時今應至，當往見佛。」彼龍為見佛故，於六齋日在恒水中，用金鉢盛銀粟，銀鉢盛金粟，又莊嚴二女，而說偈言：

「何者王中上？染與非染等，云何得無垢？何者名為愚？

何者流所澌？得何名為智？云何流不流，而名為解脫？」

龍王說此偈已，念言：「若人有能解此偈者，即是佛！若從佛聞，必示我佛處！我今不見餘沙門、婆羅門、諸天魔梵、一切世間有能解此偈者。」念已唱言：「若有能解此偈，我當與金銀鉢滿金銀粟，及此二女。」

爾時眾多餘沙門、婆羅門、長者、居士競欲為龍解此偈義，龍王為說，皆不能解。爾時那羅摩納，為摩竭國人所共宗敬，皆言：「此摩納有大知見，必能解之！」便共往請。摩納念言：「我為一國所宗，若言不能，便當為彼眾人所棄；我雖未解，當作方便，保全此譽！」便語眾人：「汝皆共我往到龍所，我當解之！」於是眾人與摩納俱，恭敬圍繞，往到龍所，語龍言：「可說汝偈，我當敷演！」龍即說偈，摩納言：「此甚易解！我七日後，當來解之。」即誦其偈，先問餘沙門、婆羅門、不蘭迦葉六師等；悉不能解，皆詭瞋罵，咸言：「無義！」欲以掩藏不解之短。

摩納復念言：「師昔告我，佛當出世，於彼淨修梵行。今沙門瞿曇在鹿苑中，必能解之，我當往問。」復作是念：「此六師等年耆博見，尚不能解！況沙門瞿曇既自年少，出家始爾，而能解乎！」復念：「明闇自然，不可以先後相格！瞿曇雖少，不可輕也！」念已，便到佛所，頂禮佛足，却住一面，說龍王偈，以問於佛。佛即為說：

「第六王為上，染者與染等，不染則無垢，染者謂之愚，

愚者流所澌，能滅者為智，捨流不復流，是名為解脫。」

摩納聞說偈已，深知是佛，誦習受持，至第七日往到龍所；時八萬四千人恒水兩岸，欲聽摩納解說偈義。摩納更語龍言：「說汝先偈。」龍王便說，摩納即說佛所說偈，而為解之。龍王聞偈，歡喜踊躍，念言：「佛已出世！我今便為已得見佛！所以者何？我不見餘沙門、婆羅門、諸天魔梵、一切世間有能解此義者。」念已，問摩納言：「汝實語我！汝所說偈，為從誰聞？我今不見諸餘沙門、婆羅門、一切世間有能說此偈者。唯除佛，若從佛聞！」答言：「我實語汝，佛已出世，我從其聞！」龍王歡喜問言：「佛今在何處？我欲見之！」摩納胡跪，舒右手指佛處方，言：「佛今在彼！」龍王益復歡喜，三返稱：「南無如來、應供、等正覺！」便語摩納言：「汝可送我往至佛所，問訊世尊！」答言：「可爾！」

龍王即自復身，身體長大，眼如大鉢，喘息如雷，口出火光，水中逆上，八萬四千人皆亦隨從。既達渚，次化作轉輪聖王，上岸詣佛；遙見世尊姿容殊特，猶若金山，龍王

歡喜，加敬無量。佛見龍王稱其名曰：「善來，伊羅鉢龍王！」龍王聞已，復加喜敬：「世尊知我名，修伽陀識我名！」前頂禮足，却住一面，更說本偈，以問於佛，佛為說摩納所受之偈。龍王聞已，先大歡喜，然後悲泣。

佛問龍王：「何故須與乍喜、乍悲？」答言：「世尊！我憶過去迦葉佛所，淨修梵行。於後時，捉紫華莖，往到佛所問言：『世尊！若比丘殺此草，得何等罪？』佛答我言：『以此因緣，或有墮最苦地獄者！』我聞此語不信不敬，便故刺伊羅樹葉，作是念：『試看有何果報？』竟不捨此見，亦不悔過。命終之後，今生長壽龍中，因是業故，名為伊羅鉢龍。既受身已，復往佛所問言：『我何時當得脫此龍身？』佛答我言：『當來過於百千億萬歲，有釋迦牟尼佛出現於世，彼佛當記汝得解脫時！』我今既見世尊生希有心，始知諸佛言無虛妄，是以欣笑。又念昔違佛教，今復不能受佛明戒，是以悲泣。」

復白佛言：「願記我何時當得脫此龍身！」佛言：「當來過百千億萬歲，有彌勒佛出現於世，汝於爾時得脫龍身，出家受戒，廣修梵行，得盡苦源！」佛便為龍受三自歸，為優婆塞；復為八萬四千人說種種妙法，示教利喜，所謂：施論乃至出要為樂。皆歡喜已，更為說諸佛常所說法，苦集盡道。八萬四千人即於坐上，遠塵離垢，得法眼淨，見法得果。見法得果已，受三自歸，次受五戒。

於是龍王語摩納言：「汝今何為須此龍女？龍女多恚，或以毒火共相傷害！隨汝所須金銀寶物，盡當相與！」

答言：「止，止！龍王！我不須龍女，亦不須金銀！我聞佛最後說偈，得離欲界欲故。」佛說法已，語龍王言：「汝可還歸所住！」龍王受教，頂禮而退。

龍王去後，摩納前禮佛足，白佛言：「世尊！願與我出家受具足戒！」佛言：「善來，比丘！」乃至鉢盂在手，亦如上說。出家未久，懃行不懈，得阿羅漢。爾時世間有六十二阿羅漢。

The fortuneteller Āsita knew that the Bodhisattva would attain Buddhahood and turn the wheel of the Dharma in the Seer's Deer Park, in the kingdom of Vārāṇasī. He then thought: "After I pass away, among my disciples, the young brahmin Nala shall be my successor. All the offerings I receive will then belong to him. He will surely become attached to them and will no longer remember that the Buddha is to appear in the world. I should now build a house for him near the Deer Park and instruct him to mindfully repeat three times every day: 'The Buddha is appearing in the world! When he appears, you must cultivate holy practices under him!'" After thinking this, he built the house and instructed him as planned. Not long after, Āsita passed away. Nala indeed received the offerings and his mind became deeply attached to them, so that he no longer remembered that the Buddha was due to appear.

At that time, the *nāga*-king Elapattra thought: "In the past, Kāśyapa Buddha gave me a prediction, saying: 'In the future, after hundreds of thousands of millions of years have passed, Śākyamuni Buddha will appear in the world. That Buddha will then predict when you shall be liberated from this *nāga* body.' That time must now have arrived; I should go to see the Buddha." Because he wished to see the Buddha, the *nāga* king stood in the waters of the Ganges on the six *upoṣadha* days. Using a golden bowl filled with silver grain and a silver bowl filled with golden grain, and having further adorned two maidens, he spoke this verse:

"Who is the most excellent among kings? How are the defiled and defilement equal?

How does one attain the state of being stainless? Who is it that is called a fool?

Who is swept away by the current? By attaining what is one called wise? How does one not drift with the flow, and is called liberation?"

After the *nāga* king spoke this verse, he thought: "If there is someone who can explain this verse, he is a Buddha! If he has heard it from a Buddha, he will surely show me where the Buddha stays. Among all other śramaṇas, brāhmanas, devas, Māras, or Brahmās in all the worlds, I see no one else capable of explaining this verse." Having thought this, he proclaimed: "If anyone can explain this verse, I shall give them these gold and silver bowls filled with gold and silver grain, as well as these two maidens."

At that time, many other śramaṇas, brāhmaṇas, elders, and householders vied with one another to explain the meaning of the verse for the *nāga* king. Although the *nāga* king recited it for them, none were able to understand it. At that time, there was a young brahmin named Nala who was universally revered and honored by the people of the kingdom of Magadha. Everyone said, "This young man possesses great wisdom and insight; he will surely be able to explain it!" They then went together to invite him. The young brahmin thought to himself, "I am the one whom the entire country looks up to. If I say I am unable to do this, I will be rejected by the people. Although I do not yet understand it, I must employ some skillful means to preserve my reputation!" He then told the crowd, "All of you come with me to the *nāga*'s dwelling, and I shall explain it!" Thereupon, the crowd accompanied the young brahmin, surrounding him with great respect. When they arrived at the *nāga*'s place, he said to the *nāga*, "Speak your verse, and I shall expound upon it!" The *nāga* then recited the verse. The young brahmin said, "This is very easy to understand! I shall return in seven days to explain it." He then memorized the verse and first went to question the other śramaṇas, brāhmaṇas, Pūraṇa Kāśyapa, and the other six teachers. None of them could understand it; instead, they all responded with deceitful anger and verbal abuse, all claiming, "This is meaningless!"—wishing thereby to conceal the shortcoming of their own lack of understanding.

The young brahmin reflected again, "My teacher told me in the past that a Buddha would appear in the world and that one should cultivate holy practices under him. Now the śramaṇa Gautama is in the Deer Park; he must surely be able to explain it. I shall go and ask him." Then he thought again, "These six teachers are old and possess vast experience, yet even they could not understand it! How could the śramaṇa Gautama, who is so young and has only recently renounced the secular life, be able to understand it?" But he reconsidered, "Light and darkness exist by their own nature; one cannot judge them based on who came first or last! Although Gautama is young, he must not be taken lightly!" Having thought this, he went to the Buddha's location, bowed his head to the Buddha's feet, and stood to one side. He then recited the *nāga* king's verse to question the Buddha. The Buddha immediately explained it to him:

"The sixth king is the most supreme; the defiled one is identical to the defilement. Being undefiled, one is without stain; the one who is defiled is called a fool.

Fools are swept away by the current; the one able to extinguish it is the wise.

By abandoning the flow and not flowing again, this is what is called liberation."

Once the young brahmin had heard the verse, he realized deep within that this was indeed the Buddha. He memorized, practiced, and upheld the teaching. On the seventh day, he went to the dwelling of the *nāga*. At that time, eighty-four thousand people had gathered on both banks of the Ganges, wishing to hear the young brahmin explain the meaning of the verse. The young brahmin spoke again to the *nāga*, saying, "Recite your previous verse." The *nāga* king then recited it, and the young brahmin immediately responded with the verse spoken by the Buddha, explaining its significance. Upon hearing this verse, the *nāga* king leaped with joy and thought to himself, "A Buddha has appeared in the world! I have now effectively attained a vision of the Buddha! Why is this so? Because I do not see any other śramaṇa, brāhmaṇa, deity, Māra,

Brahmā, or anyone in all the worlds who is capable of explaining this meaning." Having thought this, he asked the young brahmin, "Tell me the truth! From whom did you hear this verse you have spoken? I do not see any other śramaṇas, brāhmaṇas, or anyone in all the worlds who is able to speak such a verse. It could only be a Buddha, or someone who heard it from a Buddha!" The young brahmin replied, "I tell you truly, a Buddha has indeed appeared in the world, and I heard it from him!" Filled with delight, the *nāga* king asked, "Where is the Buddha now? I wish to see him!" The young brahmin knelt with his right knee on the ground and, extending his right hand toward the Buddha's location, said, "The Buddha is currently over there!" The *nāga* king was even more overjoyed. Three times he proclaimed: "Homage to the Tathāgata, the Arhat, the Completely Perfect Awakened One!" He then said to the young brahmin, "Please escort me to the Buddha's presence so that I may pay my respects to the Blessed One!" The young brahmin replied, "Alright!"

The *nāga* king then resumed his original form, his body growing immense and his eyes becoming as large as alms bowls. His breathing sounded like thunder, and light like flames emerged from his mouth. He traveled against the current through the water, followed by eighty-four thousand attendants. Having reached the shore, he then manifested as a wheel-turning sage king and went up the bank to visit the Buddha. From a distance, he beheld the Blessed One, whose appearance was exceptionally magnificent, like a mountain of gold. The *nāga* king was filled with joy, and his reverence was boundless. Seeing the *nāga* king, the Buddha addressed him by name: "Come, O *nāga*-king Elapatra!" Hearing this, the *nāga* king felt even greater joy and respect, thinking, "The Blessed One knows my name; the Sugata recognizes my name!" He came forward and bowed at the Buddha's feet, then withdrew to stand at one side. He recited his original verse to question the Buddha, and the Buddha responded by reciting the verse previously received by the young brahmin. Upon hearing it, the *nāga* king was first overcome with great joy, but then he wept with sorrow.

The Buddha asked the *nāga* king: "Why is it that you fluctuate so suddenly between joy and sorrow?" He replied: "O Blessed One! I remember that in the past, under the Kāśyapa Buddha, I purified my conduct through holy practices. Later on, I took the stem of a purple flower, went to the Buddha, and asked him: 'O Blessed One! If a monk destroys such vegetation, what kind of transgression does he incur?' The Buddha answered me: 'Because of such causes and conditions, one might even fall into the most painful of hells!' Hearing these words, I lacked faith and respect. I then intentionally pierced the leaf of an *Ela* tree, thinking to myself: 'Let us see what kind of karmic retribution results from this.' In the end, I did not abandon that view, nor did I repent for my fault. After my life ended, I was born in this life among the long-lived *nāgas*. Because of this karma, I am named the Elapatra *nāga*. Once I had received this body, I went again to that Buddha and asked: 'When shall I be liberated from this *nāga* body?' The Buddha replied: 'In the future, after hundreds of millions of years have passed, the Buddha Śākyamuni will appear in the world. That Buddha shall prophesy the time of your liberation!' Now that I have met the Blessed One, I have conceived a rare state of mind and have come to realize that the words of the Buddhas are never false; therefore, I smile with joy. Yet, I also reflect on how I formerly defied the Buddha's teaching and how I am now unable to receive the Buddha's pure precepts; for this reason, I weep in sorrow."

He further addressed the Buddha: "I pray that you prophesy when I shall be liberated from this *nāga* body!" The Buddha replied: "In the future, after hundreds of millions of years have passed, the Buddha Maitreya will appear in the world. At that time, you will gain liberation from your *nāga* body. You will renounce the secular life and receive the precepts, extensively

cultivate holy practices, and reach the very source where all suffering is exhausted!" The Buddha then administered the three refuges to the *nāga*, making him a lay devotee. Further, he expounded a variety of wonderful teachings for eighty-four thousand people, instructing, teaching, benefiting, and delighting them, namely: the discourse on giving up to the joy of renunciation. When they had all become joy, he further taught them the truth consistently proclaimed by all Buddhas: suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path. Eighty-four thousand people, right there in their seats, became distant from dust and separated from defilement, attained the purity of Dharma-eye, saw the Dharma, and attained the fruits [of realization]. Having perceived the Dharma and attained the fruit [of realization, they] took refuge in the Three [Jewels], and subsequently received the five precepts.

Then, the *nāga* king addressed the young brahmin, saying: "Why do you now have a need for this *nāga* maiden? *Nāga* maidens are often full of wrath and might cause mutual harm with their poisonous fire! Whatever gold, silver, or precious treasures you require, I shall provide them all to you!"

[Nala] replied: "Stop, Stop! O *nāga* king! I have no need for the *nāga* maiden, nor do I require gold or silver. I have heard the final verse spoken by the Buddha and have attained freedom from the desires of the desire realm." After the Buddha had finished teaching the Dharma, he addressed the *nāga* king, saying: "You may now return to your abode." The *nāga* king accepted this instruction, paid his respects by prostrating, and departed.

After the *nāga* king had left, the young brahmin prostrated at the feet of the Buddha and spoke to the Buddha, saying: "O Blessed One, may you grant me to go forth and receive full ordination!" The Buddha said: "Come, O monk!" Then, the appearance of the alms bowl in his hand, as previously described. Not long after his renunciation, through diligent and untiring practice, he attained the state of an Arhat. At that time, there were sixty-two arhats in the world.

AbhiNS (*Fó běnxíng jí jīng* 佛本行集經) fascicle 37–38 translated by Jñānagupta (*Shénà Juéduō* 闍那崛多) between 587–591 CE (T 30 no. 190, 825a18–831b9).

爾時，閻浮南天竺地有一國土，名阿槃提，彼國土中有一聚落，名獼猴食。其聚落內，有一巨富婆羅門，姓大迦旃延，其家多有資財珍寶，奴婢六畜，穀麥豆麻，屋宅園林，種種豐足，乃至如彼毘沙門宮，無有殊異。彼婆羅門，聰明智慧，讀誦受持三韋陀論，博通諸物，一事十名啍轉婆等，文句字論，往昔過去，一切諸事，五明之論，知句半句，分別世間諸受記論，及六十種大丈夫相，皆悉具足讀誦通知，與嚴熾王作國大師。時彼國師大婆羅門，第一長子，辭家遊歷他國學問，不知厭足，處處尋師，具解諸論，技成就已，還歸本家。既奉見父，即諮白言：「善哉阿爺！我今學問種種通達，為我聚集一切大眾，我欲誦出韋陀論等及諸技能。」父聞歡喜，即為集眾。兒見人集，即在眾前，所誦一切韋陀論等及諸技能，皆不隱藏，悉並誦出。而彼大眾，即便共尊彼國師子，推為上座，其父即將種種珍寶，而供養之。

時彼國師大婆羅門，復更別有第二之子，名那羅陀（隋言不叫），其父告彼第二子言：「汝那羅陀！今可捨家出至他國，受學誦習韋陀諸論，令如汝兄。」而那羅陀童子之兄，當誦一切韋陀論時，其那羅陀一聞即便一切受持。

時那羅陀聞此語已，即白父言：「善哉阿爺！我已通解一切韋陀及呪術等，阿爺今可為我，聚集一切大眾，我於眾前，誦諸韋陀及以技能。」其父聞子如是語已，心生希有！即集大眾，集大眾已，諸種安置。時那羅陀在大眾前，誦諸韋陀一切論等。爾時大眾，聞已各各心生歡喜，讚歎彼言：「善哉善哉！大智童子！快能誦習諸韋陀論。」其父復將種種財寶，以用供養。爾時，長兄聞弟誦通一切諸論，心生苦惱，作如是念：「我無量年遊歷諸國，學習種種所誦呪論，心慮煩勞，方始誦持諸呪術得。其那羅陀，云何聞已，皆少時間，受持淨遍？而其少年，尚得如是，若後成長，必定應當作王國師。以是因緣，我須方便除滅其體，如是則我得成大利；若不然者，終奪我位。」爾時，其父知自長子內心，如是於那羅陀私生惡念，既覺知已，作是思惟：「我此小兒，聰慧可憐，勿令為兄之所奪命。」作是念已，「應須方便莫令其知。」

爾時南方有一城，名優禪耶尼，去城不遠，有頻陀山，其山中有一老仙人，名阿私陀，在中居住。彼仙洞解一切韋陀并及諸論，以得四禪，具五神通。是那羅陀童子外舅。是時國師大婆羅門并及其婦，即將其子那羅陀身往彼山中，對共付囑阿私陀仙，以為弟子。其阿私陀既受領得那羅陀已，教詔顯示，不久成就，獲得四禪、具五神通。爾時，梵志阿私陀仙，將其弟子那羅陀身，即出山向波羅捺城，即於城外，造立草庵，在中居住。晝夜六時，作如是教，大聲唱言：「善哉善哉！汝那羅陀，佛今出世（如是三稱）。汝應彼邊，剃落出家，修行梵行，必當長夜大得利益，大得快樂，自利身已復應利他。」

爾時，彼老阿私陀仙作如是語，教其弟子那羅陀已，不經多時而取命終。阿私陀仙命終之後，時彼梵志私陀仙人所有世間利養名聞，悉是弟子那羅陀得。時那羅陀以世利養名聞多故，貪戀著心，無有正念，更不作想求覓勝上，不信有佛有法有僧。

爾時，海內伊羅鉢龍（隋言藿香葉）王，既受龍身，心生厭離，欲求解脫，不樂於彼穢濁惡想，而作是念：「往昔世尊迦葉如來、多陀阿伽度、阿羅呵、三藐三佛陀，親授我記：『汝大龍王！從今已去，過若干年，若干百年，若干千年，若干百千年，若干百千萬億年，當有一佛出現於世，號釋迦牟尼多陀阿伽度、阿羅呵、三藐三佛陀。』而今已過如是無量無邊億數百千萬年，叵有彼佛釋迦如來出世以不？」

爾時，復更有一龍王，名曰商佉（隋言螺），彼龍王宮，常有無量龍眾聚會。而彼會處，多諸龍王百千雲集，伊羅鉢龍亦在彼宮。是時，有一夜叉之王，名曰金齊，與伊羅鉢龍王善友，亦在彼龍眾會中坐。

...

爾時，彼會諸龍王等作如是念：『我今應當至月八日、十四、十五，或二十三及二十九并三十日，將好金器滿盛銀粟，於銀器內滿盛金粟，將此龍女，莊飾其體，以妙種種瓔珞嚴身，從此龍宮出，置於彼恒河岸上，著於露地，說此二偈，以示眾人。

「在於何自在，染著名為染，彼云何清淨？云何得癡名？

癡人何故迷？云何名智人？何會別離已，名曰盡因緣。」

...

時，彼龍王說此偈已，遍告一切諸世間言：「若有能解誦此偈者，我等即當以此金銀盛滿粟等，并及龍女，持用布施，即取彼人，作於佛想。若當有人傳從他聞來為我說，亦然布施。」時商佉王及伊羅鉢諸龍王等，欲見世尊，渴仰世尊，思遲世尊，恒以白月黑月八日、十四、十五，將好金器滿盛銀粟，於銀器內復盛金粟，及彼龍女種種嚴身，將至恒河岸上，安置住於陸地。

...

時，那羅陀童子仙人，居止在於摩伽陀國，為諸人民而作導師，彼國男女，尊重供承讚歎歌詠那羅陀仙，各相謂言：「此摩那婆，自既知已，復教他知，自既見已，復教他見。」是時，彼國摩伽陀內所有人民，作如是念：「此那羅陀仙聖童子，既自知見，教他知見，我等於彼二龍王邊，聞斯二偈，無人能誦，無人能答，我等今可至那羅陀童子仙邊，到已應說如此之事。」作是念已，摩伽陀國諸婆羅門及長者等，即便往至那羅陀仙童子之所，到已詳共白那羅陀童子仙言：「仁若知時，恒河岸上有二龍王，一名商佉，二名伊羅鉢，常以白月黑月六日，從恒河水出於陸地，將金銀器，盛粟及女，乃至誰能解此偈義，即施與彼說此二偈，偈云：『在於何自在，乃至盡因緣。』」

...

爾時，那羅陀仙人童子作是思惟：「我今既為此摩伽陀國內人民作於尊師，此之人民皆供養我，尊重承事欽仰於我，又復謂我自知見已，轉能教他。我今若於是人民前，言我不解此二偈義，此之人民，即毀辱我，一切利養名聞闕少，我皆失之。」作是念已，即便告彼摩伽陀國諸婆羅門大長者等，作如是言：「我共汝等！一時往詣二龍王邊，請說二偈，尋取其義。」

爾時童子那羅陀仙，共摩伽陀長者人民婆羅門等，左右圍遶，推那羅陀童子仙人最為上首，向二龍邊。到已告言：「二大龍王！願為我等說於二偈，我得聞已，思惟取義。」爾時，商佉二龍王等，即為彼仙，說二偈云：「在於何自在，乃至盡因緣。」爾時，童子那羅陀仙告彼二龍，作如是言：「我今於汝二龍王邊，受此二偈，從今已去，過七日後，當來汝邊答報偈意。」時彼二龍白那羅陀童子仙言：「如仁者教，作如是事。」時，那羅陀從二龍王受得偈已，還向本處。時摩伽陀一切人民，憍薩羅國一切人民，及鳩留國、般遮羅國諸人民等，傳聞童子那羅陀仙，從商佉龍并伊羅鉢二龍王邊，受持二偈，謂言從今去出七日，還來到此說二偈義。而彼人民，駕諸雜乘，所謂象車馬車牛車，及步人等，相與雲集。

爾時，恒河此彼兩岸，有於八萬四千眾類，閎然集聚，皆共欲聽那羅陀仙及二龍王解說偈時。時波羅捺居住在城，有諸六師，各自稱言：「我是尊者。」所謂富蘭迦葉、摩

薩迦梨瞿奢梨迦、阿耆多祁奢迦摩羅、波羅浮多迦遮耶那、刪闍夷毘羅師誰富多羅、尼乾他若祁富多羅等。時，那羅陀童子仙人，即便向彼諸六師邊，欲問偈義，到已即問此二偈意。而彼六師，既不能解此偈義意，更復增上，於仙人邊起瞋恚心，還反問於那羅陀仙，作如是言：「此之二偈，有何意也。」

爾時，世尊初證正覺，居住在彼波羅捺城鹿野苑內舊仙人林。時那羅陀童子仙人，自心如是思惟念言：「此沙門在波羅捺城鹿野苑舊仙所居林內，我今可向彼邊借問此二偈意。」復重思惟：「自餘沙門，及婆羅門耆年大德，堪為一切國王作師，久來出家，所謂富蘭迦葉，乃至尼乾陀若祁富多羅等，我至彼邊，問此二偈，猶不能解，況復如此年少沙門，生來未久，出家始爾。我問於此二偈之意，彼詎能答？」更復思惟：「年少沙門，或婆羅門，不可輒輕。所以者何？或彼年少沙門之人，或婆羅門，亦有聰明快智慧者，我今但可往詣於彼大沙門邊，問此偈義。」

爾時，童子那羅陀仙即詣佛邊，到佛所已，共佛相瞻，慰喻面款，種種善言，巧語談話訖已，即便却一面坐。其那羅陀摩那婆仙一面坐已，即白佛言：「大德尊者！沙門瞿曇！我欲諮問尊者一義，未審尊者，許我以不？」是時佛告摩那婆言：「汝摩那婆！隨所有問，我當為解。」時，那羅陀摩那婆仙得佛許已，即便說偈，而問佛言：

「在於何自在，染著名為染，彼云何清淨？云何得癡名？

癡人何故迷？云何名智人？何會別離已，名曰盡因緣。」

爾時世尊聞彼說已，即還以偈答那羅陀摩那婆言：

「第六自在故，王染名曰染，無染而有染，是故名為癡。

以沒大水故，故名盡方便，一切方便盡，故名為智者。」

爾時，童子那羅陀仙從佛得聞如是偈已，心意開解，生大歡喜，踊躍遍身，不能自喻。

聞已即便奔走往詣彼商估所，及伊羅鉢二龍王邊，到彼二大龍王邊已，即便告彼二龍王言：「汝等龍王！說偈問我。」時二龍王，依以二偈，問那羅陀童子仙言：「在何自在王，乃至盡因緣。」爾時，童子那羅陀仙，還以二偈答龍王言：「第六自在故，乃至名為智。」爾時，伊羅鉢龍王聞此偈已，心作如是思惟念言：「我今已得無上世尊，我今已得勝修伽陀，我今已知世尊出現，知修伽陀，大聖世尊，今為我生，為我出世，為我覺悟（如是再稱）。」時伊羅鉢二大龍王，如是念已，白那羅陀摩那婆言：「仁摩那婆！實為我說，此是仙意自辯才力，為從他聞而解此義？仙摩那婆！我實不見，今世間中及以天上，若有沙門婆羅門等，或天或人，能自辯才達是二偈，能自說者，無有是處。唯除如來無上世尊，或佛沙門，從彼等邊，聞而方辯。」

爾時，童子那羅陀仙，即便以偈告伊羅鉢二龍王言：

「如龍王說非我辯，大聖世尊已出興，諸相具足莊嚴身，彼能如是辯才說。」

爾時，伊羅鉢龍王即還以偈白仙童子那羅陀言：

「大仙言是佛語者，為當睡臥夢裏聞，若是分明對面承，唯願仁今重讚說。」

爾時，童子那羅陀仙依所覩見，即更以偈答龍王言：

「天人自在大丈夫，今居波羅鹿苑內，既轉無上法輪已，猶如師子吼勝林。」

爾時，伊羅鉢龍王復更以偈白那羅陀童子仙言：

「仁今所言佛世尊，我不聞久今聞說，既聞與仁相共詣，觀彼希現難思議。

昔覩今復得重觀，正覺如來諸相好，今日始更出現世，難值猶若優曇花。

經歷多時乃一興，清淨猶彼空中月，諸相具足莊嚴體，正覺最上勝菩提。」

久遠曠絕不聞聲，清亮猶如梵音響，若諸眾生得聞者，從佛得入解脫門。」

爾時，伊羅鉢龍王說偈讚歎佛世尊已，復更重白那羅陀仙作如是言：「那羅陀仙！仁言佛也！」時，那羅陀摩那婆仙答龍王言：「我言佛也（梵本再問再答）。」龍王復言：「那羅陀仙！如此鳴吼，出世甚難，所謂彼佛世尊也。那羅陀仙！彼阿羅呵、三藐三佛陀，今在何方？」時，那羅陀摩那婆仙即整衣服，偏袒右肩，合十指掌，向佛在方，示龍王言：「汝等龍王！若欲知者彼佛、如來、多陀阿伽度、阿羅呵、三藐三佛陀，今在某方。」時，伊羅鉢龍王知佛處已，即整衣服，偏袒右肩，右膝著地，向佛所在，合十指掌，三稱此言：「南無世尊、多陀阿伽度、阿羅呵、三藐三佛陀（如是三說）。」時伊羅鉢龍王白那羅陀童子仙言：「摩那婆仙！相隨共向彼世尊、多陀阿伽度、阿羅呵、三藐三佛陀所，禮拜供養。」時那羅陀報龍王言：「善哉龍王！我等共去。」

時伊羅鉢并及商佉二大龍王，自餘無量諸龍眷屬，那羅陀仙摩那婆等，八萬四千諸眾生輩，欲向佛所。爾時，伊羅鉢龍王作是思惟：「我今若以變化之身見於佛者，此我不善，我今宜以自許報身，往見世尊。」爾時，伊羅鉢龍王至其龍宮，以自報形而欲見佛，從北天竺特叉尸羅城，向波羅捺國，強有三百六十由旬。時彼龍王出欲見佛，其頭已至佛世尊所，而尾猶尚在自本宮。而彼龍頭，其狀猶如獨樹造般，其項猶如象鼻放水，耳目猶如憍薩羅國銅鉢之器，口出光炎，猶如重雲出於閃電，氣息作聲，如雲雷鳴，作伽茶伽茶聲。而彼八萬四千眾類，一切悉隨伊羅鉢行。而伊羅鉢遙見如來，極大端正光相非常，心生歡喜，乃至猶如虛空中星莊嚴顯赫，既覩見已，向於佛邊，生清淨心正信之心，踊躍歡喜，進向佛所。

爾時，世尊既遙覩見伊羅鉢龍漸漸而來，見已告言：「善來善來！伊羅鉢龍王！經歷多時不曾相見，王今身體安隱以不？少病少惱，及諸親眷，並無疾耶？」爾時，伊羅鉢龍王作如是念：「世尊已知我名字也。」復更重於如來世尊，增加歡喜，得清淨心，生愛敬心。時伊羅鉢即隱本形，別更化作摩那婆身，近世尊前，頂禮佛足，却住一面。住一面已，即更親誦彼二偈文，而重問佛：

...

爾時，世尊說此偈已，其那羅陀摩那婆仙，即離欲法。爾時，伊羅鉢龍見佛聞法，瞻仰尊顏，悲喜相交，淚下如雨。

爾時，世尊告伊羅鉢大龍王言：「汝大龍王！何故忽然，瞻看我面，笑而復悲，如是淚下？」作是語已，伊羅鉢龍即白佛言：「如來世尊！我念往昔，有佛出世，名曰迦葉多陀阿伽度、阿羅訶、三藐三佛陀，我時於彼佛法之中，修行梵行，為出家人。世尊！我於彼時見有一草，名曰伊羅，我時以手斫彼草，取執捉將詣迦葉佛所，到佛所已，白彼佛言：『世尊！若有比丘，斫於此草，得何果報？』時彼世尊，即報我言：『汝比丘知！若人故心斫斷此草，彼人當墮牢固地獄。』世尊！我於爾時，於彼迦葉多陀阿伽度、阿羅訶、三藐三佛陀邊聞於此語，心中不信，不生希有奇特之想。以我不取彼佛語故，不受於彼如來教誨，又自思惟：『但我斫此伊羅之草，有何果報？』心作是念。世尊！而我當時既造於彼波夜提罪，而不信有波夜提報，復不能捨此之邪見，命終已後，遂即生於長壽龍中，是故彼時為我立名，名伊羅鉢伊羅鉢也。」

而我爾時，還於彼處迦葉佛邊，問彼佛言：『大聖世尊！我於何時，當得脫此惡龍之形？何時當得復於人身？』作是語已，默然而住。爾時，彼佛迦葉如來、多陀阿伽度、阿羅訶、三藐三佛陀，即告我言：『汝大龍王！今應當知！過若干年若干百年若干千年，過若干百千萬億年後，當有佛出興於世，彼佛號為釋迦牟尼多陀阿伽度、阿羅訶、三藐三

佛陀，彼釋迦佛，當記汝得復於人身。」世尊！我於彼時作如是念：『我今以於迦葉佛邊所說法戒違僭不信，受此龍身，以微善緣，今值世尊，還不持戒。』世尊！我見如此自罪過故，呵責自身，泣淚啼哭，如雨滿面；見世尊喜，所以微笑，為是因緣。我如是念：

『希有希有！未曾有事，如是之法，諸佛世尊，乃能如是，無有二言。』如彼迦葉如來世尊授於我記：『汝大龍王！過若干年乃至億年，於後當有如來出世。』如彼佛言，無有異也。世尊！我以是緣，今復問佛世尊，我何時得脫此龍身？更何時得復於人身？」

爾時，世尊告伊羅鉢大龍王言：「汝大龍王！從今已去，過若干年，乃至如前若干億年，於後當有佛出於世，名曰彌勒、多陀阿伽度、阿羅呵、三藐三佛陀，汝於彼時，當得人身。時彼世尊，度汝出家，修行梵行，得盡諸苦。」

爾時，世尊為伊羅鉢，更復說法，令其歡喜，勸示教言：「來汝龍王！歸依佛、歸依法、歸依僧，受持五戒，而汝當得長夜利益，大得安樂。」伊羅鉢龍既從佛聞如是語已，即白佛言：「如世尊教，我今歸依佛法僧寶，受持五戒。」

爾時，世尊重更教誨伊羅鉢言：「汝大龍王！今應知時。」

時伊羅鉢語那羅陀摩那婆言：「來摩那婆！仁須幾多金銀珍寶隨意所須，從我索之，我當與仁。而此龍女，仁無所用。所以者何此之龍女口一出氣，能令世人作於灰土。」

時那羅陀報龍王言：「汝大龍王！我亦不用金銀珍寶，亦復不用龍王之女。何以故？我今佛邊聞諸偈已，即於諸欲生厭離想。」爾時，伊羅鉢龍王頂禮佛足，遶佛三匝，辭佛而還。

爾時，世尊告彼八萬四千眾等，其那羅陀最為上首，次第為說，所謂教行布施持戒，得上生天，又說欲中多諸過患，令生厭離，證於漏盡，又教出家讚歎功德，助成解脫。而世尊知彼諸大眾，那羅陀等最為上首，各各皆生歡喜之心，生踊躍心，生柔軟心，得無礙心。

爾時，世尊所有教法，令其歡喜真正要趣，謂四聖諦，苦集滅道。世尊既將此四聖諦，種種方便，解說顯示，教誨建立，分別宣揚，教行學習，如是生苦，如是苦集，如是苦滅，如是得道。世尊以此四種聖諦種種因緣，顯示宣說，乃至教行。而彼眾等，即於其坐，離諸塵垢，盡煩惱界，於諸法中，得淨智眼。所有集法，皆悉除滅，如實知見。譬如淨衣，無有垢膩，無有黑毛，隨欲染時，而受諸色。如是如是，彼諸大眾那羅陀等，於彼坐處，遠離煩惱，悉盡諸集，證知諸法，建立無畏，度諸疑網，不隨他語，知世尊教，即並歸依佛法僧寶，受持五戒。是時彼眾八萬四千，從坐而起，頂禮佛足，圍遶三匝，辭還本處。爾時童子那羅陀仙，已見諸法，已得諸法，已證諸法，已入諸法，度諸所疑，度諸所惑，無復疑網，已得無畏，不隨他語，已知世尊法教微密，即從坐起，頂禮佛足，而白佛言：「唯願世尊！與我出家及具足戒。」

爾時，佛告彼童子言：「善來比丘！入我法中，行於梵行，正盡諸苦，令到其邊。」

時彼長老，便成出家，戒行具足。是時長老那羅陀比丘，既出家已，具戒成就，未經幾時，獨行獨坐，捨於眾鬧，謹慎身口，不曾放逸，精勤勇猛，無懈怠故。不久之間，其善男子，所為出家無上梵行，進於彼岸，現見諸法，自證諸通，證已自知，自見自覺，而口唱言：「生死已盡，梵行已立，所作已辦，更不受後有，如是了知。」

而彼長老即成羅漢，心善解脫，慧善解脫。

...

At that time, in the land of South India in Jambudvīpa, there was a kingdom called Avanti. In that kingdom, there was a village named Monkey Food. Within that village lived a very wealthy brahmin of the Mahākātyāyana clan. His household possessed abundant wealth and jewels, male and female slaves, the six kinds of livestock, and various grains such as wheat, beans, and sesame. His houses, gardens, and groves were so opulent that they were no different from the palace of the heavenly king Vaiśravaṇa. That brāhmaṇa was intelligent and wise; he had memorized and upheld the three Vedas and was extensively learned in all matters. He knew the ten names of a single object, and was well-versed in grammar and lexicography. He was proficient in all affairs of the past, the treatises of the five sciences, and the knowledge of full and half-phrases. He could distinguish the worldly sciences of prophecy and was fully endowed with the knowledge of the sixty kinds of marks of a great man, having mastered them all through recitation. He served as the state preceptor to King Radiant Splendor. At that time, the firstborn son of this state preceptor and great brahmin took leave of his family to travel to other countries for study. Never feeling satisfied with his knowledge, he sought out masters in various places until he had fully mastered the different treatises. Once his skills were perfected, he returned home. Having greeted his father, he said: "Excellent, Father! I have now mastered various fields of study. Please assemble a great crowd for me, as I wish to recite the Vedas and demonstrate my skills." Hearing this, the father was delighted and gathered the people. Seeing the assembly, the son stood before them and recited all the Vedas and demonstrated his arts without concealing anything. The great assembly then together honored that son of the state preceptor, and promoted him to the head seat, while his father made offerings of various precious jewels to him.

The state preceptor then had a second son named Narada (translated in the Sui language as "Not Shouting"). The father said to his second son: "Narada! You should now leave home and go to another country to study and recite the Vedas, just as your elder brother did." However, when Narada's elder brother had been reciting all the Vedas, Narada had already memorized and grasped everything upon a single hearing.

At that time, once Narada had heard these words, he immediately said to his father: "Excellent, Father! I have already mastered all the Vedas as well as the *mantras* and similar arts. Father, you should now assemble a great crowd for me, so that I may recite the Vedas and demonstrate my skills before the multitude." Having heard his son speak in this way, the father was filled with a sense of wonder. He immediately gathered the people, and once the great assembly had met, he arranged everything in order. Then, Narada stood before the crowd and recited the Vedas and all the various treatises. Upon hearing him, the members of the assembly each rejoiced in their hearts and praised him, saying: "Excellent, excellent! This boy of great wisdom is truly gifted at reciting and practicing the many Vedic treatises!" His father then took various treasures and riches to make offerings to him. At that time, the eldest brother heard that his younger brother had mastered all the treatises. His heart was filled with distress, and he thought to himself: "For countless years, I have traveled through many lands, exhausting my mind and body to study and memorize various incantations and treatises before finally being able to uphold them. How is it that this Nārada, having only just heard them, could in such a short time master and uphold them so perfectly? While he is still a youth, he has already achieved such things; if he grows up, he will surely become the state preceptor. For this reason, I must find a way to eliminate him. If I do so, I will gain great benefit; if I do not, he will eventually usurp my position." Then, the father realized what was in his eldest son's heart and knew that he was secretly harboring evil intentions toward Narada. Having perceived this, he reflected: "This

young child of mine is wise and dear to me; I must not let his life be taken by his brother.” After thinking this, he decided: “I must use some skillful means to ensure that the brother does not find out his whereabouts.”

At that time, in the south, there was a city called Ujjain. Not far from this city was Mount Vindhya, where an elderly seer named Asita resided. That seer had mastered all the Vedas and various treatises; he had attained the four absorptions and possessed the five superknowledges. He was the maternal uncle of the youth Narada. Then, the great brahmin who served as the state preceptor, together with his wife, took their son Narada to that mountain. They entrusted him to the seer Asita to become his disciple. Once Asita had accepted Narada, he instructed and guided him. Before long, Narada succeeded in his practice, attaining the four absorptions and the five superknowledges. At that time, the brahmin seer Asita took his disciple Narada and left the mountain for the city of Vārāṇasī. Outside the city, they constructed a thatched hut and lived there. Six times throughout the day and night, Asita would give this instruction, proclaiming in a loud voice: "Excellent, excellent, Narada! The Buddha has now appeared in the world!" (He announced this three times). "You should go to him, shave your head to renounce the secular life, and cultivate holy conduct. This will surely bring you great benefit and immense joy throughout the long night. Having benefited yourself, you should then benefit others."

Then, after the aged seer Asita had spoken these words and finished instructing his disciple Narada, he passed away not long after. Following the death of the seer Asita, all the worldly gains, benefits, and fame that had belonged to that brahmin seer Asita were inherited by his disciple Narada. Because Narada received such abundant worldly profit and renown, his heart became filled with greedy attachment. Lacking right mindfulness, he no longer aspired to seek the path to supreme excellence, nor did he believe in the existence of the Buddha, the Dharma, or the Saṃgha.

At that time, in the ocean, there was a king named the *nāga* king Elapatra (translated in the Sui language as Patchouli Leaf). Having received a *nāga* body, he felt a deep sense of weary disgust and sought liberation, taking no pleasure in the foul and corrupt thoughts of that state. He then reflected: "In the past, the Blessed One, the Tathāgata Kāśyapa, the tathāgata, arhat, and completely perfect awakened one, personally bestowed this prophecy upon me: 'O Great *Nāga* King! From this time forward, after several years, several hundred years, several thousand years, several hundred thousand years, and several hundred thousand million billion years have passed, a Buddha shall appear in the world named Śākyamuni, the tathāgata, arhat, and completely perfect awakened one.' Now that such immeasurable, boundless millions and billions of years have already gone by, has that Buddha, the Tathāgata Śākyamuni, appeared in the world or not?" At that time, there was another *nāga* king named Śaṃkha (called "Conch" in the Sui language). In his *nāga* palace, a vast multitude of *nāga* would constantly assemble. At that meeting place, hundreds of thousands of *nāga* kings gathered like clouds, and the *nāga*-king Elapatra was also present in that palace. At that moment, a *yakṣa* king named Jinqi, who was a close friend of the *nāga* king Elapatra, was also sitting within that great assembly of *nāgas*.

[parts of the text are abbreviated]

At that time, the assembly of *nāga* kings thought to themselves: "On the eighth, fourteenth, and fifteenth days of the month, or on the twenty-third, twenty-ninth, and thirtieth days, we should take fine golden bowls filled with silver grains and silver bowls filled with golden grains. We shall take this daughter of the *nāgas*, adorn her body, and decorate her with

various exquisite necklaces. Then, departing from this *nāga* palace, we will place her on the bank of the Ganges River, setting her upon the open ground. We shall then speak these two verses to show everyone:

‘In what does sovereignty reside? Why is a defiled attachment called stained? How does one attain purity? And how is one called a fool?

Why does a foolish person become deluded? Who is called a wise person? Why is the separation after a union designated as the exhaustion of causes and conditions?’

[Parts of the text are omitted]

At that time, after the *nāga* king had spoken these verses, he addressed the entire world, saying: “If there is anyone who can understand and recite these verses, we shall immediately take these gold and silver bowls filled with grain and this *nāga* maiden to offer as a gift. We will regard that person just as we would the Buddha. If someone has heard these verses from another and comes to explain them to me, I shall likewise grant them these gifts.”

At that time, the *nāga*-kings Śaṃkha and Elāpattra, desiring to see the Blessed One, longing for him, and reflecting upon him, would regularly, on the eighth, fourteenth, and fifteenth days of both the bright and dark fortnights, take fine golden bowls filled with silver grain and silver bowls filled with golden grain, together with that *nāga* maiden adorned with various ornaments, and bring them to the banks of the Ganges River, placing them upon the dry land.

[Parts of the text are omitted]

At that time, the young seer Narada dwelt within the kingdom of Magadha, acting as a guide for the people. The men and women of that land revered, supported, praised, and sang the glories of the seer Narada. They said to one another, "This young brahmin, having realized the truth for himself, teaches others so they may realize it too; having seen it for himself, he instructs others so they may see it as well." Then, the people living within the kingdom of Magadha thought to themselves, "Since this young and holy seer Narada has realized and seen the truth himself and teaches others to do the same, we should consider our situation. We heard these two verses from those two *nāga* kings, but no one has been able to recite them or provide an answer. We ought to go to the young seer Narada and, upon arriving, explain the matter to him." Having made this resolution, the brahmins and householders of Magadha went to the place where the young seer Narada was staying. Upon their arrival, they addressed him together, saying, "Noble one, if you would be so kind as to listen: On the banks of the Ganges, there are two *nāga* kings, one named Śaṃkha and the other named Elapattra. Regularly, on the sixth days of the bright and dark fortnights of the moon, they emerge from the waters of the Ganges onto dry land. They bring gold and silver bowls filled with grain, and bring along a maiden, offering them to whoever can explain the meaning of their verses. They recite these two verses, which say: ‘In what does sovereignty reside?’ and up to the ‘exhaustion of causes and conditions.’"

At that time, the young seer Narada thought to himself: "I am currently regarded as a revered teacher by the people of this kingdom of Magadha. All these people make offerings to me, honoring, serving, and looking up to me with respect. Furthermore, they believe that I possess personal knowledge and vision, and that I am capable of teaching others in turn. If I were now to say before these people that I do not understand the meaning of these two verses, they

would revile and humiliate me. All my profit, fame, and offerings would diminish, and I would lose everything." After having this thought, he addressed the brāhmins and great householders of the kingdom of Magadha, saying: "Let us go together at once to the place of the two *nāga* kings and ask them to recite the two verses, so that we may seek out their meaning."

At that time, the young seer Narada, surrounded by the elders, common people, and brahmins of Magadha, was honored as their foremost leader as they approached the two *nāgas*. Having arrived, he addressed them, saying: "O two great *nāga* kings! Please recite the two verses for us. Once I have heard them, I shall contemplate and grasp their profound meaning." Then the two *nāga* kings, Śaṃkha and his companion, recited the two verses for the seer, saying: "In what does sovereignty reside, up to the exhaustion of causes and conditions." At that moment, the young seer Narada spoke to the two *nāgas* in this way: "I have now received these two verses from you. From this day forth, after seven days have passed, I shall return to you to explain the meaning of these verses." The two *nāgas* replied to the young seer Narada: "We shall do as you, O Noble One, have instructed." Then Narada, having received the verses from the two *nāga* kings, returned to his original place. Meanwhile, all the people of Magadha, Kosala, Kuru, and Pañcāla heard the report that the young seer Narada had received two verses from the *nāga* kings Śaṃkha and Elapatra, and that he would return after seven days to explain their significance. Consequently, those people gathered like clouds, arriving in various conveyances, elephant carriages, horse-drawn chariots, and ox carts, while others came on foot.

At that time, on both banks of the Ganges River, eighty-four thousand beings had gathered in a great assembly, all wishing to hear the seer Narada and the two *nāga* kings explain the verses. In the city of Vārāṇasī, there resided the six teachers who each claimed for themselves: "I am a worthy one." These were Pūraṇa Kāśyapa, Maskarī Gośālīputra, Ajita Keśakambala, Pakudha Kātyāyana, Sañjaya Vairātīputra, and Nirgrantha Jñātīputra. Then, the young seer Narada went toward those six teachers to ask about the meaning of the verses. Having arrived, he inquired about the significance of these two verses. However, those six teachers were unable to understand the point of the verses. Instead, their ill will only increased, and they became angry at the seer. They questioned Narada in return, saying: "What is the meaning of these two verses?"

At that time, the Blessed One had recently attained supreme awakening and was dwelling in the Deer Park, also known as the Grove of the Ancient Seers, near the city of Vārāṇasī. The young seer Narada then reflected within his own mind: "This śramaṇa is staying in the Deer Park of Vārāṇasī, in the grove where the ancient seers once lived. I should go to him now and ask about the meaning of these two verses." However, he reconsidered: "Other śramaṇas and elder brahmins of great virtue, who are worthy to be teachers to all kings and have long since renounced the world—such as Pūraṇa Kāśyapa and even Nirgrantha Jñātīputra—could not understand the meaning of these two verses when I approached them. How much less could such a young śramaṇa, who was born not long ago and has only recently entered the monastic life? If I ask him the meaning of these two verses, how could he possibly answer?" Yet he reflected further: "One should not lightly dismiss a young śramaṇa or brahmin. Why is this? For among such young śramaṇas or brahmins, there may be those who are exceptionally intelligent and possess sharp wisdom. I should simply go to this great śramaṇa and ask him the significance of these verses."

At that time, the young seer Narada went to the Buddha. Upon reaching the Buddha's presence, they looked upon each other. After exchanging friendly greetings, pleasantries, and various polite words of conversation, he sat down to one side. Having seated himself, the young

ascetic Narada addressed the Buddha, saying: “O Great Virtuous One! O Ascetic Gautama! I wish to ask the Worthy One about a certain matter. I do not know if the Worthy One will grant me permission?” Then the Buddha said to the young brahmin: “O young brahmin, ask whatever you wish, and I shall explain it for you.” Having received the Buddha’s permission, the young ascetic Narada then spoke in verse, questioning the Buddha:

“In what does sovereignty reside? Why is a defiled attachment called stained? How does one attain purity? And how is one called a fool?

Why does a foolish person become deluded? Who is called a wise person? Why is the separation after a union designated as the exhaustion of causes and conditions?”

At that time, the Blessed One, having heard these words, replied to the young brahmin Narada with these verses:

“Because of sovereignty over the sixth, the king's defilement is called defiled. Though there is no inherent defilement, defilement arises; for this reason, one is called a fool. Because of drowning in the great waters, it is called the exhaustion of skillful means. When all such means are exhausted, one is called wise.”

At that time, the young seer Narada, having heard these verses from the Buddha, attained a clarity of mind and heart. He was filled with immense joy, which surged through his entire being so intensely that it surpassed all description.

Upon hearing this, he hurried immediately to the locations of the two great Nāga kings, Śaṃkha and Elāpattra. Having reached the presence of these two great *nāga* kings, he said to them: “O *nāga* kings! Speak your questions to me.” Then the two *nāga* kings, in accordance with his request, questioned the young seer Narada in two verses: “In what does sovereignty reside, up to the exhaustion of causes and conditions?” At that time, the young seer Narada replied to the *nāga* kings with two verses in return: “Because of sovereignty over the sixth, up to one is called wise.”

When the *nāga* king Elapatra heard these verses, he reflected and thought to himself: “I have now found the Unexcelled Blessed One; I have now found the Sublime Sugata. I now know that the Blessed One has appeared; I know that the Sugata, the Great Sage and Blessed One, has been born for my sake, has appeared in the world for my sake, and has attained awakening for my sake” (proclaiming this twice). Having thought this, the two great *nāga* kings, Elapatra and his companion, said to the young brahmin Narada: “O virtuous young brahmin! Tell us truly. Is this the product of your own sagely mind and rhetorical power, or did you understand this meaning by hearing it from another? O young seer! We truly do not see anyone in this world or in the heavens, whether they be śramaṇas or brāhmaṇas, gods or humans, who would have the personal eloquence to penetrate these two verses or be able to explain them on their own; such a thing is impossible. This is true for everyone except the Tathāgata, the Unexcelled Blessed One, or a śramaṇa of the Buddha from whom one might hear them and then be able to explain them.”

At that time, the young sage Narada immediately addressed the two *nāga* kings, Elapatra, with a verse:

“As the *nāga* king suggests, this eloquence is not my own. The Great Sage, the Blessed One, has already appeared in the world. He whose body is adorned and perfected with all the marks of excellence, he alone is capable of such eloquent speech.”

Then, the *nāga* king Elapatra replied to the young sage Narada with a verse:

“The Great Sage says these are the words of a Buddha; did you hear them while reclining in a dream? If you truly received them clearly face-to-face, I pray that you, O Kind One, would now extol them once more.”

Then, the young sage Narada, based on what he had witnessed, answered the *nāga* king with another verse:

"The Great Hero who possesses sovereignty over celestials and humans is now dwelling within the Deer Park of Vārāṇasī. Having already turned the unsurpassed wheel of the Dharma, He is like a lion roaring in the Victor's Wood."

At that time, the *nāga* king Elapatra further addressed the young seer Narada in verse, saying:

"The Blessed Buddha, whom you have just mentioned is one of whom I have not heard for a long time, but now hear spoken of. Having heard this, let us go together with you to behold that wondrous manifestation, which is inconceivable.

Though I saw him in the past, I now have the chance to behold again. The various primary and secondary marks of the Perfectly Awakened Tathāgata, only today has he reappeared in this world; he is as difficult to encounter as the udumbara flower.

Only after a vast passage of time does such a one arise, pure like the moon suspended in the sky, with a body adorned and fully endowed with all the physical marks, attaining the most supreme and peerless awakening.

Through long ages and distant eras, his voice was not heard, but now it rings clear like the resonance of Brahma. If any sentient beings are able to hear it, they shall follow the Buddha and enter the gateway to liberation.

At that time, after the *nāga* king Elapatra had praised the Blessed Buddha in verse, he again spoke to the sage Narada, saying: "O sage Narada! You spoke of a 'Buddha'!" Then the young brahmin sage Narada replied to the *nāga* king: "Indeed, I spoke of a Buddha" (The Sanskrit text records a second inquiry and a second response). The *nāga* king spoke once more: "O sage Narada! One who roars in such a way is exceedingly rare to find appearing in this world; that is to say, the Buddha, the Blessed One. O sage Narada! Where is that Arhat, that completely perfect awakened one, currently residing?" At that moment, the young brahmin sage Narada adjusted his robes, bared his right shoulder, and joined his palms with ten fingers pressed together. Facing the direction where the Buddha stayed, he indicated it to the *nāga* king, saying: "O *nāga* king! If you wish to know, that Buddha, the Tathāgata, the Arhat, the completely perfect awakened one, is currently in such a place." Once the *nāga* king Elapatra learned of the Buddha's location, he immediately adjusted his cloth, bared his right shoulder, and knelt with his right knee on the ground. Facing the place where the Buddha was, he joined his palms and three times proclaimed: "Homage to the Blessed One, the Tathāgata, the Arhat, the completely perfect awakened one!" (He said this three times).

Then the *nāga* king Elapatra said to the young sage Narada: "O young brahmin sage! Let us go together to the place of the Blessed One, the Tathāgata, the Arhat, the completely perfect awakened one, to pay our respects and make offerings."

Narada replied to the *nāga* king: "Excellent, O *nāga* king! Let us go together!"

At that time, the two great *nāga* kings, Elapatra and Śaṃkha, together with an immeasurable multitude of other *nāga* followers, the young sage Narada and eighty-four thousand other sentient beings, all desired to go to the place where the Buddha was.

Then, the *nāga* king Elapatra thought to himself: "If I were to go and see the Buddha in a transformed physical shape, it would not be virtuous of me. I ought to go and see the Blessed One in my actual retribution body."

Thereupon, the *nāga* king Elapatra returned to his *nāga* palace. Wishing to see the Buddha in his actual retribution form, he set out from the city of Takṣaśilā in northern India

toward the kingdom of Vārāṇasī, a distance of more than three hundred and sixty yojanas. When the *nāga* king emerged to see the Buddha, his head had already reached the presence of the Buddha, the Blessed One, while his tail still remained within his own palace.

That dragon's head was shaped like a boat carved from a single tree; its neck was like an elephant's trunk spraying water; its eyes and ears were like the bronze bowls of the Kosala kingdom; and from its mouth issued flames of light, like flashes of lightning emerging from heavy clouds. Its breath made a sound like the rumbling of thunder, producing a clattering gaḍa-gaḍa noise. All eighty-four thousand beings of that multitude followed Elapatra as he traveled.

When Elapatra saw the Tathāgata from afar—exceedingly upright, with radiant marks of extraordinary splendor, as majestic and brilliant as the stars decorating the empty sky—he rejoiced in his heart. Having beheld the Buddha, he drew near to him, giving rise to a pure mind of correct faith. Filled with exuberant joy, he advanced toward the Buddha's presence.

At that time, the Blessed One, seeing from afar that the *nāga* king Elapatra was gradually approaching, addressed him: “Welcome, welcome, *nāga* king Elapatra! It has been a long time since we last met. Is your body at ease? Are you free from illness and distress? Are your many relatives and kinsmen likewise healthy and without ailment?”

Then the *nāga* king Elapatra thought to himself: “The Blessed One already knows my name.” Because of this, his reverence for the Tathāgata increased even more; he attained a pure mind and felt great joy and deep affection. Thereupon, Elapatra concealed his original form and transformed himself into a young man. Approaching the Blessed One, he bowed his head to the Buddha's feet and then stepped back to stand to one side. Having done so, he personally recited those two verses and questioned the Buddha once again:

[Parts of the text are omitted]

At that time, once the Blessed One had finished reciting these verses, the young seer Narada immediately became free from the dharmas of desire. Then, the *nāga* king Elapatra, having gazed upon the Buddha and heard the Dharma, looked up at the Blessed One's countenance with profound reverence. Overwhelmed by a mixture of sorrow and joy, his tears fell like rain.

At that time, the Blessed One addressed the great *nāga*-king Elapatra, saying: “O great *nāga* king! Why have you suddenly gazed upon my face, and why do you now laugh and then grieve, with tears falling in this way?” After he had spoken these words, the *nāga* Elapatra replied to the Buddha: “Tathāgata, Blessed One! I recall that in the distant past, a Buddha appeared in the world named Kāśyapa, a Tathāgata, Arhat, and completely perfect awakened one. At that time, I practiced the holy conduct within the teachings of that Buddha as a renunciant. O Blessed One! In those days, I saw a certain blade of grass called ela. I then cut that grass with my hand, took it up, and went to where the Buddha Kāśyapa was staying. Having arrived there, I asked that Buddha: ‘O Blessed One, if a monk cuts such grass as this, what kind of karmic retribution will he receive?’ Then that Blessed One replied to me: ‘O monk, you should know! If a person intentionally cuts this grass, that person will fall into the Firm Hell.’ O Blessed One! When I heard these words from the Buddha Kāśyapa, the Tathāgata, Arhat, and completely perfect awakened one, I did not believe them in my heart; I did not perceive his words as rare or wondrous. Because I did not accept the words of that Buddha and did not receive the Tathāgata's instruction, I thought to myself: ‘What possible retribution could there be for simply cutting this ela grass?’ Such was the thought I formed. O Blessed One! At that time, although I had

committed that *prāyaścittika* offense, I did not believe there was a retribution for it. Furthermore, I was unable to abandon this mistaken view. When my life ended, I was consequently reborn among the long-lived *nāgas*. For this reason, I was given the name Elapatra at that time.

At that time, I returned to where the Buddha Kāśyapa was and asked him: ‘O Great Sage, Blessed One! At what time shall I be liberated from this wretched form of an evil *nāga*? When will I be able to regain a human body?’ Having spoken these words, I remained silent. Then, that Buddha Kāśyapa, the Tathāgata, Arhat, completely perfect awakened one, addressed me, saying: ‘O great *nāga* king! You should know now: after some years, some hundreds of years, some thousands of years, indeed, after some hundreds of thousands of millions of years, a Buddha shall arise in the world. That Buddha’s name will be Śākyamuni, the Tathāgata, Arhat, completely perfect awakened one. That Buddha Śākyamuni will then prophesy when you shall regain a human body.’ O Blessed One! At that time, I thought to myself: ‘Because I disobeyed and lacked faith in the teachings and precepts explained by the Buddha Kāśyapa, I received this *nāga* body. Though I have now encountered the Blessed One through a tiny bit of virtuous karma, I am still unable to maintain the precepts.’ O Blessed One! Because I perceived my own transgressions in this way, I reproached myself, and tears fell from my eyes like rain, covering my face. Yet, seeing the Blessed One, I felt joy; that is why I smiled for this very reason. I thought: ‘How extraordinary! How unprecedented! Such is the Dharma that the Buddhas, the Blessed Ones, can act in this way, never speaking with a double tongue.’ Just as the Tathāgata Kāśyapa, the Blessed One, gave me the prophecy: ‘O great *nāga* king! After some years, even up to millions of years, a Tathāgata will later appear in the world.’ It is exactly as that Buddha said, without any difference. O Blessed One! For this reason, I now ask the Buddha, the Blessed One, once more: When will I be able to escape this *nāga* body? And at what time will I be able to regain a human body?”

Then, the Blessed One addressed the great *nāga* king Elapatra, saying: “O great *nāga* king! From this time forth, after many years have passed, even as many as the hundreds of millions of years mentioned before, there will later be a Buddha who appears in the world named Maitreya, the Tathāgata, Arhat, completely perfect awakened one. At that time, you shall obtain a human body. Then, that Blessed One will grant you ordination to leave the household life; you will cultivate the chaste path of holy life and reach the end of all suffering.”

Then, the Blessed One further expounded the Dharma for Elapatra to make him rejoice, and he instructed him with these words of exhortation: “Come, *nāga* king! Take refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṃgha! Uphold the five precepts, and you shall obtain long-lasting benefit and great peace and happiness.”

After the *nāga* Elapatra heard these words from the Buddha, he addressed the Buddha, saying: “According to the Blessed One’s teaching, I now take refuge in the Triple Gem of the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṃgha, and I shall uphold the five precepts.”

At that time, the Blessed One again instructed Elapatra, saying: “O great *nāga* king! You should now know the proper time.” Then Elapatra spoke to the young brahmin Narada: “Come, young brahmin! However much gold, silver, or precious jewels you require, ask of me as you wish, and I shall give them to you. But you have no use for this *nāga* girl. Why is this? Because a single breath from this *nāga* girl’s mouth can turn the people of the world into ash and dust.”

Then Narada replied to the *nāga* king: “O great *nāga* king! I have no use for gold, silver, or precious jewels, nor do I have any need for the daughter of a *nāga* king. Why is this? Now that I have heard these verses from the Buddha, I have developed a sense of aversion toward all sensual desires.”

At that time, Elapatra, the *nāga* king, bowed his head to the Buddha's feet, circumambulated him three times, took leave of the Buddha and returned.

Then the Blessed One addressed the assembly of eighty-four thousand, among whom Narada was the foremost leader. He taught them in proper sequence, namely instructions on the practice of giving and the observance of precepts to attain rebirth in the heavenly realms. He also spoke of the many faults and perils within sensual desires to inspire a sense of renunciation, leading toward the exhaustion of all taints. Furthermore, he taught the way of renunciation, praising its virtues and assisting them in attaining liberation. The Blessed One knew that within that great assembly, with Narada as their leader, each person had generated a heart of joy, a heart of great soaring exultation, and a heart of gentle flexibility, thereby attaining an unobstructed mind.

At that time, the Blessed One's teachings brought joy to others by revealing the true and essential goal, which is the four noble truths: suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path. Through various skillful means, the Blessed One explained and revealed, instructed and established, and analyzed and propagated these truths for those training in the practice. He taught: "Such is the suffering of birth; such is the origin of suffering; such is the cessation of suffering; and such is the attainment of the path." By means of these four noble truths and through various causes and conditions, the Blessed One revealed, expounded, and taught the practice. And those beings, right there in their seats, became free from all dust, exhausted the realm of afflictions, and amidst all phenomena, attained the eye of pure wisdom. Whatever is subject to origination was entirely extinguished, and they attained insight accordant with reality.

Just as a clean cloth, free from grime or black wool, easily takes on various colors when dyed, in exactly the same way, the great assembly, including Narada and the others, remained in their places and distanced themselves from afflictions. Having exhausted all causes of suffering, they realized all phenomena and established themselves in fearlessness. Having crossed over the web of doubt, they no longer followed the words of others but understood the Blessed One's teaching. Thereupon, they took refuge in the Triple Gem, the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṃgha, and undertook the five precepts.

At that time, those eighty-four thousand people in the assembly rose from their seats, prostrated at the Buddha's feet, circumambulated him three times, and took their leave to return to their homes.

Then the young seer Narada, having already seen, attained, realized, and entered into all phenomena, had crossed beyond all doubts and delusions. No longer caught in the web of uncertainty, he had attained fearlessness and did not depend on the words of others. Understanding the subtle and profound nature of the Blessed One's teaching, he rose from his seat, prostrated at the Buddha's feet, and addressed the Buddha, saying: "O Blessed One, may you grant me to go forth and receive full ordination."

At that moment, the Buddha said to the young brahmin: "Come, O monk! Enter into my teaching and practice the holy life to bring an end to all suffering and reach the further shore."

At that time, the elder immediately underwent the renunciation of worldly life and became fully endowed with the moral precepts. Then, that elder monk Narada, having already left the household life and perfected the completion of the full precepts, before much time had passed, would walk alone and sit alone, abandoning the clamor of the masses. Guarding his body and speech with caution, never once falling into negligence, he was diligent and courageous because he was free from indolence. In a short while, this son of a good family, for the sake of the supreme holy life for which he had renounced the world, advanced to the other shore. Clearly

perceiving all phenomena and personally realizing all spiritual powers, having attained such realization, he knew it for himself; through his own vision and self-awakening, he then proclaimed these words:

“Birth and death are exhausted; the holy life is established; what needs to be done has been done; there will be no further rebirths. Such was already understood.”

Thus, that elder became an Arhat, possessing a mind perfectly liberated and being perfectly liberated through wisdom.

[The rest of the text is omitted]

MSV-KV (*Gēnběn shuō yíqiè yǒubù pínàiyé zá shì* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶雜事) fascicle 21
translated by Yijing (義淨) in 710 CE (T 24 no. 1451, 303a6–305a17).

復次應知醫羅鉢龍因緣之事，昔於觀史多天宮殿之上，有書佛語問答之詞，頌曰：
「何處王為上？於染而染著，無染而有染，何者是愚夫？
何處愚者憂？何處智者喜？誰和合別離，說名為安樂？」

若佛世尊不出於世，此之頌義無人能受，亦無解者。若佛出現，有能受持及能解義。時北方多聞藥叉天王，有緣須至觀史天宮，見斯問頌心生希有，便記其文不能解義，持至本宮書在版上。爾時得叉尸羅國，有舊住龍王名醫羅鉢，長夜希望何時得見世尊出世？

時彼龍王有一親友藥叉名曰金光，因至北方多聞天所，於彼版上見此書頌，因即憶持不能解義。時此藥叉持往得叉尸羅國，與醫羅鉢龍王而告彼曰：「親友！此是佛說，深義無人能解，汝可記此法頌并持金篋滿中盛金，遍遊諸國聚落城邑唱如是言：『若有能解此頌義者，我與金篋而為供養。』若處無人能解了者，即可告言：『此處無人，不名國邑。』作是唱已復往餘處。」

龍王聞已敬受經頌，即自化身為摩納婆形，并持金篋遍遊諸國城邑聚落，漸次行至婆羅痾斯國，於其城內四衢道中唱如是語：「現在城中諸人眾等，及以外來四遠商客當聽我語。」即說其頌：「此之問頌是我將來，若能解者即與金篋而為供養。」乃有無量百千人眾悉皆雲集，其中有聰明博識情起貢高，亦有聞已心生希慕，驚怪非常，然無有能為解釋者。龍王唱言：「婆羅痾斯既無智人，此非城邑。」

時諸婆羅門居士等咸報摩納婆曰：「勿為斯唱『此非城邑』！我此城中有上智人住阿蘭若，且待彼來當解斯義。」問曰：「彼名字何？」答曰：「名那剌陀。」若如是者，我今且待。」時那剌陀於靜林中，得信來至。時彼化龍當前而住，白言：「大仙！我今將此問頌詞句來至於此，若人解者我與金篋而為供養。」時那剌陀聞已記憶，告摩納婆曰：「當為汝釋。」問曰：「何時？」答曰：「十二年後。」白言：「大仙！時太長久。」復言：「六年。」答言：「太久。」「三年、一年、六月、三月、一月、半月乃至七日。」白言：「大仙！我待七日。」化龍報曰：「大仙隨意！我且虔誠。」

時那剌陀與五苾芻先為親友，往彼告曰：「有一摩納婆，將此句頌及持金篋，來至我所作如是言：『有人能解此句頌者，當與金篋而為供養。』然彼句頌文少義多，甚深難解，今欲如何？」苾芻告曰：「那剌陀！應往佛所而為諮問。」那剌陀曰：「仁者！佛出世耶？」答曰：「已出。」問曰：「住在何處？」答曰：「在仙人墮處施鹿林中。」時彼聞已心大歡喜，馳即往詣薄伽梵所，見三十二相炳著其身，八十隨好莊嚴赫奕，圓光一尋以為映佩，明逾千日形若寶山，色相殊妙心神寂怕過。十二年修禪定者既得親覩，生希有心，如無子人忽得於子、如貧窮人得大寶藏、猶如太子得紹王位、如久積集善根有情初得見佛，時那剌陀深心歡喜亦復如是。漸至佛所禮雙足已，退坐一面。

世尊隨彼意樂隨眠根性差別，當機為說四聖諦法令彼悟解。既聞法要，以金剛智杵摧破二十薩迦耶見山，證預流果見實諦已，頂禮佛足白言：「世尊！我願於佛善法律中而為出家，成苾芻性堅修梵行。」佛言：「汝先許為摩納婆解釋頌義，應先往彼為其說已然後出家。」白佛言：「我雖獲得如是智見，然於頌義未解宣陳，既無辯才設往何益？」佛言：「汝可往彼作如是語：『汝可為我說其問頌。』彼若說已應如是答：

『第六王為上。染處即生著，無染而起染，說此是愚夫。』

愚者於此憂，智人於此喜；愛處能別離，此則名安樂。」

彼若告言：『我不能解。』更為說頌：

『若人聞妙語，解已修勝定；若聞不了義，彼人由放逸。』

彼若聞頌更作是語：

『汝今說佛語，我未閑其義，迷情不能了，疾可為除疑。』

說此語時，汝可對彼以爪截葉。若更問言：『世尊出世？』報言：『已出。』若言：『何處？』答曰：『在施鹿林中。』

那剌陀受佛教已，至摩納婆所作如是語：「汝可說頌。」即以頌答，具告其事，乃至報佛在鹿林中。時毘羅鉢便作是念：「我若於那剌陀前現本龍身彼便輕我。若為婆羅門身往世尊所，此婆羅門斯有大婆羅門，解三明書及四明論，彼若見我為摩納婆形共生嫌議，諸婆羅門生高貴族，何故自卑向喬答摩處？」復作是念：「作本龍身往世尊所，龍有多怨恐為障礙，我今應可作轉輪王詣世尊所。」即便化作轉輪聖王，七寶導前并九十九俱胝兵旗扈從，千子圍遶如半月形，各以種種寶物而作莊嚴。復有無量種種外道沙門梵志，百千人眾而為輔翊，於王頭上持百支傘蓋，威光赫奕猶如日月往世尊所。

爾時世尊於無量百千大眾之前而為說法，時諸大眾遙見輪王，無量百千軍眾圍遶，生希有心共相謂曰：「此之輪王從何處來？世所未見。豈非梵天王等來供養耶？」時諸人等或有愛樂，心生貪著願此王身，各生異念。王至佛所，頂禮雙足却坐一面。

爾時世尊告言：「汝愚癡人！於迦葉波佛時，受佛禁戒不能護持，遂便破戒感此下劣長壽龍身。今者何故還起詐心誑我徒眾？汝今還可復其本形。」龍王白言：「世尊！我是龍身多諸怨惡，恐有眾生共相損害。」

爾時世尊告金剛手曰：「汝可護此龍王勿令損惱。」時金剛手受世尊語已，便為守護隨後而行。是時龍王從坐而起，別至一處遂復本形，身有七頭廣長無量，頭枕婆羅痾斯城，尾在得叉尸羅國（相去有二百驛），由先惡業，一一頭上各生一髻羅大樹，被風搖動膿血皆流，露汚形骸臭穢可惡，常有諸虫蠅蛆之類，遍其身上晝夜啖食，令他嫌恥不樂觀見。

是時龍王即以本身詣世尊所，頂禮雙足却住一面。時諸大眾見此龍身恐怖可畏，離貪欲人尚生恐怖，況未離者見此龍身，龜澁鱗甲皆悉劈裂，瘡潰膿流種種異色，身體凹凸高下不平，其形廣大能不驚懼？皆白佛言：「此是何物？來世尊前。」

爾時世尊告諸大眾：「此是前來轉輪王身，汝等於彼生死榮華心生愛樂，此是本形、彼是化作，由先惡業報受斯苦。」彼諸人等聞佛說已，各懷憂惱默然而住，龍王白言：「唯願世尊為我授記，當於何日捨此龍身？」

佛告龍王：「當來人壽八萬歲時，有佛出世號曰慈氏，十號具足，為汝授記當免龍身。」是時龍王即於佛前悲號啼哭，諸頭眼中一時出淚，成十四河駛流驚注。

佛復告言：「汝且裁止！莫大啼哭流淚不止，令國破亡。」

龍白佛言：「而我本心不害小命，何況損國？」作是語已頂禮佛足忽然不現。

是時大眾咸皆有疑，而白佛言：「此龍宿世作何惡業？頭上生樹、身出膿血，廣說如上。」佛告諸大眾：「欲知此龍宿世因緣報得苦身，自作自當無餘代受。」

廣如上說頌曰：

「假令經百劫，所作業不亡；因緣會遇時，果報還自受。」

汝等苾芻！應當一心聽我所說。乃往過去於賢劫中人壽二萬歲時，有佛出世名曰迦葉波，十號具足，在婆羅痾斯施鹿林中依止而住。此龍于時於佛法中出家修行，善閑三藏具習定門，於寂靜處毘羅樹下而作經行以自策勵。于時毘羅樹葉打著其額即便忍受，後於一時繫心疲倦，從定而起策念經行，葉還打額極生痛苦，發瞋怒心即以兩手，折其樹葉擲之于地作如是語：『迦葉波佛無情物上見何過咎，而制學處令受斯苦？』由彼猛毒瞋心毀戒，命終之後墮此龍中，毘羅大樹生於頭上，膿血流出多有諸蟲，蠅蛆啖食臭穢非常。汝諸苾芻於意云何？善閑三藏習定苾芻壞毘羅葉者，豈異人乎！今此龍是。苾芻當知黑業黑報、白業白報、雜業雜報。是故汝等應捨黑雜修純白業」乃至說頌如前。

爾時那剌陀仙人詣世尊所，頂禮佛足退坐一面而白佛言：「世尊！先所許者我已作訖，欲於如來善法律中出家修學。」佛言：「善來苾芻！聽汝出家可修梵行。」聞是語已鬚髮自落，如曾剃髮已經七日，法衣著身瓶鉢在手，威儀整肅如百歲苾芻。頌曰：

「世尊命善來，髮除衣著體；即得諸根寂，隨佛意皆成。」

...

Furthermore, one should be aware of the causes and conditions regarding the *nāga*-king Elapatra. Formerly, within the celestial palace of Tuṣita Heaven, there were written words of a dialogue spoken by the Buddha, expressed in these verses:

"Where is a king considered supreme? Who is stained by defilements and clings to them?
Who is stained even where no defilement exists? What is defined as a fool?

Where does the fool find sorrow? Where does the wise man find joy? Who says that the separation of the union is happiness?"

If the Blessed Buddha were not to appear in the world, no one would be capable of receiving the meaning of these verses, nor would anyone understand them. However, when a Buddha manifests, there are those who can uphold them and comprehend their significance. At one time, the Great Yakṣa King Vaiśravaṇa of the north had cause to visit the Tuṣita Heaven. Seeing these inquisitive verses, he was struck by their rarity; he memorized the text although he could not grasp its meaning, and upon returning to his own palace, he had them inscribed on a tablet. At that time, in the kingdom of Takṣaśilā, there lived an ancient *nāga* king named Elapatra. Through the long night of *samsāra*, he had yearned for the time when he might witness the Blessed One appearing in the world.

At that time, the *nāga* king had a close friend, a yakṣa named Jin Guang. Having traveled to the abode of Vaiśravaṇa in the north, he saw these written verses on a wooden board. He immediately committed them to memory, yet he was unable to understand their meaning. This yakṣa then carried them to the kingdom of Takṣaśilā and addressed the *nāga*-king Elapatra, saying: "My dear friend, these are the words of the Buddha. Their profound meaning is such that no one can understand them. You should record these dharma verses and take a golden casket filled with gold. Travel throughout all the kingdoms, villages, and cities, and proclaim these words: 'If there is anyone capable of explaining the meaning of these verses, I shall offer them this golden casket.' If you find a place where no one is able to understand them, then you should say: 'There are no people here; this place does not deserve the name of a city.' After making this proclamation, proceed once more to another place."

Having heard this, the *nāga* king respectfully received the verses. He then transformed his body into the form of a young brahmin and, carrying a golden casket, traveled throughout various kingdoms, cities, and villages. Eventually, he arrived at the kingdom of Vārāṇasī. At a four-way crossroads within that city, he proclaimed these words: "All those currently residing in

this city, as well as the merchants and travelers who have come from the four directions, listen to what I say!" He then recited the following verse: "I bring these investigative verses; if anyone is able to explain them, I shall present this golden casket to them as an offering." Consequently, hundreds of thousands of people gathered like clouds. Among them were some who were learned and erudite yet felt a sense of arrogance, while others, upon hearing the words, were filled with longing and wonder at their extraordinary nature; nevertheless, no one was able to provide an explanation. The *nāga* king proclaimed: "Since there are no wise people in Vārāṇasī, it is not a city."

At that time, the various brahmins and householders addressed the young brahmin, saying: "Do not proclaim that this is not a city! In our city, there is a person of superior wisdom who dwells in a forest hermitage. Just wait until he arrives; he will certainly explain the meaning of this." He asked: "What is his name?" They answered: "His name is Narada." [The *nāga* king said:] "If that is the case, I shall wait for the time being." Then Narada, while in his quiet forest retreat, received word and arrived. At that moment, a manifested *nāga* stood before him and said: "Great Sage! I have come here bringing these verses of inquiry. If someone can explain them, I shall offer this golden casket as a gift." When Narada heard this, he committed them to memory and said to the young brahmin: "I shall explain them for you." The youth asked: "When?" He replied: "In twelve years." The youth said: "Great Sage! That is far too long." Narada then said: "In six years." The youth answered: "Still too long." He then suggested: "Three years, one year, six months, three months, one month, half a month, or even seven days." The youth said: "Great Sage! I shall wait seven days." The manifested *nāga* responded: "As you wish, Great Sage! I shall remain here in sincere devotion."

At that time, Narada was an old friend of the five monks. He went to them and said: "A certain young brahmin came to me carrying this verse and a golden casket, saying: 'If anyone can explain this verse, I shall offer them this golden casket.' However, the words of this verse are few while its meanings are many; it is incredibly profound and difficult to comprehend. What should be done now?" The monks replied: "Narada! You should go to the Buddha's place to inquire about it." Narada asked: "O virtuous ones! Has a Buddha appeared in the world?" They answered: "He has appeared." He asked: "Where does he abide?" They replied: "In the Deer Park at Rṣipatana." Upon hearing this, he was filled with great joy. He hurried immediately to the place of the Blessed One and saw the thirty-two marks of a great man clearly manifest on his body, along with the eighty subsidiary signs which adorned him with brilliant splendor. A halo extending one fathom served as his radiant ornament, its brightness surpassing a thousand suns, his form like a mountain of jewels. His physical characteristics were extraordinarily wonderful, and his mind was exceedingly tranquil. Having practiced meditative concentration for twelve years, he now finally beheld the Buddha in person and gave rise to a rare state of mind. It was as if a childless man had suddenly gained a son, or a poor person had discovered a great precious treasury, or a crown prince had succeeded to the throne, or a sentient being who had long gathered wholesome roots finally beheld a Buddha for the first time. The profound joy in Narada's heart was just like this. Gradually approaching the Buddha, he prostrated at both feet and then withdrew to sit on one side.

The Blessed One, knowing the differences in their intentions, latent dispositions, and innate capacities, expounded the Dharma of the Four Noble Truths according to their specific needs so that they might reach understanding. Having heard this essential Dharma, they used the diamond wisdom-scepter to shatter the mountain of the twenty views of self and attained the fruit of a stream-enterer. Having realized the truth, they bowed their heads to the Buddha's feet and

addressed him: "O Blessed One! I wish to renounce secular life within the Buddha's excellent teaching and discipline to become a monk and steadfastly cultivate holy practices." The Buddha replied: "You previously promised to explain the meaning of the verses to the young brahmin. You should first go to him and explain them, and only then may you renounce the householder's life." [Narada] said to the Buddha: "Although I have attained the knowledge and vision, I still do not understand how to expound the meaning of those verses. Since I lack rhetorical skill, what benefit would there be in going?" The Buddha said: "You may go there and speak these words: 'Recite for me the verses you are questioning.' Once he has spoken them, you should answer him in this way:"

The sixth king is the supreme. Attachment arises in places of defilement; where there is no defilement, they create it. Such a person is called a fool.

A fool grieves over this, while the wise rejoices in it. Being able to part from the objects of affection is called happiness.

If they respond by saying, "I am unable to understand," then speak this verse once more:

"If one hears sublime words, having understood them, practices superior concentration; if one hears the non-definitive meaning, that person is acting out of negligence."

If, upon hearing this verse, they further remark:

"You are now speaking the words of the Buddha, but I am not yet acquainted with their meaning. My deluded mind cannot comprehend them; please quickly dispel my doubts."

When these words are spoken, you should pinch a leaf with your fingernails in front of him. If he then asks, "Has the Blessed One appeared in the world?" answer them, "He has appeared." If he asks, "In what place?" reply, "In the Deer Park."

Narada, having received the Buddha's instructions, went to the young brahmin and said: "You may now recite the verse." The young brahmin replied with the verse and explained the matter in full, even reporting that the Buddha was staying in the Deer Park.

At that time, Elapatra thought to himself: "If I manifest my original *nāga* form before Narada, he will surely despise me. If I go to the Blessed One in the form of a brahmin, since there are great brahmins in this city of Vārāṇasī who are masters of the texts of the three types of knowledge and the four treatises of knowledge, should they see me in the guise of a young brahmin, they would collectively mock and criticize me. They would say, 'The brahmins are born of a noble lineage; why should they humble themselves by approaching Gautama?'" He then considered further: "If I go to the Blessed One in my original *nāga* form, *nāga* have many enemies, and I fear there might be obstacles. I should now go to the Blessed One in the form of a wheel-turning king." Immediately, through supernormal power, he transformed into a wheel-turning sage king. The seven treasures led the way, accompanied by an escort of ninety-nine koṭis of military banners. He was surrounded by a thousand sons in a crescent formation, each adorned with various precious jewels. Furthermore, there were countless varieties of non-Buddhist mendicants and brahmins, a multitude of hundreds of thousands of people serving as his retinue. Above the king's head, they held five hundred parasols. With a brilliant majesty like that of the sun and moon, he proceeded toward the location of the Blessed One.

At that time, the Blessed One was teaching the Dharma before a vast assembly of hundreds of thousands. Then, the members of that great multitude glimpsed from afar a wheel-turning king, surrounded by an immeasurable army of hundreds of thousands. Feeling a sense of extraordinary wonder, they remarked to one another: "Where could this wheel-turning king have come from? Such a sight has never been witnessed in this world. Could it be a Great Brahma King who has come to make offerings?" Among those present, some felt a sense of attraction

and, giving rise to craving and attachment toward the king's form, each harbored various thoughts. The king approached the place where the Buddha was, paid homage by bowing at his feet, and then withdrew to sit on one side. At that moment, the Blessed One addressed him, saying: "You foolish man! During the time of Kāśyapa Buddha, you received the Buddha's precepts but were unable to maintain them. Having consequently broken the precepts, you were reborn in this inferior form of a long-lived *nāga*. Why do you now again give rise to a deceitful mind to delude my followers? You must now return to your original form." The *nāga* king replied to the Buddha: "O Blessed One! In this *nāga* body, I have many enemies and much malice; I fear that other beings may mutually bring me harm."

At that time, the Blessed One addressed Vajrapāṇi, saying: "You should protect this *nāga* king and ensure he is not harmed or troubled." Having received the Buddha's instructions, Vajrapāṇi began to guard him, following closely behind. The *nāga* king then rose from his seat and went to a secluded place where he resumed his original form. His body possessed seven heads and was of immeasurable length and breadth. His head rested at the city of Vārāṇasī, while his tail reached the kingdom of Takṣaśilā, a distance of two hundred yojanas. Due to his past unwholesome karma, a large *Ela* tree grew upon each of his heads. When these trees were shaken by the wind, pus and blood would flow from them, defiling his physical frame with a repulsive and foul-smelling stench. Various insects, flies, and maggots constantly swarmed over his body, biting and feeding on him day and night. The sight was so loathsome and shameful that others could not bear to look upon it.

At that time, the *nāga* king approached the Blessed One in his original form. He prostrated at the Buddha's feet and then withdrew to stand to one side. When the great assembly beheld the *nāga*'s body, it was so terrifying and fearsome that even those who had abandoned desire felt dread, let alone those who had not. The coarse and rough scales were all completely split and cracked; sores had festered and were oozing pus of various strange colors. The body was lumpy and uneven, and its form was so massive that it was impossible not to be struck with terror. Everyone addressed the Buddha, saying, "What kind of creature is this that has come before the Blessed One?" Then the Blessed One addressed the assembly: "This is the very same being who previously appeared as a wheel-turning king. You all felt delight and attachment toward that glory of the cycle of birth and death; however, this is his true form, while the other was a transformation. Because of past evil karma, he now undergoes this bitter retribution." Having heard the Buddha's explanation, the people were all filled with sorrow and remained silent. Then the *nāga* king spoke: "I only pray that the Blessed One will grant me a prophecy: on what day shall I finally be able to cast off this dragon body?"

The Buddha told the *nāga* king: "In the future, when the human lifespan reaches eighty thousand years, a Buddha named Maitreya will appear in the world. He will be fully endowed with the ten epithets and will grant you a prediction of future enlightenment, at which time you shall be freed from this *nāga* body." At that moment, the *nāga* king wept bitterly in the presence of the Buddha. From the eyes of his many heads, tears fell all at once, forming fourteen rivers that surged and rushed forth with a frightening force. The Buddha spoke to him again, saying: "You must restrain yourself! Do not wail so greatly; if your flood of tears does not cease, it will cause the kingdom to be destroyed." The *nāga* addressed the Buddha: "In my fundamental heart, I would not harm even a tiny life, how much less would I damage a whole country?" Having spoken these words, he prostrated at the Buddha's feet and suddenly vanished. At that time, the great assembly was filled with doubt and addressed the Buddha: "What evil karma did this *nāga* commit in his past lives? Trees grow from his head, and his body oozes pus and blood, as

described in detail above.” The Buddha told the great assembly: “If you wish to understand the causes and conditions from past lives that led to this *nāga*’s retributive body of suffering, know that he created it himself and must experience it himself; no one else can undergo it in his place.”

As explained extensively above, a verse says:

"Even if a hundred eons pass, the karma one has created does not perish; when the causes and conditions meet, one must personally experience the retribution.

O monks! You should listen with a single-minded focus to what I say. Long ago, during the Bhadrakalpa when the human lifespan was twenty thousand years, a Buddha appeared in the world named Kāśyapa. He was fully endowed with the ten epithets and resided in the Deer Park at Vārāṇasī. At that time, this *nāga* had renounced the secular life to practice within the Buddha's teaching. He was well-versed in the Tripiṭaka and practiced the methods of meditation. In a quiet place, he would walk in meditation beneath an Ela tree to encourage his own progress. Once, a leaf from the Ela tree struck his forehead, but he endured it. Later, at one time when his mind was weary from concentration, he rose from meditation to practice mindful walking. When a leaf struck his forehead again, he felt extreme pain. Stirred to wrath, he used both hands to tear off the leaves, threw them to the ground, and spoke in this way: 'What fault did the Buddha Kāśyapa see in an insentient object that he should establish a training rule and cause me to suffer such hardship?' Because of that fierce and poisonous mind of ill will, he violated the precepts. After his life reached its end, he fell into the form of this *nāga*. A massive Ela tree grew from the top of his head; bloody pus flows out, and many insects, flies, and maggots bite and eat him. It is exceptionally foul-smelling. What do you think, O monks, that monk who was well-versed in the Tripiṭaka and practiced meditation, yet destroyed the Ela leaves, could he be another person? He is this very *nāga*. O monks, you should understand that dark karma results in dark retribution, white karma results in white retribution, and mixed karma results in mixed retribution. Therefore, you must abandon dark and mixed actions and cultivate purely white karma." Up to the verse as before.

Then, the seer Narada approached the Blessed One, bowed his head to the Buddha's feet, withdrew to sit to one side, and addressed the Buddha, saying: “O Blessed One! I have completed what was previously promised. I wish to renounce the secular life and train within the *Tathāgata*’s excellent Dharma and Vinaya.”

The Buddha said: “Come, O monk! I permit you to renounce the secular life and cultivate holy conduct.” Once these words were spoken, their hair and beards fell away of their own accord, appearing as though they had been shaved seven days prior. Dharma robes draped their bodies, and alms bowls were in their hands. Their deportment was as disciplined and serene as that of monks who had practiced for a hundred years. A verse says:

"The Blessed One said, 'Come,' and the hair vanished as robes clothed the body; the faculties immediately attained tranquility, as all was fulfilled according to the Buddha's intention."

[The rest of the text is omitted]

Appendix 2: The Parallels of the Story of Trivusa and Valia (RS 24 verso)²⁶²

Pali Parallel: Vin I 3–4

atha kho bhagavā sattāhassa accayena tamhā samādhimhā vuṭṭhahitvā mucalindamūlā yena rājāyatana tenupasaṃkami, upasaṃkamitvā rājāyatanamūle sattāha ekapallaṃkena nisīdi vimuttisukhapaṭisavedī.

tena kho pana samayena tapussa bhallikā vāṇijā ukkalā ta desa addhānamaggappaṭipannā honti. atha kho tapussabhallikāna vāṇijāna nātisālohitā devatā tapussabhallike vāṇije etadavoca—“aya, mārisā, bhagavā rājāyatanamūle viharati paṭhamābhisambuddho; gacchatha ta bhagavanta manthena ca madhupiṇḍikāya ca patimānetha; ta vo bhavissati dīgharatta hitāya sukhāyā”ti.

atha kho tapussabhallikā vāṇijā manthaṇca madhupiṇḍikaṇca ādāya yena bhagavā tenupasaṃkamsu, upasaṃkamitvā bhagavanta abhivādetvā ekamanta aṭṭhasu. ekamanta ʔhitā kho tapussabhallikā vāṇijā bhagavanta etadavocu—“paṭiggaṇhātu no, bhante, bhagavā manthaṇca madhupiṇḍikaṇca, ya amhāka assa dīgharatta hitāya sukhāyā”ti.

atha kho bhagavato etadahosi—“na kho tathāgatā hatthesu paṭiggaṇhanti. kimhi nu kho aha paṭiggaṇheyya manthaṇca madhupiṇḍikaṇcā”ti?

atha kho cattāro mahārājāno bhagavato cetasā cetoparivitakkamaññāya catuddisā cattāro selamaye patte bhagavato upanāmesu—“idha, bhante, bhagavā paṭiggaṇhātu manthaṇca madhupiṇḍikaṇcā”ti. paṭiggahesi bhagavā paccagghe selamaye patte manthaṇca madhupiṇḍikaṇca, paṭiggahetvā paribhuñji.

atha kho tapussabhallikā vāṇijā bhagavanta onītapattapāṇi veditvā bhagavato pādesu sirasā nipatitvā bhagavanta etadavocu—potthakesu natthi “ete maya, bhante, bhagavanta saraṇa gacchāma dhammaṇca, upāsake no bhagavā dhāretu ajjatagge pāṇupete saraṇa gate”ti. te ca loke paṭhama upāsakā ahesu dnevācīkā.

Then, after seven days had passed, the Blessed One arose from that state of concentration and departed from the foot of the Mucalinda tree toward the Rājāyatana tree. Having arrived at the foot of the Rājāyatana tree, he sat in a single cross-legged posture for seven days, experiencing the bliss of liberation.

At that time, two merchants named Tapussa and Bhallika were traveling along the main road from Ukkalā toward that region. Then, a deity who was a blood relative of the merchants Tapussa and Bhallika spoke to them, saying: "Sirs, the Blessed One is staying at the foot of the Rājāyatana tree, having just achieved full awakening. Go and offer the Blessed One a rice cake and a honey ball; that will lead to your long-term welfare and happiness."

Then, the merchants Tapussa and Bhallika took the rice cake and honey balls and approached the Blessed One. Having approached and paid their respects, they stood to one side. Standing there, they addressed the Blessed One: "O Venerable, may the Blessed One accept these rice cakes and honey balls, so that it may be for our enduring benefit and joy."

Then this thought occurred to the Blessed One: "*Tathāgatas* do not receive offerings directly into their hands. In what, then, should I receive this rice cake and honey ball?"

Then the Four Great Kings, having known the Blessed One's thought with their own minds, presented four bowls made of stones from the four directions to the Blessed One, saying: "O Venerable, may the Blessed One accept the rice cake and honey ball here." The Blessed One

²⁶² Parts that appear in Gāndhāri version are in bold.

accepted the precious stone bowls along with the rice cake and honey ball; having accepted them, he ate.

Then, the merchants Tapussa and Bhallika, having seen the Blessed One had finished his meal and removed his hand from the bowl, they prostrated themselves at his feet and said: "O Venerable, we go to the Blessed One and the Dhamma for refuge. May the Blessed One accept us as lay followers who have taken refuge from this day forward for as long as life lasts."

Thus, they became the first lay followers in the world to take refuge through the two-fold formula.

Sanskrit Parallel: SbhV I 122–124.

vimuktiprītisukhasaṃvedī buddho bhagavān saptāham ekaparyamkena atināmayati; na cainam kaścīt piṇḍakena pratipādayati; tena khalu samayena trapuṣabhallikau vaṇijau pañcamātraiḥ śakaṭaśataiḥ sārdham anuvyavaharamāṇau, tasminn eva mārge adhvapratipannāḥ abhūtām; atha trapuṣabhallikayor vaṇijor anyatamāyāḥ purāṇamitrāmātyajñātisālohitāyāḥ devatāyāḥ etad abhavat:

ayaṃ buddho bhagavān urubilvāyāṃ viharati nadyā nairāñjanāyās tīre bodhimūle acirābhisambuddho vimuktiprītisukhapratisaṃvedī saptāham ekaparyamkenātināmayati; na cainam kaścīt piṇḍakena pratipādayati; taṃ trapuṣabhallikau vaṇijau tatprathamataḥ pratipādayetām; tat syāt trapuṣabhallikayor vaṇijor dīrgharātram arthāya hitāya sukhāya; yanv ahaṃ svayam eva utsukyāṃ āpadayeya yaduta bhagavataḥ piṇḍapātāpradānasya hetor iti; atha sā devatā sarvaṃ karvaṭakam udāreṇāvabhāseṇa sphāritvā trapuṣabhallikau vaṇijāv idam avocat:

vaṇijau vaṇijau ayaṃ buddho bhagavān urubilvāyāṃ viharati nadyā nairāñjanāyās tīre bodhimūle acirābhisambuddho vimuktiprītisukhapratisaṃvedī; saptāham ekaparyamkenātināmayati; nainam kaścīt piṇḍakena pratipādayati; taṃ yuvāṃ tatprathamataḥ piṇḍakena pratipādayatām; tad yuvayor bhaviṣyati dīrgharātram arthāya hitāya sukhāya; ityuktvā sā devatā tatraivāntarhitā;

atha trapuṣabhallikayor vaṇijor etad abhavat: na batāvaro buddho bhaviṣyati; nāvaram dharmākhyānam; yatredānīm devatā api tasya bhagavata autsukyāṃ āpadyante yaduta piṇḍapātāpratipādanahetoḥ; iti viditvā prabhūtaṃ madhu ca manthāś ca ādāya yena bhagavāṃs tenopasaṃkrāntau; upasaṃkramya bhagavataḥ pādau śirasā vanditvā ekānte 'sthātām; ekāntasthitau trapuṣabhallikau vaṇijāv idam avocatām: ihāvābhyāṃ bhadanta bhagavantam uddiśya prabhūtaṃ madhu ca manthāś ca ānītāḥ; tān bhagavān pratigrhṇātv anukampām upādāya iti;

atha bhagavata etad abhavat: na mama pratirūpaṃ syād yad ahaṃ pānau piṇḍapātāṃ pratigrhṇīyāṃ, tadyathā anyatīrthikāḥ; yanv ahaṃ samanvāhareyam kutra pūrvakaiḥ samyaksambuddhaiḥ piṇḍapātāḥ pratigrhīto hitāya prāñinām iti;

devatā bhagavata ārocayanti: pātre bhadanta pūrvakaiḥ samyaksambuddhaiḥ piṇḍapātāḥ pratigrhīto hitāya prāñinām iti; bhagavato 'pi samanvāhr̥tya jñānadarśanam pravartate pātre pūrvakaiḥ samyaksambuddhaiḥ piṇḍapātāḥ pratigrhīto hitāya prāñinām iti;

*tatra bhagavataḥ pātreṇa pātrakāryam utpannam; atha catvāro mahārājā bhagavataḥ pātreṇa pātrakāryam utpannam iti viditvā anyatamasmāt pāṣāṇaparvatāc catvāri śailamayāni pātrāṇy amanuṣyakṛtāny amanuṣyaniṣṭhitāny acchāni śucīni niṣpratigandhāny ādāya, yena bhagavāṃs tenopasaṃkrāntāḥ; upasaṃkramya bhagavataḥ pādau śirasā vanditvā ekānte tasthuḥ; ekāntasthitāś catvāro mahārājā bhagavantam idam avocan: iha asmābhir bhadanta bhagavataḥ pātreṇa pātrakāryam utpannam viditvā anyatamasmāt pāṣāṇaparvatāc catvāri śailamayāni **pātrāṇy** amanuṣyakṛtāny amanuṣyaniṣṭhitāni acchāni śucīni niṣpratigandhāni ānītāni; tāni bhagavān pratigrhṇātv anukampām upādāya iti;*

atha bhagavata etad abhavat: saced ahaṃ ekasya mahārājasyāntikād ekaṃ pātram pratigrahiṣyāmi, trayāṇāṃ bhaviṣyati cetaso 'nyathātvam; saced dvayor, dvayor bhaviṣyati cetaso 'nyathātvam; sacet trayāṇāṃ ekasya bhaviṣyati cetaso 'nyathātvam; yanv ahaṃ caturṇāṃ mahārājānāṃ antikāc catvāri pātrāṇi pratigrhya ekaṃ pātram adhimucyeyam iti; atha bhagavāṃs caturṇāṃ mahārājānāṃ antikāc catvāri pātrāṇi pratigrhya ekaṃ pātram

adhimuktavān iti; tatra bhagavatā trapuṣabhallikayor vaṇijor antikāt piṇḍapātaḥ pratigrhīto hitāya prāṇinām iti;

tatra bhagavān trapuṣabhallikau vaṇijāv idam avocat: etau yuvām vaṇijau buddhaṃ śaraṇaṃ gacchatām; dharmam śaraṇaṃ gacchatām; yo 'py asau bhaviṣyaty anāgate 'dhvani saṃgho nāma tam api śaraṇaṃ gacchatām; etāv āvām bhadanta buddhaṃ śaraṇaṃ gacchāvaḥ, dharmam śaraṇaṃ gacchāvaḥ, yo 'py asau bhaviṣyaty anāgate 'dhvani saṃgho nāma tam api śaraṇaṃ gacchāvaḥ;

atha bhagavāms trapuṣabhallikayor vaṇijos tad dānam anayā abhy anumodanayā abhy anumodate

*yadārthaṃ dīyate dānam tadārthāya bhaviṣyati /
sukhārthaṃ dīyate dānam tat sukhāya bhaviṣyati //
sukho vipākāḥ puṇyānām abhiprāyaḥ ca siddhyati /
kṣipraṃ ca paramām śāntiṃ nirvṛtiṃ cādhigacchati //
parato ye upasargā devatā mārakāyikāḥ /
na śaknuvanty antarāyaṃ kṛtapuṇyasya kartu vai //
saced hi sa vyāyamate āryaprajñayā tyāgavān /
duḥkhasyāntakriyāyai sparśo bhavati vipaśyataḥ //*

atha trapuṣabhallikau vaṇijau bhagavato bhāṣitam abhinandya anumodya bhagavataḥ pāḍau śirasā vanditvā bhagavato 'ntikāt prakrāntau.

The Buddha, the Blessed One, experienced the joy and bliss of liberation while remaining in a single meditative posture for seven days; during this time, no one provided him with any almsfood. At that time, the two merchants Trapuṣa and Bhallika, who were traveling for trade with approximately five hundred wagons, had set out upon that very same road. Then it occurred to a certain deity, who had been an old friend, companion, relative, and blood-relation of the two merchants Trapuṣa and Bhallika:

"The Buddha, the Blessed One, is staying at Uruvilvā on the bank of the river Nairāṇjanā at the foot of the Bodhi tree. Having recently attained full enlightenment, he is experiencing the joy and bliss of liberation, spending seven days in a single meditative posture. No one has yet offered him any almsfood. If the two merchants, Trapuṣa and Bhallika, were to be the first to offer him food, it would lead to their long-term welfare, benefit, and happiness. Therefore, I shall personally take an interest in ensuring that an offering of alms is made to the Blessed One." Then that deity, having suffused the entire caravan with a magnificent light, spoke thus to the two merchants, Trapuṣa and Bhallika:

"Merchants, merchants! This Buddha, the Blessed One, is staying at Uruvilvā on the bank of the river Nairāṇjanā at the foot of the Bodhi tree. Having recently attained complete enlightenment, he is experiencing the joy and bliss of liberation. He has passed seven days in a single meditative posture, and yet no one has presented him with any alms-food. You two should first present him with an offering of alms. That will lead to your long-term welfare, benefit, and happiness." Having spoken these words, the deity vanished on the spot.

Then the thought occurred to the two merchants, Trapuṣa and Bhallika: "Ah, this Buddha will surely be no ordinary being, nor will his teaching of the Dharma be common! For now, even the deities are showing such great fervor for that Blessed One, specifically for the sake of providing him with alms." Having understood this, the two merchants Trapuṣa and Bhallika took a great quantity of honey and rice cake and approached the Blessed One. After approaching him and bowing their heads to the feet of the Blessed One, they stood to one side. Standing there, the

two merchants, Trapuṣa and Bhallika, addressed the Blessed One as follows: "O Venerable, we have brought here a great quantity of honey and rice cake for the Blessed One. May the Blessed One accept these out of compassion."

Then the following thought occurred to the Blessed One: "It would not be fitting for me to accept alms with my hands, as do the non-Buddhist ascetics. Instead, I should reflect upon how the previous perfectly awakened Buddhas accepted almsfood for the benefit of sentient beings?"

The deities announced to the Blessed One: "O Venerable, the previous perfectly and completely awakened Buddhas accepted alms in a bowl for the sake of benefiting living beings." As the Blessed One also turned his attention toward this, his knowledge and vision arose: "The previous perfectly and completely awakened Buddhas accepted alms in a bowl for the sake of benefiting living beings."

Then, the Blessed One came to have a need for an alms bowl. Then the Four Great Kings, having understood that a need for a bowl had arisen for the Blessed One, took four stone bowls from a certain rocky mountain. These bowls, fashioned by non-humans and finished by non-human hands, were translucent, pure, and devoid of any odor. Carrying them, the kings approached the Blessed One. Upon arrival, they bowed their heads at the feet of the Blessed One and stood to one side. Standing there, the Four Great Kings addressed the Blessed One as follows: "O Venerable, having recognized here that a need for a bowl has arisen for the Blessed One, we have brought four stone bowls from a certain rocky mountain. These bowls were fashioned by non-human beings and finished by non-human beings; they are transparent, pure, and odorless. May the Blessed One please accept them out of compassion."

Then this thought occurred to the Blessed One: "If I accept a single bowl from just one Great King, the other three will be displeased. If I accept from two, then two will be displeased. If I accept from three, then one will be displeased. What if I were to accept four bowls from the four Great Kings and then resolve them into one single bowl?" Then the Blessed One, having accepted four bowls from the four Great Kings, resolved them into a single bowl. There, the Blessed One accepted an offering of alms from the merchants Trapuṣa and Bhallika for the sake of the welfare of all living beings.

Then, the Blessed One spoke thus to the two merchants, Trapuṣa and Bhallika: "You two merchants go for refuge to the Buddha; go for refuge to the Dharma; and go for refuge also to that which will arise in the future, known as the Saṃgha." [The two merchants said:] "O Venerable, we two take refuge in the Buddha, and we take refuge in the Dharma; we also take refuge in that which will arise in the future as the community known as the Saṃgha."

Then the Blessed One expressed his appreciation for the gift from the two merchants, Trapuṣa and Bhallika, with this verse of rejoicing:

"The purpose for which a gift is given, that will be for the benefit.
A gift is given for the sake of happiness, that will be for happiness
The ripening of merit is joyful, and one's aspirations are fulfilled.
One swiftly attains supreme peace and reaches total liberation.
Whatever external afflictions arise from the divine hosts of Māra,
They are unable to create an obstacle for one who has cultivated merit.
For if a generous person strives with noble wisdom,
Then, for that discerning one, there is the touch of the end of suffering.

Then the two merchants, Trapuṣa and Bhallika, having rejoiced and delighted in the words of the Blessed One, bowed their heads at his feet and departed from the presence of the Blessed One.

Chinese Parallels

DhG Vin (*Sì fēn lǜ* 四分律) fascicle 31 translated by Buddhayaśas (佛陀耶舍) in collaboration with Zhú Fóniàn (竺佛念) in 408 CE (T 22 no. 1428, 781c11–785c27).

爾時世尊，於彼處盡一切漏，除一切結使。即於菩提樹下結加趺坐，七日不動，受解脫樂。爾時世尊，過七日已，從定意起，於七日中未有所食。

時有二賈客兄弟二人：一名瓜、二名優波離，將五百乘車載財寶，去菩提樹不遠而過。

時樹神篤信於佛，曾與此二賈客舊知識，欲令彼得度，即往至賈人所語言：「汝等知不？釋迦文佛·如來·等正覺，於七日中具足諸法。於七日中未有所食，汝等可以蜜麩奉獻如來，令汝等長夜得利善安隱快樂。」

爾時兄弟二人，聞樹神語已歡喜，即持蜜麩往詣道樹。遙見如來顏貌殊異，諸根寂定最上調伏，如被調象無有卒暴，如水澄靜無有塵穢，見已，發歡喜心。於如來所前至佛所，頭面禮足在一面立。

時二人白世尊言：「今奉獻蜜麩，慈愍納受。」時世尊復作如是念：「今此二人奉獻蜜麩，當以何器受之？」復作是言：「過去諸佛·如來·至真·等正覺，以何物受食？諸佛世尊不以手受食也。」

時四天王立在左右，知佛所念，往至四方，各各人取一石鉢，奉上世尊，白言：「願以此鉢受彼賈人麩蜜。」時世尊慈愍故，即受四天王鉢，令合為一，受彼賈人麩蜜。受彼賈人麩蜜已，以此勸喻，而開化之。即呪願言：

所為布施者，必獲其利義；若為樂故施，後必得安樂。

汝等賈人！今可歸依佛、歸依法。」

即受佛教，言：「大德！我今歸依佛、歸依法。」是為優婆塞中最初受二歸依，是賈客兄弟二人為首。

...

爾時賈人兄弟二人，即從座起復道而去。

At that time, the Blessed One, in that very place, exhausted all taints and eliminated every affliction. He sat cross-legged beneath the Bodhi tree, remaining motionless for seven days while experiencing the bliss of liberation. Then, the Blessed One, after seven days had passed, arose from his state of concentration. Throughout those seven days, he had not eaten.

At that moment, two brothers who were merchants—one named Gourd and the other named Bhallika—were passing not far from the Bodhi tree, leading five hundred wagons laden with treasures.

Then, a tree deity who had profound faith in the Buddha and was an old acquaintance of these two merchants wished to lead them to salvation. The deity went to where the merchants were and said to them: "Do you all not know? The Buddha Śākyamuni, the Tathāgata, the Perfectly Awakened One, has perfected all dharma within these seven days. For seven days, he has not eaten. You should offer honey and grain to the Tathāgata; this will bring you benefit, goodness, tranquility, and happiness through the long night."

The two brothers were delighted to hear the tree deity's words. They took the honey and grain and went to the tree of enlightenment. From a distance, they saw the Tathāgata's

extraordinary appearance; his faculties were serene and perfectly disciplined, like a tamed elephant without any wildness, or like water that is clear, still, and free from any impurity. Upon seeing him, they were filled with joy. They approached the Tathāgata, bowed their heads at the Buddha's feet, and stood to one side.

At that time, the two men addressed the Blessed One, saying: "We now offer this honey and grain; please accept it out of compassion."

Then the Blessed One thought to himself: "Since these two are now offering me honey and rice cake, what kind of vessel should I use to receive it?" He further reflected: "How did the past Buddhas, the Tathāgatas, the Truly Authentic Ones, the Perfectly Awakened Ones, receive their food? The Buddhas and Blessed Ones do not receive food directly with their hands."

At that moment, the Four Heavenly Kings, who were standing nearby, knew the Buddha's thoughts. They went to the four directions, and each took a stone bowl to present to the Blessed One, saying: "May you use these bowls to receive the merchants' offering of grain and honey." Out of compassion, the Blessed One accepted the Four Heavenly Kings' bowls and joined them into a single bowl to receive the merchants' food.

After he had accepted the offering, he spoke to them with words of encouragement to guide and transform them. He then pronounced this blessing:

"One who performs generosity will certainly attain its benefits; if one gives for the sake of happiness, one shall certainly attain happiness.

O merchants! You all should now take refuge in the Buddha and take refuge in the Dharma."

They immediately followed the Buddha's instruction, saying: "O Great Virtuous One! We now take refuge in the Buddha and take refuge in the Dharma." These were the very first among lay followers to receive the two refuges, led by these two merchant brothers.

[Section on relic establishment is omitted]

At that time, the two merchant brothers arose from their seats and returned.

Mahīś Vin (*Mishāsè bù héxī wǔ fēn lǜ* 彌沙塞部和醯五分律) fascicle 15 translated by Buddhajīva (佛陀什) in collaboration with Zhú Dàoshēng (竺道生) between 423–424 CE (T 22 no. 1421, 103a8–b10)

爾時世尊身有風患，摩修羅山神即取訶梨勒果奉佛：「願佛食之，以除風患！」佛受為食，風患即除，結跏趺坐，七日受解脫樂。過七日已，從三昧起，遊行人間。

時有五百賈客，乘五百乘車，中有二大人：一名離調、二名波利。二人昔善知識，死為善神，恒隨逐之，作是念：「今佛始成大道，未有獻食者，我今當令二人飯佛，使長夜獲安！」即以神力，車牛皆躓，眾人怖懼，四向求神。

彼神於空中，語言：「汝等莫怖，汝等莫怖！今佛世尊初成大道，靜坐七日，從定起遊行，坐彼樹下，未有獻食者。汝奉上麩蜜，長夜獲安！」

眾人歡喜，即和麩蜜，俱詣樹下，遙見世尊，姿容挺特，諸根寂定，有三十二大人之相，圓光一尋，猶若金山；前禮佛足，奉上麩蜜。

世尊作是念：「過去諸佛皆以鉢受，當來諸佛亦復如是，我今亦應用鉢受施。」四天王知佛意，各取一自然香淨石鉢，以奉世尊，白言：「惟願哀納我等此器，受賈人施！」佛復惟念：「若取一王鉢，不可餘王意！」便悉受四鉢，累左手中，右手按之，合成一鉢，以用受施。受已，語言：「汝等當歸依佛，歸依法！」即受二自歸，是為人中二賈客，最初受二自歸。便為說隨喜呪願之偈：

「二足汝安隱，四足亦安隱，去亦得安隱，還亦得安隱。

如耕田有望，下種亦有望，汝今入海望，獲果亦如彼。」

爾時世尊說此偈已，更為賈人說種種妙法，示教利喜已，復至一樹下食麩蜜。食麩蜜已，復結跏趺坐，入定七日，受解脫樂。

At that time, the Blessed One's body was afflicted by a wind disorder. The deity of Mount Mo Xiu Luo then took a He Li Le fruit and offered it to the Buddha, saying: "May the Buddha consume this to eliminate the wind ailment!" The Buddha accepted and ate it, and the disorder was immediately cured. He then sat in the lotus posture and experienced the bliss of liberation for seven days. After those seven days had passed, he arose from his meditative absorption and wandered in the world.

At that time, there were five hundred merchants traveling with five hundred wagons. Among them were two great men: the first named Li Wei and the second named Bo Li. Their former virtuous friend had died and become a benevolent deity, constantly followed and protected the merchants. The deity thought: "The Buddha has recently attained the Great Way, yet no one has offered him food. I shall now cause these two men to offer him a meal, so that they may obtain lasting peace through the long night of existence!"

Immediately, using the supernatural powers, the deity caused the wagons and oxen to stumble. Everyone was filled with fear and sought the help of the gods in the four directions. The deity then spoke from the air, saying: "Do not be afraid! Do not be afraid! The Blessed Buddha has just attained the Great Way. After sitting in silence for seven days, he arose from meditation to travel and is now sitting beneath that tree. No one has yet offered him food. If you present him with grain and honey, you shall obtain lasting peace!"

The group was filled with joy. They mixed the grain and honey together and went to the tree. From a distance, they beheld the Blessed One; his appearance was exceptionally magnificent, and his faculties were serene and composed. He possessed the thirty-two marks of a

great being, and a halo of light extending one fathom surrounded him like a mountain of gold. They stepped forward, prostrated at the Buddha's feet, and offered the grain and honey.

The Blessed One thought to himself: "The Buddhas of the past all used bowls to receive offerings, and the Buddhas of the future will do the same. I, too, should now use a bowl to accept this gift." The Four Heavenly Kings, perceiving the Buddha's intention, each took a stone bowl—spontaneously produced, fragrant, and pure—and offered them to the Blessed One, saying: "We pray that you compassionately accept these vessels from us and receive the merchants' offering." The Buddha then thought: "If I accept the bowl from only one king, it will displease the others." He then accepted all four bowls, stacked them in his left hand, and pressed them with his right hand, merging them into a single bowl to receive the offering. Having received it, he said to them: "You should take refuge in the Buddha and take refuge in the Dharma." They thus received the two refuges; the two merchants were the first among humans to take them. He then spoke a verse of blessing and invocation for them:

"May you, the two-leg [beings] be at peace, and the four-leg [beings] be at peace, too.

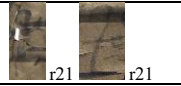
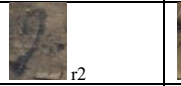
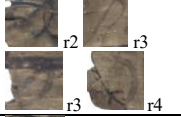
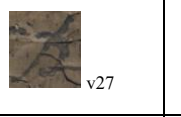
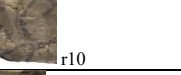
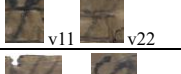
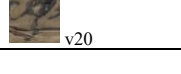
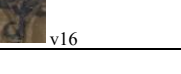
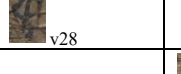
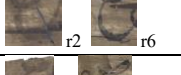
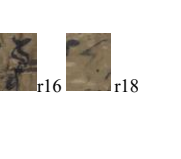
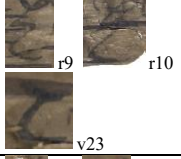
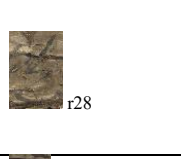
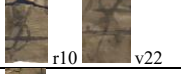
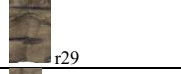
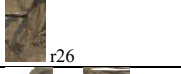
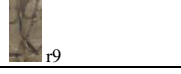
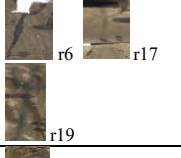
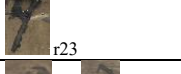
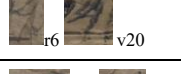
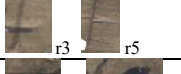
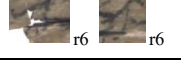
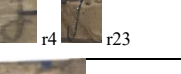
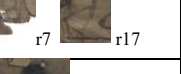
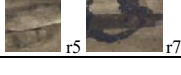
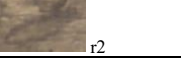
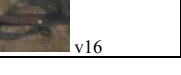
May you find peace as you depart, and find peace upon your return.

Just as there is hope in tilling the field, and hope in sowing the seed, so too, as you now hope in crossing the sea, the fruit you obtain shall be just like that."

When the Blessed One had finished reciting this verse, he further preached various aspects of the sublime Dharma to the merchants. Having instructed, benefited, and gladdened them, he went beneath another tree to eat the grain and honey. After eating, he sat again in the lotus position and entered meditative concentration for seven days, experiencing the bliss of liberation.

Appendix 3: Kharoṣṭhī script as written in RS 24²⁶³

Basic Signs

| | <i>a</i> | <i>i</i> | <i>u</i> | <i>e</i> | <i>o</i> |
|---------------|--|--|--|---|--|
| <i>Vowels</i> |  r4 v22 |  r21 r21 |  r5 r9 |  r2 |  r21 v21 |
| <i>k-</i> |  r2 r3
r3 r4 |  r16 |  r18 |  v27 | |
| <i>ḱ-</i> |  r17 | | | | |
| <i>kh-</i> |  r4 r6 | |  r10 | | |
| <i>g-</i> |  v11 v22 |  v20 |  v16 |  v28 | |
| <i>ḡ-</i> |  r2 r6 | | | |  r30 |
| <i>c-</i> |  r2 r9
r13 r22
r22 | |  r16 r18 | | |
| <i>ṣ-</i> |  r9 r10
v23 |  r28 |  v29 | | |
| <i>ch-</i> |  r10 v22 |  r29 | | | |
| <i>j-</i> |  r26 |  r9 | | | |
| <i>ñ-</i> |  r6 r17
r19 | | | | |
| <i>ḍ-</i> |  r23 |  r6 v20 | | | |
| <i>ṇ-</i> |  r3 r5 |  r6 r6 |  r4 r23 |  r4 |  r7 r17 |
| <i>t-</i> |  r5 r7 | |  r2 |  r4 |  v16 |

²⁶³ The convention uses “r-number” and “v-number” to refer to recto/verso and line number. For instance, r4 and v27 mean recto line 4 and verso line 27, respectively.

| | <i>a</i> | <i>i</i> | <i>u</i> | <i>e</i> | <i>o</i> |
|------------|--|--|---|--|--|
| <i>th-</i> |   | | | | |
| <i>d-</i> |  |  |   | | |
| <i>ḏ-</i> |   |   | |  |  
 |
| <i>dh-</i> |  | | | | |
| <i>p-</i> |   |   |  |  | |
| <i>b-</i> |  |  |  | |  |
| <i>bh-</i> |  |  | | | |
| <i>m-</i> |   |   |  
 | 
 | 
 |
| <i>y-</i> |  
 | | | 
 | |
| <i>r-</i> |   |   |  |  |   |
| <i>l-</i> |  
 | | |  |  |
| <i>v-</i> |  |  |   | | |
| <i>ś-</i> |  | |  | | |
| <i>ṣ-</i> |  |  | | | |
| <i>ṣ-</i> |  | 
 |  | |  |
| <i>ṣ-</i> |  |  | | | |

| | <i>a</i> | <i>i</i> | <i>u</i> | <i>e</i> | <i>o</i> |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|
| <i>s-</i> |  r21 | |  r13  r16 | | |
| <i>ś-</i> |  r3  r6
 r7 |  r17 |  v20 |  r24 | |
| <i>h-</i> |  r23 |  r27 |  r20 | |  r21 |

Conjunct Consonants

| | | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|---|---|
| <i>kra</i>
 v18 | <i>kṣa</i>
 r14  r17
 r22  v14 | <i>kṣu</i>
 r9 | <i>gre</i>
 r11 | <i>dva</i>
 v23 | <i>dhra</i>
 r10
 r21 |
| <i>pra</i>
 r6  v16 | <i>bra</i>
 r17 | <i>bhra</i>
 r21 | <i>rke</i>
 v29 | <i>rtha</i>
 v9 | <i>rpa</i>
 r3 |
| <i>rma</i>
 r10 | <i>rvi</i>
 r3 | <i>sta</i>
 r5 | <i>spa</i>
 r20  r21
 v17  v21 | <i>spi</i>
 r7
 v26 | <i>tra</i>
 v29 |
| <i>tri</i>
 v8 | <i>tse</i>
 v28 | | | | |

Scribal mark

| | |
|---|---|
|  v19 |  v20 |
|---|---|