

## A SANSKRIT MANUSCRIPT ON BIRCH-BARK FROM BAIRAM-ALI. II. AVADĀNAS AND JĀTAKAS (PART 2)

This article continues the publication of a Sanskrit manuscript on birch-bark from Bairam-Ali, presenting a section with several *avadāna* and *jātaka* stories [1].

In point of fact, we do not know the Sanskrit texts of the *Sūtra-piṭaka*, *Vinaya-piṭaka* and *Abhidharma-piṭaka* of the Sarvāstivāda school, although the Sarvāstivāda canon contained all of these sections, as is clear from the Chinese translations of these texts [2]. Scholars, however, have long known Sanskrit collections of *avadānas* which they believe to go back to the Sarvāstivāda canon: these are the *Avadānaśataka* (100 *avadānas*) and *Divyāvadāna* (38 *avadānas*).

Some sense of the structure of the Sarvāstivādins Sanskrit *Vinaya* is provided by the compilative work included in the Bairam-Ali manuscript; we have already published it in preceding issues of *Manuscripta Orientalia*, beginning with vol. 5, No. 2 (1999). A better understanding of the Sarvāstivādins *Vinaya* can be obtained by examining the Sanskrit text of another Buddhist school, that of the Mūlasarvāstivādins; it was found among the Gilgit manuscripts and published in transliteration [3]. It is a colossal text, copied on 523+11 extant folios of birch bark, each 66.0×12.0 cm with 10 lines of text on each side [4].

Raniero Gnoli dates the formation of the Sanskrit text of this *Vinaya* to the time of Kaṇiṣka the Great and links it to the Buddhist assembly he allegedly held in Kashmir [5]. The *Vinaya* of the Mūlasarvāstivādins was translated in full into Tibetan and Chinese; the Tibetan translation is exact and thorough, while the Chinese contains certain additions and independent interpretations [6].

There are two views on the canons of the two early Buddhist schools, the Sarvāstivādins and Mūlasarvāstivādins, which took shape in close chronological proximity. E. Frauwallner believes that the Mūlasarvāstivāda canon is based on that of Mathurā, which is linked with the Buddhist assembly in Vaiśālī [7]. É. Lamotte holds otherwise. He argues that Mathurā was not the centre for the codification of the Mūlasarvāstivāda canon, that the canon itself took shape no earlier than the fourth — fifth century A.D., and that it was based on the canon of the Sarvāstivādins. Unlike Lamotte, A. Bareau sees in the Mūlasarvāstivāda canon a multitude of archaic features and considers it one of the most ancient canons, earlier than that of the Sarvāstivādins [9].

In a word, the relation between the canons of the Mūlasarvāstivādins and Sarvāstivādins remains far from clear.

The competing points of view were introduced here with the sole aim, that is to underscore that the language and palaeography of the Bairam-Ali manuscript indicate that it was set down in written form in Kashmir. The language of the texts was greatly influenced by the North-Western Prakrits of the *Gandhārī* variety. The scribe evidently followed traditions developed in Kashmir. The writing material — birch-bark — also points to Kashmir.

On the other hand, a comparison of the text preserved in our manuscript with the text of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* shows that the latter underwent significant literary adjustment, incorporating many *jātakas* and *avadānas* in an order that points to a link with certain parts of the *Vinaya*. The Sarvāstivāda canon has not preserved an edited text. As concerns the number of *jātakas* and *avadānas* in it, it appears to be no fewer than what has come down to us in a conspectus form.

A comparison with the *Saṅghabhedavastu* allows us to make some additions to what was published by us in vol. 6, No. 4 of *Manuscripta Orientalia*. For one, we can identify the story on fol. 4a—b about the elephant Dhanapālaka, which follows the Buddha, dies of grief, and is reborn in the heaven of the four great kings. Part of the *gāthā* is from this story: “*parigamya ca dakṣiṇam jītārim suralokabhimukho divaṃ jagāma*” (*Saṅghabhedavastu*, pt. II, pp. 189—91). On fol. 4b, a new story begins: “The story of the king Dhṛtarāṣṭra and his faithful captain Pūrṇamukha...” (it concerns a previous incarnation of Ānanda, *Saṅghabhedavastu*, pt. II, pp. 192—4). This story is absent in our text. The new story, which begins on fol. 4b, concerns a leader of the monkeys, but differs from that included under the same title in the *Saṅghabhedavastu*, pt. II, p. 202.

Further, the text on fol. 5b under the title *Sākṣiti* appears to have a parallel in the story of how the king Ajātaśatru repented of the murder of his father and was converted to Buddhism by Buddha himself (*Saṅghabhedavastu*, pt. II, pp. 251—4; see also the Buddha's sermon on the unreality of the Self, *ibid.*, pt. I, pp. 158—9). Finally, the story under the name *Pampha*, which remains unidentified, is reflected in two stories in the *Saṅghabhedavastu*: “The five *bhikṣus* and “The name of Ājñatakaunḍinya” (pt. I, pp. 133—6). The comparison with the *Saṅghabhedavastu* allows us to make some addition to Part I of my work published in *Manuscripta Orientalia*, VI/4. Now we can identify the story on fol. 4a—b. It is a story of how the elephant Dhana-