

The Bajaur Collection of Kharoṣṭhī Manuscripts

MAHĀPRAJĀPATĪ GAUTAMĪ AND THE ORDER
OF NUNS IN A GANDHĀRAN VERSION
OF THE *DAKṢIṆĀVIBHAṄGASŪTRA*

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THE POSITION OF women in early Buddhism is closely connected with the question of the existence and role of the nuns' Order within the four-fold system of the Buddhist community consisting of monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen. Oskar von Hinüber (2008) has recently argued that a nuns' Order probably did not exist during the Buddha's lifetime. Von Hinüber says that, if we consider

the very rare presence of individual nuns in the *suttanta* texts and the astonishing absence of any *suttanta* mentioning the Buddha talking to an individual nun directly and personally, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that during the lifetime of the Buddha the Buddhists had an order of monks only and that is exactly the situation as reflected in the *suttantas*. (2008, 24)

Only few months later, this view was categorically refuted by Anālayo, who criticized von Hinüber's methodological approach, which is mainly based on the Pāli *Nikāya* texts. He writes:

in order to reach conclusions about the history of early Buddhism, a study of all relevant sources is an indispensable requirement. For conclusions of such significance, attempting a major revision of the history of early Buddhism, it is not possible to restrict one's research to the four Pāli *Nikāyas* alone . . . Given that we do not possess archaeological or epigraphic material on the foundation of the order of nuns and thus have to rely entirely on textual records—with all the problems that this entails—it is all the more imperative that the extant textual records are used in as comprehensive a manner as possible. (2008, 114)

In order to address this imperative expressed by Anālayo, that the extant textual record be utilized in “as comprehensive a manner as possible,” it is the aim of the present chapter to introduce a new version of a story that is closely connected with the foundation of the nuns' Order and has been discussed by von Hintüber and Anālayo in the cited studies. This new version is part of the “Bajaur Collection of Kharoṣṭhī Manuscripts” being studied in the framework of a project financed by the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) at Freie Universität Berlin. This collection of nineteen birch-bark manuscripts was discovered in 1999 in the Bajaur agency of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province (former North-Western Frontier Province) of Pakistan. It comprises texts from a wide range of Buddhist genres—including *vinaya*, *āgama* and Mahāyāna texts—which can be dated on palaeographic grounds to the first two centuries of the Common Era.¹ One of the manuscripts (= BajC 1) contains the hitherto unknown Gāndhārī version of the *sūtra*, which is known in the Theravāda Pāli canon as *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅgasutta* (MN 142). The Chinese *Madhyama-āgama* (T 26) lists this text as no. 180 under the title 瞿曇彌經 *qútánmí jīng* corresponding to the Sanskrit title *Gautamīsūtra*. Although both titles were obviously known in various traditions, the present chapter will use the Sanskrit form *Dakṣiṇāvibhaṅgasūtra* when referring to the textual tradition of this *sūtra* in general.² On the basis of the orthography of

1. For more information regarding the Bajaur Collection see Strauch (2007/8) and Strauch (2008). A more comprehensive evaluation of the contents of the Bajaur Collection in comparison with Buddhist Gāndhārī literature as a whole will soon be available—see Falk and Strauch (forthcoming).

2. For a discussion of the various titles see Anālayo (2011b, 810, fn. 261).

the Bajaur version, the reconstructed Gāndhārī title can be established as **Dhakṣināvibhaṅgasūtra*.

The *sūtra*'s connection to the foundation of the Order of nuns is two-fold. First, its narrative part refers to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, who tries to offer the Buddha a robe. As is well known, the figure of the Buddha's aunt and foster mother Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī (Pāli Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī) is also closely connected with the foundation of the Order of nuns. The way these two incidents—the robe gift and the foundation of the nuns' Order—are described is quite similar in both stories and offers a number of opportunities for comparison. The second association of the *sūtra* with the Order of nuns is found in the dogmatic part of the text. After refusing Mahāprajāpatī's robe offer, the Buddha presents several lists that categorize and qualify various kinds of gifts—hence the title of the Pāli *sutta*: *dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga*, “analysis of offerings.” Among the possible recipients of gifts the Buddha also lists the *bhikṣuṇīsāṅgha*, “Order of nuns.” This inclusion of the *bhikṣuṇīsāṅgha* on this list has been a topic of controversy among scholars in the past, even prior to the most recent articles by von Hinüber and Anālayo. In this chapter, I will introduce the Gāndhārī version of the *Dakṣināvibhaṅgasūtra*. The main focus of this chapter will be a comparison of this version with its numerous parallels from other Buddhist traditions, including the Chinese, Tibetan, and Pāli canons. Based on this comparative analysis, I will conclude with an assessment of how this new piece of evidence contributes to the debate on the foundation of the Order of nuns.

1. *The manuscript*

The *sūtra* is preserved on the obverse of a relatively large birch-bark scroll that is now kept in three different glass frames. Its last line is written on the reverse of the scroll and thus shows that the end of the birch-bark manuscript is completely preserved and that this *sūtra* was the only text inscribed on it. Another scribe used the empty reverse to add another text in large, carelessly written letters. Although some portions of the original scroll are missing, its state of preservation is generally good (see Fig. 1.1) and allows the reconstruction of large portions of the text. With the help of image processing it is possible to establish the original size of the scroll, which would have been 17.5 cm in width and 70.5 cm in length. The text is written in 80 lines of about 42 *akṣaras*.



FIGURE 1.1 Part of the scroll containing the Gāndhārī version of the *Dākṣiṇāvibhaṅgasūtra* (BajC 1) © The Bajaur Collection Project, Freie Universität Berlin.

2. The structure of the text

Unfortunately, the beginning part of the text including the *nidāna* is lost. Thus we cannot say when and where the reported events took place. The only word of the *nidāna* portion that survived is *bhagavato* (§ 0). The next section narrates that the Buddha is approached by Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, who wants to offer him a robe. Again this passage is preserved only in fragments, but it is obvious that the Buddha refuses this gift and asks Mahāprajāpatī to direct her present to the Buddhist *saṅgha* as a whole (§ 1).

After Mahāprajāpatī repeated her request two more times and received the same response, Ānanda intervenes. He reminds the Buddha of the services done by Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī to him and asks him to accept her gift (§ 2.1). Although the Buddha acknowledges these services, he points to his own services done for Mahāprajāpatī and adds a passage that generalizes this reply by listing a number of persons to whom one owes a debt due to their merits for one's own spiritual biography (§ 2.1 + § 3). This part of the *sūtra* forms the narrative core of the story.

Following this dialogue between the Buddha and Mahāprajāpatī, and the intervention by Ānanda, the Buddha expounds two different lists, which form the dogmatical core of the *sūtra* and are not particularly closely related to the described event. The first of these lists enumerates fourteen individual offerings, called in the Gāndhārī *paḍipogaliga dhakṣina*. The list is arranged hierarchically and starts from gifts to animals, classified here as the lowest recipients, and progresses upward in a chain of worthy recipients that culminate in the Tathāgata Samyaksambuddha (§ 4). A parallel list follows that describes the fruits of the respective gifts. This list is arranged in the same sequence, beginning from gifts to animals (§ 5). Both lists of individual offerings are followed by a list of gifts to the Buddhist Order. The Gāndhārī text calls them *saṃghagada dhakṣina*. Seven different items are mentioned (§ 6). This list is supplemented by a passage that dwells on the merits that are to be expected from the offering of each type of gift (§ 7). The Buddha's instruction is concluded by a fourfold list, which contains the kinds of purifying a gift (*dhakṣinapariśodhi*) (§ 8). This is also the topic of the five *gāthās*, which conclude the whole *sūtra* (§ 9). The five verses of the Gāndhārī version are by and large identical with those of the Pāli text. If the *sūtra* is divided into parts, the Gāndhārī version contains the following structural elements:

o. *nidāna*

1. The Buddha refuses to accept Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī's gift
2. Ānanda's intervention
 - 2.1. The service done by Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī
 - 2.2. The service done by the Buddha
3. The persons to whom one owes a debt
4. The fourteen individual gifts
5. The fruits of the fourteen individual gifts
6. The seven gifts directed to the Order
7. The fruits of the seven gifts directed to the Order

8. The four kinds of purifying a gift

9. The *gāthās*

3. *The parallels*

In general terms, the parallels of the *Dakṣiṇāvibhaṅgasūtra* can be divided into two major groups, which I call direct and indirect parallels. The direct parallels comprise texts that represent complete or incomplete versions of the same text. The indirect parallels consist of different sorts of texts, which show more or less identical textual passages, which are due to a parallelism in content or in structure. A complete survey of the parallels with the exact bibliographical data will be provided in Table 1.1, below.³

Indirect parallels

The largest group of indirect parallels is associated with the foundation of the nuns' Order. This event is not only described in the *vinayas* of several schools, but is also the subject of an individual *sūtra* which is usually named *Gautamīsūtra* and is found in the Pāli *Anguttara-nikāya* (*Gotamīsutta*) and the Chinese *Madhyama-āgama* (T 26, no. 116).⁴ The narrative included in a second independent Chinese translation of a discourse (T 60) is, according to Anālayo, "in most aspects so similar to that of MĀ 116 that it seems safe to conclude that this version stems from a closely related line of transmission" (2011c, 270, fn. 8). The parallel passages in the *Dakṣiṇāvibhaṅgasūtra* and the texts describing the foundation of the Order of nuns usually cover the initial part (§§ 1–3) of our *sūtra*.⁵ The

3. The parallels and their main bibliographical data as well as references to their translations are collected and described in the respective chapter of Anālayo's outstanding work, "A Comparative Study of the *Majjhima-nikāya*" (2011b, 810–19, 1054). Anālayo's analysis of the *Dakṣiṇāvibhaṅgasūtra* also considers the Gandhari version provided by the author in form of a preliminary transliteration. The *vinaya* parallels are found in Heirman (2001) and Anālayo (2011c). These three works form the basis of the bibliographical survey subsumed in the table, especially with regard to the Chinese and Tibetan parallels. For a comprehensive collection of parallels see now also Chung and Fukita (2011, 153–54).

4. The text of T 26, 116 is translated by Anālayo (2011c, 272–87).

5. The various texts concerning the foundation of the nuns' order have been analysed by Ann Heirman (2001) and Anālayo (2011c). I want to thank Bhikkhu Anālayo, who generously provided me with the interlinear translations of most of the *vinaya* passages.

report of the Mahīśāsaka *Vinaya* (T 1421) occupies a special position among them, in that it incorporates the robe gift into the description of events leading to the foundation of the nuns' Order, and thus combines both episodes in one narrative thread. This is clearly a secondary development based on the structural parallelism of both narratives.

A second group of indirect parallels is related to the so-called *Maitreyavyākaraṇa* tradition (cf. Lamotte 1988, 699–710). In some of them the intended robe gift of Mahāprajāpatī is reinterpreted within the framework of the prediction of the future Buddha Maitreya. In most of the versions Śākyamuni hands over the robe, which had just been given by Mahāprajāpatī to the *saṅgha*, to Maitreya.⁶ The golden robe is perceived here as a sign of his future Buddhahood.⁷ Among these texts the *Maitrisimit* deserves special attention.⁸ Due to the thematic parallelism its Uighur version contains almost the entire Dakṣiṇāvibhaṅgasūtra including the dogmatical part with the various lists.

Direct parallels

Two of the direct parallels of our *sūtra* are part of a *Madhyama-āgama* or *Majjhima-nikāya*. The *Majjhima-nikāya* of the Theravāda canon contains this *sūtra* under the title *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅgasutta* in its *vibhaṅgavarga* section (MN 142).⁹ The Chinese *Madhyama-āgama*, which was translated by the Kashmirian monk Gautama Saṅghadeva at the end of the 4th century, calls the same text 瞿曇彌經 *qútánmí jīng*, corresponding to the Sanskrit *Gautamīsūtra* (MĀ 180). Currently, scholars attribute the Chinese *Madhyama-āgama* to the Sarvāstivāda school of Buddhism (cf. Anālayo 2011b, 7, fn. 64. For an opposite view see Chung & Fukita 2011, 13–34).

6. A variant of this Maitreyan version of the robe gift episode is found in the individual discourses T 202 and T 203. Here after the Buddha's refusal Mahāprajāpatī continues to look for a recipient of her gift among the monks of the *saṅgha*. Nobody dares to accept it, until Maitreya finally took it (Lamotte 1988, 704; Anālayo 2011b, 812, fn. 268).

7. The works, which contain this story, are listed and shortly described by Lamotte (1988, 702–705). For the role of the robe gift episode in the Maitreyavyākaraṇa context see also Silk (2003, 195–97).

8. As shown by Hüsken (2000, 46, fn. 9) and Anālayo (2008, 106–8), the Maitrisimit account does not refer to the foundation of the Order of nuns, but reports the robe gift episode, which is described in the different versions of the *Dakṣiṇāvibhaṅgasūtra*.

9. The story of Mahāprajāpatī's robe gift is also referred to in the paracanonical *Milindapañha* (ed. Trenckner 1962, 240f., tr. Horner 1964, 44–46).

The *Madhyama-āgama* version, however, is not the only Chinese text among the direct parallels. Another Chinese version is preserved as an independent *sūtra* (T 84). It is said to have been translated between 980 and 1000 by Dānapāla from Uḍḍiyāna (Swat). Its title 分別布施經 (“*Sūtra on the division of gifts*”) corresponds to the Pāli title of this *sūtra* (cf. Tsukamoto 1985, 1097).¹⁰ A fourth, rather valuable direct parallel is part of Śamathadeva’s commentary on the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, the *Upāyikā Abhidharmakośaṭīkā*, extant today only in the Tibetan translation of Jayaśrī. According to Schmithausen (1987, 338–343), Śamathadeva’s quotations are more closely related to parallels from Mūlasarvāstivāda texts of the Chinese *Samyukta-āgama* than to texts of the Sarvāstivāda *Madhyama-āgama*. It can therefore be suggested that Śamathadeva quoted from a *Madhyama-āgama* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition (cf. Strauch 2008: 118–119).

These parallels from translated canonical collections can be supplemented by two fragments from Sanskrit traditions. The first of them is part of the Berlin Turfan Collection. It consists of a single folio (SHT III 979, Waldschmidt 1971, 241–242). The preserved text, which corresponds to parts of §§ 2 and 3 of the *Gāndhārī sūtra*, is largely parallel to the version of the Chinese *Madhyama-āgama* (T 26) and can therefore probably be attributed to the Sarvāstivādins.¹¹ The second Sanskrit version was identified by Peter Skilling among the manuscript fragments of the Schøyen Collection (MS 2379/15, yet unpublished). Again, it consists of only a small part of one folio. Its preserved text corresponds to a later part of the *Gāndhārī sūtra*, namely to parts of §§ 3–8. The school affiliation of this version is uncertain. It is possible that it belongs to a Mahāsāṅghika- (Lokottaravāda) tradition, as the *vinaya* texts that can be identified among the Schøyen fragments can be attributed to this school (Chung 2002; 2006; Karashima 2000; 2002; 2006). However, the school affiliation of the *āgama* material from the Schøyen Collection is less clear, although the possibility of a Mahāsāṅghika affiliation cannot be ruled out (Hartmann 2002, 1–2.; 2004, 127).

According to this classification, the parallels and their school-affiliation (if uncertain, preceded by *) can be subsumed in the following table (Table 1.1):

10. Both Chinese versions (T 26, 180 and T 84) were translated by Tsukamoto (1985, 1093–1100).

11. The exact parallel to the Chinese MĀ is: T 26, 722a4–19 (Chung and Fukita 2011, 153).

Table 1.1 The parallels of the Gāndhārī **Dhakkṣināvibhaṅgasūtra*

School affiliation	Indirect		Direct
	Maitreya	Foundation of the Order of nuns	
Theravāda	Vinaya	Non-Vinaya	
	Pāli: <i>Vinayavibhaṅga</i> Vin. II 253–256	Pāli: <i>Aṅguttara-nikāya</i> AN 8.51 (Gotamīsutta) = IV 274–279	Pāli: <i>Majjhima-nikāya</i> MN 142 (Dakkhīnāvibhaṅgasutta) = III 253–258
Mahīśāsaka	Chin.: <i>Vinaya</i> (T 1421) 185b19–186a28		
Mahāsāṅghika	Chin.: <i>Vinaya</i> (T 1425) 471a25–476b11		*Skt.: Schøyen fragment 2379/15 (unpublished)
Mahāsāṅghika- Lokottaravādins	Skt. <i>Bhikṣuṇī-Vinaya</i> ed. Roth (1970, 4–21)		
Dharmaguptaka	Chin.: <i>Vinaya</i> (T 1428) 922c7–923c12		
Sarvāstivāda · Vaibhāṣika	Chin.: <i>Vinaya</i> (T 1435) 293b29–c9, 345b29–c22, 410a10–11 Skt. <i>Bhikṣuṇī-Karmavācānā</i> ed. Schmidt (1993, 242–8)	*Chin.: <i>Madhyamāgama</i> T 26 (no. 116); 罽曇彌經 <i>qūtánmí jīng</i> (Sūtra on Gautamī): 605a8–607b16	*Chin.: <i>Madhyamāgama</i> T 26 (no. 180); 罽曇彌經 <i>qūtánmí jīng</i> (Sūtra on Gautamī): 721c–723a *Skt.: Turfan fragment SHT III 979 ed. Waldschmidt (1971, 241–2)
	Maitrisimit Uighur: ed. Geng (1988, 191–209), ed. Tekin (1980, 69–70) Tokharian: ed. Xianlin (1998, 169–89)		

(continued)

Table 1.1 (continued)

School affiliation	Indirect		Direct
	Maitreya	Foundation of the Order of nuns	
		Vinaya	Non-Vinaya
Mulasarvāstivāda		<p>Chin.: <i>Vinaya</i> (T 1451) 350b10–351c2</p> <p>Tib.: <i>Vinaya</i> D 6 <i>da</i> 100a4–104b5 Q 1035 <i>ne</i> 97a7–101b8</p> <p>Chin.: <i>Vinayamātrkā</i> (T 1463) 803a22–b24</p>	<p>*Tib.: Samathadeva: <i>Abhidharmakosaṣṭṭkā</i></p> <p>D (4094) <i>ju</i> 254a1–257a6 Q (5595) <i>tu</i> 289a8–293a3</p>
(Haimavata?)			
?			<p>Chin. T 60 856a6–858a6 佛說瞿曇彌記果經 “discourse spoken by the Buddha [in reply to] Gotamī’s declaration regarding the fruits [of recluse-ship]” (Anālayo 2011c, 269, fn. 8)</p>
?			<p>Chin.: T 84 分別布施經 “Sūtra on the division of gifts”: 903b–904b</p>

In order to clarify how the position of the Gāndhārī version fits within these various textual traditions I will next examine two significant passages of the *sūtra*. The first of them is taken from the narrative part, which has a number of parallels in the *vinaya* material and can therefore help to evaluate and place the Gāndhārī version within the group of the indirect parallels and also ascertain its relation to the various reports about the foundation of the Order of nuns. The second passage is taken from the dogmatic core of the *sūtra* and will more precisely define its position among the direct parallels. In the final section of the chapter, to conclude, special attention will be given to an assessment of the delineation of the nuns' Order in the Gāndhārī version, as compared to other versions of the text.

4. *The sūtra's narrative: Mahāprajāpatī's request*

The narrative part of the *Dakṣiṇāvibhaṅgasūtra* and the introductory portion of the ordination story are largely parallel. They share the following elements:

1. Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī approaches the Buddha with a request. This is repeated three times and three times refused by the Buddha.
2. Ānanda intervenes. In the case of the gift of the robe episode the Buddha maintains his position. With regard to the request for ordination he eventually agrees.

The argument used by Ānanda to “convince” the Buddha and his highlighting of the “mother service” done by Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī¹² is largely identical in all versions, which seem to go back to a common core.¹³ In the Pāli versions it is expressed with the phrase:

12. This subject has been extensively discussed—on the basis of texts in Indian languages—by Ohnuma (2006).

13. According to the structural analysis provided by Ann Heirman (2001, 279–81) the parallel text portion of the versions of the *Dakṣiṇāvibhaṅgasūtra* and that of the versions of the ordination story as contained in the *vinayas* and the *Gautamīsūtra* would correspond to sections (c) “Ānanda acts as a mediator” and (e) “Ānanda refers to the extensive merit of Mahāprajāpatī towards the Buddha. She nursed and raised him.”

1. Ordination story: *Cullavagga* (*Vinaya-piṭaka*)

*bahūpakārā bhante mahāpajāpatī gotamī bhagavato mātucchā
āpādikā posikā khīrassa dāyikā bhagavantam janettiyā kālakatāya
thaññaṃ pāyesī* (Vin II 254–55)¹⁴

2. Robe gift episode: *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅgasutta* (*Majjhima-nikāya*)

*bahūpakārā bhante, mahāpajāpatī gotamī bhagavato mātucchā
āpādikā posikā khīrassa dāyikā, bhagavantam janettiyā kālakatāya
thaññaṃ pāyesī* (MN III 253)

Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī has been very helpful to the Blessed One, venerable sir. As his mother's sister, she was his nurse, his foster mother, the one who gave him milk. She suckled the Blessed One, when his own mother died. (tr. Ñānamoli 2005, 1102)

This portion—albeit incompletely preserved—is also part of the Gāndhārī text (§ 2.1):

///(*mahaprayava*)[*di*] *go*[*dami*] *madu-janitri-kalagada*[*e*] *avaia*
po[*si*](*ga*)///(BajC 1, line 7)

Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī (was) the nurse who nourished (him) when the mother who gave (him) birth had passed away.

In most of the parallels, this argument of Ānanda is countered by the Buddha with a reference to his own services to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī. As noted by Anālayo:

According to the main Chinese and Tibetan parallels to the *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅgasutta*, in reply to his reminder by Ānanda the Buddha explained that he also had benefited Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, as due to him she had gone for refuge and taken the five precepts, was free from doubt in the three jewels, and had acquired insight into the four noble truths. This listing of benefits implies that she had become a stream-enterer. (2011b, 813)

14. Cf. the nearly identical text in the *Gotamīsutta* of the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*: *bahupakārā, bhante, mahāpajāpatī gotamī bhagavato mātucchā āpādikā posikā, bhagavantam janettiyā kālāṅkatāya thaññaṃ pi* (AN IV 276).

The items included in this list vary in the different texts. Not all the ordination accounts contain this counter-argument of the Buddha. It is therefore possible that this element of the robe gift story was later interpolated into the ordination narrative. If such an interpolation did take place, it does not appear to have been dependent upon school affiliation.¹⁵ This portion is only fragmentarily preserved in the Gāndhārī *sūtra* (§ 2.2). Only the beginning and the reference to the five precepts survive in the preserved part of the manuscript:

(ma)[ha]prayavadi godamie bahokaro ta kiṣa hetu ma[ma]////(panadi)
[pa](tadepradi)[vira]da adiṃṇadanade prativirada (*kameṣu michacacade prativirada) (mu)[ṣa]vadade pradivirada suramereamaja-pramati[tha](nade prativirada) (BajC I, lines 8–10)

(And I was) of great service to Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī. Out of what reason? (*It is due to) my (*support) (. . .) (that Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī) refrains from killing living beings, refrains from taking what is not given, (*refrains from misconduct in sensual pleasures), refrains from false speech, refrains from wine, liquor and intoxicants which are the basis of negligence.¹⁶

In many of the parallel versions this passage is mirrored by an enumeration of persons to whom one owes a debt. This enumeration takes up the list of the preceding paragraph. In the Pāli *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅgasutta* the passage is introduced by:¹⁷

15. Remarkably, the Pāli versions of the ordination account in the *vinaya* and in the *Gotamīsutta* omit this passage. It is also missing in the Chinese *vinayas* of the Mahāsāṅghikas (T 1425), the Sarvāstivādins (T 1435), and the *Haimavatas (T 1463), in the Tibetan *vinaya* of the Mūlasarvāstivādins and in the Sanskrit *Bhikṣuṇīkarmavācānā* of the Sarvāstivādins. As seen in Table 1.2, below, other versions of the Mahāsāṅghikas-(Lokottaravādins) and of the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivādins do contain this passage. I am grateful to Anālayo who checked the Chinese references for me.

16. For sake of coherence the terminology of the translation corresponds to Nānamoli (2005, 1103).

17. This passage is closely related, but not identical with the list in AN 3,24, where three *bahukārā puggalā* are enumerated (AN I 123). This parallel, which explicitly refers to attaining stream-entry and full awakening among those acts, which characterize the merits of a *bahukāra-puggala*-, is a further argument for the lay status of Mahāprajāpatī. As Anālayo says: “From this listing it would seem that, had Mahāprajāpatī Gotamī already reached full awakening by the time of the present discourse, this would merit explicit mentioning” (2011b, 814, fn. 282). Anālayo’s suggestion, that Mahāprajāpatī’s “offering of a robe to the Buddha could find a placing at some point during the time period between her going forth and her attainment of full liberation” (2011b, 815, fn. 282) seems to me less straightforward.

1. *yaṃ hi ānanda, puggalo puggalaṃ āgamma buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gato hoti, dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gato hoti, saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gato hoti. Imassānanda, puggalassa iminā puggalena na suppatikāraṃ vadāmi, yadidaṃ abhivādana paccuṭṭhāna-añjalikamma-sāmīcikkamma-cīvara-piṇḍapāta-senāsana-gilāna-paccaya-bhesajja-parikkhārānuppādānena* (MN III 254)

When one person, owing to another, has gone for refuge to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha, I say that is not easy for the former to repay the latter by paying homage to him, rising up for him, according him reverential salutation and polite services, and by providing robes, almsfood, resting places, and medicinal requisites (tr. Nānamoli 2005, 1103).

The same phrase is repeated three more times for the following persons:

2. a person who has taken the five precepts
3. a person possessing “unwavering confidence in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha” and “the virtues loved by noble ones” (tr. Nānamoli 2005, 1103): *buddhe aveccappasādena samannāgato hoti, dhamme aveccappasādena samannāgato hoti, saṅghe aveccappasādena samannāgato hoti, ariyakantehi sīlehi samannāgato hoti.*
4. a person without doubt in the four noble truths, that is, “who has become free from doubt about suffering, about the origin of suffering, about the cessation of suffering, and about the way leading to the cessation of suffering” (tr. Nānamoli 2005, 1103): *dukkhe nikkankho hoti, dukkhasamudaye nikkankho hoti, dukkhanirodhe nikkankho hoti, dukkhanirodhagāminiyā paṭipadāya nikkankho hoti.*

Again the Gāndhārī scroll does not preserve the whole text, but allows reconstruction of at least its basic shape (§ 3):

- 3.1. *(yo ho anamda pugalo) (pu)[ga](o) agamo budha janati [dha]m(ma janati samgha janati) (*anamda taṣa pugalaṣa na sukaro paḍhihato yamida civara-piṇḍavada-ṣeṇaṣano-gilana-pracea-bheṣajo-parikharo*
- 3.2. *yo ho anamda pugalo pugalo agamo) /// [pano gado] ? ? [anamda ta]sa [p](u)[g](alaṣa na s)u[karo] paḍhihato yamida civara-piṇḍavada-ṣeṇaṣano-gilana-pracea-bheṣajo-parikharo*
- 3.3. *yo ho anamda pugalo pugalo agamiya budho nikamkṣo dhammo nika(m)-kṣo samghe nikamkṣo (anamda ta)[sa] pugalaṣa na s(u)[karo] paḍi[ha]to yami(da) civara-piṇḍavado-ṣeṇaṣano-gilana-pracea-bheṣaja-pari[kha](ro)*

- 3.4. *yo ho ananda pugalo pugalo agamya* /// *ḡig[i]ra ? ? ?* /// (*ananda tasa*)
pugalaṣa na (sukaro paḍihato yam)[i](da) [civara-piṃḍava]do-
ś(e)naṣano-gilana-pra[c](e)[a-bhe]ṣaja-parikha[rena] (BajC I, lines 13–18)
- 3.1. (Ānanda, when one person,) owing to another, knows the Buddha,
 (knows the) *dharma* (and knows the *saṅgha*,) (*this person, Ānanda,
 is not easily rejected with regard to robes, almsfood, resting places
 and medicinal requisites for the sick.)
- 3.2. (Ānanda, when one **person**,) **owing to another**, (. . .) this person,
 Ānanda, is not easily **rejected with regard to** robes, almsfood, resting
 places and medicinal **requisites for the sick**.
- 3.3. Ānanda, when one person, owing to another, is without doubt about
 the Buddha, without doubt about the *dharma* and without doubt
 about the *saṅgha*, this person, (Ānanda), is not easily rejected with
 regard to robes, almsfood, resting places and medicinal requisites for
 the sick.
- 3.4. (Ānanda, when one person, owing to another,) (. . .) this person,
 (Ānanda), is not easily rejected with regard to robes, almsfood, rest-
 ing places and medicinal requisites for the sick.

As we can see, two of the four elements in the Gāndhārī passage are missing. However, we know from the preceding passage that the five precepts would have been part of this enumeration, thus only one element remains unknown. If we compare this passage of the Gāndhārī version with its direct and indirect parallels we get a list of doctrinal issues, which are part of these various lists:

- A Three jewels (*triratna*): Buddha, *dharma*, *saṅgha*
- B Five precepts (*śīla*, *śikṣāpada*)
- C Four Noble Truths (*āryasatyā*)
- D Five Noble Treasures (*āryadhana*): *śraddhā*, *śīla*, *śruta*, *tyāga*, *prajñā*

These Buddhist core doctrines are combined with the following elements:

- 1 “knows” (*jānāti*)
- 2 “takes refuge” (*śaraṇaṃ gacchati*)
- 3 “has no doubt” (*niḥkaṅkṣa-*)
- 4 “has (unwavering) confidence” (Pāli *aveccapasādena samannāgata-*)
- 5 “believes in” (*abhiprasanna-*)
- 6 other verbal forms

An analysis of the texts considering these structural elements yields the following picture (Table 1.2):¹⁸

Table 1.2 The list of persons to whom one owns a debt

Direct parallels		Indirect parallels									
		Vinaya					Non-Vinaya				
Gāndhāri—Bajaur I	Theravāda—Pāli MN 142	Sarv—Turfan SHT III 979	#Mūl—Tibetan D 233	* Sarv—T 26, sūtra 180	T 84	Mah-Lok (ed. Roth 1970)	Mahīśāsaka (T 1421)	Dharmaguptaka (T 1428)	Mūl (T 1451)	T 60	* Sarv—T 26, sūtra 116
A 1	A 2	A 5	A 5	A 2	A 2	A 2	A 1	A 5	A 1	A 2	A 2
*B	B	A 3	A 2	A + C 3	B	B		A 2	A 2	A 3	A + C 3
A 3	A 4	A 2	A 3	D 6	A 3	D 6		B	B	C 3	D 6
?	C 3	C 3	C 3	B	C 3	C 1		C 1	C 3	D + B	B

From the above tabulation, it is clear that nearly every version has its own structure. All the versions agree in their inclusion of the three jewels (A: *triratna*) in the list. Most add other items like the five precepts (B: *pañcaśīla*), the Four Noble Truths (C: *āryasatya*) and the Five Noble Treasures (D: *āryadhana*), while others repeat the already mentioned element with other verbal forms. Among the different versions, the three that stem from (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda sources (bold frame) are the most similar to one another. But even here the texts are not identical. If the Chinese *Madhyama-āgama* (T 26) does indeed belong to the Sarvāstivāda tradition, it uses a completely different formula in this passage. It is possible that the textual variants represent rather different local or regional traditions than formulae which are characteristic for a specific school.¹⁹

18. For the texts which do not contain this passage, see above fn. 15. In T 1421 only one item is mentioned. The treatment of this passage in the *Maitrisimit* versions differs considerably from that of the other texts and cannot be used for a comparison.

19. As indicated by Chung and Fukita (2011, 154), a part of this passage is quoted in the *Karmavibhaṅga* 61.6–9 (ed. Kudō 2004, 122). The quotation is introduced by *yathā cāha* **Bhagavān Dakṣiṇāvibhaṅgasūtre*. It refers to *triratna* + *śaraṇam gam-* (A 2) and to the

On the basis of this evidence alone it is not possible to make any reliable statements about a suggested affiliation of our text to any of these versions or schools. Neither the Dharmaguptaka nor the Mahāsāṅghika parallels as preserved in the *vinayas* of these schools are especially close to the Gāndhārī text. The versions that most closely relate to, but are not identical with, our Gāndhārī text are the Pāli version and the independent Chinese translation of T 84 (grey shadow).

5. The dogmatical core: The classification of gifts

The dogmatical core of the *sūtra* (§§ 4–7) is only part of the direct parallels and the Uighur version of the *Maitrisimit*. According to the structure of this part, two groups can be distinguished (see Table 1.3):

Table 1.3 The narrative part of the *sūtra* (§§ 4–9) and its parallels

	Gāndhārī—Bajaur I	Theravāda Pāli—MN 142	Sarv—Turfan SHIT III 979	*Mūl—Tibetan D 253	* Sarv—T 26, sūtra 180	T 84	Schøyen fragment	Maitrisimit
4 The fourteen individual gifts	4	4	6	6	6	4	4	6
5 The fruits of these fourteen individual gifts	5	5		7		5	5	7
6 The seven gifts directed to the Order	6	6		4	4	6		4
7 The fruits of the seven gifts directed to the Order	7	7		5	5			5
8 The four kinds of purifying a gift	8	8		8	8	8		
9 The gāthās	9	9		9	9	9		
Groups	B II	B I	A	A	A	B II	B I	A

śikṣāpadas (B). The passage and its parallels are discussed by Kudō (2004, 265–6, fn. 40). A nearly identical passage is quoted from a “*Dadiṅāmvihamgasūtra*”, probably corrupt for *Dakṣiṇāvibhamgasūtra* (61.5, ed. Kudō 2004, 123).

The first group (A) starts the introduction with the enumeration of the seven *saṅgha*-oriented gifts and continues with the 14 individual gifts. This group consists of the following versions: the Chinese *Madhyama-āgama sūtra* (T 26, no. 180), the Turfan fragment, and the Tibetan version in Śamathadeva's commentary. As far as we can judge, these versions most probably belong to the Sarvāstivāda or Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition. Accordingly, this feature can be regarded a peculiarity of this branch of Buddhist textual tradition. The fact that the parallel text of the *Maitrisimit* shares this sequence might give an indication of its source, which should be looked for in Sarvāstivāda circles. Our Gāndhārī *sūtra* obviously belongs to the second group (B), which shows the reverse order of these elements and is shared by all the remaining versions.

However, other differences can be observed that allow a further sub-grouping: The first of these differences concerns the sequence of elements in the list of individual gifts. As can be seen from the above table, this list occurs twice in the *sūtra*: the first instance enumerates the gifts, and in the second instance the enumeration is repeated for the sake of specifying the reward that is to be expected from each respective gift. With regard to these two subsequent lists, two subgroups can be distinguished: The first of them (I) starts its enumeration with the highest recipient and continues the subsequent list of rewards in the reverse order. This structure is found in all texts of group A, but it is also found in some texts of group B. The Pāli version begins its list of recipients with the sentence:

tathāgate arahante sammāsambuddhe dānaṃ deti, ayaṃ paṭhamā pāṭipuggalikā dakkhiṇā.

One gives a gift to the Tathāgata, accomplished and fully enlightened; this is the first kind of personal offering. (tr. Nānamoli 2005, 1103)

The list ends with:

tiracchānagate dānaṃ deti, ayaṃ cuddasamī pāṭipuggalikā dakkhiṇāti.

One gives a gift to an animal; this is the fourteenth kind of personal offerings. (tr. Nānamoli 2005, 1104)

Its second listing—of the rewards—is arranged in the reverse order and begins with:

tiracchānagate dānaṃ datvā sataguṇā dakkhiṇā pāṭikaṅkhitabbā.

By giving a gift to an animal, the offering may be expected to repay a hundredfold. (tr. Nānamoli 2005, 1104)

This part ends with a gift to a Tathāgata:

ko pana vādo tathāgate arahante sammāsambuddheti.

What should be said about a giving a gift to a Tathāgata, accomplished and fully enlightened? (tr. Nānamoli 2005, 1104)

The same structure is found in the Sanskrit text, which is preserved on the fragment of the Schøyen Collection. The only texts that show a different order and are therefore to be attributed to subgroup II are the separate Chinese version translated by Dānapāla (T 84) and our Gāndhārī sūtra, which begins its first chain with the lowest recipient:

ciričanugadaṣa pracea[dano] deti (BajC I, line 19)

One gives an individual gift to an animal.

The last recipient on the list is the highest:

(taṣa)[ga](da)[sa] (arahadaṣa samasabu)[dha]sa prac(e)adano det[i]
(BajC I, line 24)

One gives an individual gift to the Tathāgata, accomplished and fully enlightened.

In the subsequent list of rewards, the text begins again with the lowest recipient:

[ciričanuga](da)[sa] praceadano dai(ta) [śa]tauno vivao paḍiaksīdave
(BajC I, lines 24–25)

Having given an individual gift to an animal, a hundredfold fruition (of the gift) is to be expected.

And concludes again with the highest:

[ko vana va](vo ta)[sagadaṣa araha](da)[sa] (samasabudhaṣa) (BajC I, line 32)

What should be said about a gift to a Tathāgata, accomplished and fully enlightened?

Analyzing this comparison on a structural level, the Gāndhārī text is most closely related to the later independent Chinese translation T 84 with whom it shares two distinctive features: the sequence of the listing and the internal sequence of elements. Moreover, to situate these two as structurally close is in general accord with our observations with regard to the narrative part, where T 84 was also among those texts that were particularly close to the Gāndhārī *sūtra*. This preliminary result might be surprising, but reminds us of the necessity to evaluate the historical authenticity of a version not according to the age of its translation or manuscript evidence. Old features may be hidden in new translations, while new features can show up in an old manuscript. In this case the arrangement of the lists with the individual gifts mentioned first is without doubt an old feature (= Group B). It can be found in all non-Sarvāstivāda versions. The new feature—the rearrangement of the sequence of the individual items—is restricted to only two versions, including the “old” Gāndhārī tradition. But we should not forget that even this tradition stands at the end of a process of textual development, which had already lasted for some centuries. That this peculiar combination of old and new features is preserved as well in the oldest as in the youngest of our textual witnesses might be due to a common school affiliation of both texts. But it cannot be denied that the parallelism may also be caused by the common provenance of both texts and can therefore be characterized as a regional variant. Dānapāla, the 10th-century translator of the Chinese text, came from Swat. Perhaps he utilized in his translation a version that was in use in his home area. If this was the case, it may be the reason this version is closely related to our Gāndhārī text.

6. *The seven gifts to the saṅgha and the Order of the nuns*

In all the versions the enumeration of the individual gifts is either preceded or followed by another list that contains the various kinds of gifts directed to the Buddhist community. The term used for this category is *saṅhagatā dakṣiṇā* (P. *saṅhagatādakkhiṇā*, G. *saghagada dhakṣina*). The passage has provoked a number of comments with regard to its implications for the history of the nuns’ Order. As already mentioned, von Hinüber briefly discusses Mahāprajāpatī’s robe gift as part of his argument that

there was no Order of nuns at the time of the Buddha. One of his main pieces of evidence for this is the apparent lack of direct interactions between the Buddha and nuns in the first four *nikāyas*. The story of the *Dakṣiṇāvibhaṅgasūtra* does not negate von Hinüber's assertion, since Mahāprajāpatī is introduced here not as a Buddhist nun, but still seems to be a laywoman.²⁰ Nonetheless, the Pāli version of the *sūtra* enumerates, among the communities that are the recipients of the gifts to the Order, the *bhikkhunīsaṅgha*—which is clearly a contradiction to the narrative frame, at least if we concede that the tradition according to which the foundation of the Order of nuns goes back to Mahāprajāpatī is true. Von Hinüber wants to explain this paradox by a kind of absentmindedness and refers to L. Schmithausen, who drew his “attention to the remarkable fact that some Chinese versions correctly preserve a most likely older version of the text without any reference to the nuns” (2008, 21, fn. 59).²¹ However, von Hinüber does not exclude the possibility “that an attentive later redactor removed the *bhikkhunīsaṅgha* from the text” in these versions (2008, 21–22, fn. 59).

The existence, in this *sūtra*, of Mahāprajāpatī as a laywoman alongside a mention of the Order of nuns does indeed present something of a problem for how we understand the founding of the nuns' Order, given that the most common and accepted account gives her as the first woman to receive ordination. Another solution with regard to this “anachronism” was brought forward by Liz Williams. She argued that it is either “evidence of the existence of *bhikkhunīs* before Mahāprajāpatī requested the going forth” or that “this sutta may be an assimilation of one story with another” (2000, 170). This second explanation, which regards the Pāli version “as the outcome of a merger of two originally different texts”, was also favored by Anālayo (2008, 110).²² I want to use this opportunity to introduce here for the first time²³ the respective passage of the Gāndhārī

20. Only one version (T 84) calls Mahāprajāpatī a *bhikṣuṇī*, but it also mentions her as taking only the five precepts. The controversial issue of Mahāprajāpatī's assumed lay status has been repeatedly discussed by Anālayo, who does not exclude the possibility that the robe gift episode falls within a time after her going forth (2008, 109; 2011b, 814–81).

21. In his criticism of von Hinüber's article Anālayo rightly points out, that this omission is only true for one particular phrase in the whole passage. Otherwise the Chinese versions “refer repeatedly to the nuns” (2008, 114).

22. For more references with regard to this problem cf. Anālayo (2008, 136, fn. 23 + 24).

23. A short reference to the Gāndhārī version, “where the *bhikṣuṇīsaṅgha* is almost certainly mentioned”, is given by von Hinüber (2008, 22, fn. 59) on the basis of an oral

version of this *sūtra* and to discuss the role of the *bhikṣuṇīsangha* in comparison with its parallels. For this purpose I will first cite the text as contained in the Gāndhārī version (in an abbreviated manner). Although it is not completely preserved, its coherent and repetitive structure allows its reconstruction with a high degree of certainty:

6. [satime] *anamda saṃghagada dhakṣina* (. . .) *kadara sata*

6.1. *iṣaṃnada taṣagado tiṭhaṃti yave budhap[r]amu[haṣa] (bh)[ikh](u)*
(saṃghaṣa) [da]ṇo deti aya [anam]da paḍhama saṃghagada dhakṣina
 (. . .)

6.2. *(punavaro anamda ta)[sa]gado tiṭhaṃto yaveto 'budhapramuḥaṣa*
*(bhikhunisamghaṣa dano deti aya anamda *dudiya sam)[gha]gada*
dhakṣina (. . .)

6.3. *p(u)navaro anamda taṣagade parinivude bhikhusa(m)ghaṣa dano deti*
*aya [a](naṃda *tatiya) saṃghagada dhamkṣina* (. . .)

6.4. *punavaro ana(m)da taṣa[ga](de parinivude bhikhunisamghaṣa dano deti*
a)[yaṃ a]namda cauṭha saḥagada dhakṣina

6.5. *punavaro anamda [ta]ṣagade pari[nivute]///(da)[n](o) deti ayaṃ anamda*
paṃcama saṃghagada dhamkṣina (. . .)

6.6. *///(*taṣagade pariṇivu)[de evam aha etaya bhikhu]saghade agachamtu*
aya ana(m)da ṣaṭha saṃghaga(da dhakṣina

6.7. *punavaro anamda taṣagade parinivu)[de] etaya bhikhunisamghade*
agachamtu ayaṃ sa(tama saṃghagada dhakṣina)(. . .) (BajC 1, lines
 32–50)

6. “Ānanda, there are these seven kinds of gifts directed to the Order . . .
 Which are these seven?”

6.1. Here, Ānanda, as long as the Tathāgata is living, one gives a gift to the Order of monks, headed by the Buddha. This Ānanda, is the first gift directed to the Order . . .

6.2. And again, Ānanda, as long as the Tathāgata is living, (one gives a gift to the Order of nuns), headed by the Buddha. (This, Ānanda, is the second) gift directed to the Order . . .

- 6.3. And again, Ānanda, if the Tathāgata has passed away, one gives a gift to the Order of monks. This, Ānanda, is the (third) gift directed to the Order . . .
- 6.4. And again, Ānanda, if the Tathāgata (has passed away, one gives a gift to the Order of the nuns.) This, Ānanda, is the fourth gift directed to the Order.
- 6.5. And again, Ānanda, if the Tathāgata has passed away, one gives a gift to . . . This, Ānanda, is the fifth gift directed to the Order . . .
- 6.6. (. . .) if (the Tathāgata) has passed away, one says: May so many from the Order of monks come forward (to receive the gift). This, Ānanda, is the sixth gift directed to the order (. . .)
- 6.7. (And again, Ānanda, if the Tathāgata) has passed away, (one says): May so many from the Order of nuns come forward (to receive the gift). This is the seventh (gift directed to the order) (. . .).”

As we see, the first two items in the list are introduced by the phrase: “as long as the Tathāgata is living”: *taṣagado tiṭhamṭi yave/ (ta)[sa]gado tiṭhamto yaveto*. Accordingly, only these two items could signify the order as *bud-dhapramukha* “headed by the Buddha.” The remaining five omit this attribute and begin with “when the Tathāgata has passed away”: *taṣagade parinivude*. The same distinction is met in all other versions, although not always expressed in this explicit way (see Table 1.4). Virtually all of the texts start their enumeration from the perspective of the narrative, that is, during the lifetime of the Buddha.

The first item of the Gāndhārī text—including the attributes “as long as the Tathāgata is living” and “Monks’ Order headed by the Buddha”—is matched exactly by the Chinese *Madhyāma-āgama sūtra* (MĀ 180):

Gāndhārī **Dhaksinavibhaṅgasutra*:

iṣaṃnada taṣagado tiṭhamṭi yave budhap[r]amu[haṣa] (bh)[ikh](u)
(*samghaṣa*) [*da*]ṇo deti (Ba)C 1, lines 34–35)

Chinese *Madhyāma-āgama* (MĀ 180)

得大廣報。 信族姓男。 族姓女。 佛在世時。 佛為首。 施佛及比丘眾。 是謂第一施眾。 (T 26, 722a22–23)

If a believing son or daughter of a good family, while the Buddha is in the world, gives to the Buddha and to the assembly of bhikṣus with the Buddha at its head, that is called the “first group of gifts”. . . (tr. Tsukamoto 1985:5: 1094)

Table 1.4 The seven gifts to the order in the parallel versions

No.	Direct Parallels				Indirect	
	Gāndhārī Bajaur I	Pāli Theravāda MN 142	Chin. T 26, 180 (corrupt)	Chin. T 84		Tibetan D 253
1	Buddha alive Monks' Order headed by the Buddha	(*Buddha alive) Both orders headed by the Buddha	Buddha alive Buddha and monks' order headed by the Buddha	(*Buddha alive) Monks' order in the presence of the Buddha	Monks' order Headed by the Buddha	???
2	Buddha alive *Nuns' order headed by the Buddha	Buddha deceased Both orders	1. Buddha deceased Both orders 2. (*Buddha deceased) Monks' order	Buddha deceased Monks' order	(*Buddha deceased) Monks' order	???
3	Buddha deceased Monks' order	(*Buddha deceased) Monks' order	3. (*Buddha deceased) Nuns' order	Buddha deceased Nuns' order	(*Buddha deceased) Nuns' order	???
4	Buddha deceased *Nuns' order	(*Buddha deceased) Nuns' order	4. (*Buddha deceased) Group of monks	Buddha deceased Both orders	(*Buddha deceased) Both orders	(*Buddha deceased) Nuns' order
5	Buddha deceased *Both orders?	(*Buddha deceased) Group of monks and nuns	5. (*Buddha deceased) Group of nuns	Buddha deceased Itinerant monks	(*Buddha deceased) Group of monks	(*Buddha deceased) Group of monks
6	Buddha deceased Group of monks	(*Buddha deceased) Group of monks	Non-vigorous monks <i>gotrabhū</i> , etc.	Buddha deceased Itinerant nuns	(*Buddha deceased) Group of nuns	(*Buddha deceased) Group of nuns
7	Buddha deceased Group of nuns	(*Buddha deceased) Group of nuns	Perfect monks	Buddha deceased Itinerant monks and nuns	(*Buddha deceased) Group of monks and nuns	Undisciplined monks <i>gotrabhū</i> , etc.

Other versions, such as the text quoted by Śamathadeva, mention only the attribute *buddhapramukha* (indicated below in bold print):

Śamathadeva (Tibetan)

*sañs rgyas la mñon du phyogs te dge sloñ gi dge 'dun la sbyin pa byin na
dge 'dun yon gnas yin no* (D 4094 ju 255a)

The second class of items is characterized as offerings made after the Buddha's *mahāparinirvāṇa*. Again some versions signify these actions or the first of them explicitly with an expression corresponding to Gāndhārī *tasagade parinivude* "when the Tathāgata has passed away" (Theravāda MN 142, T 26 (180), T 84). It can therefore be suggested that this binary structure belongs to the original shape of the list. Thus the items on the list can be divided into two sections:

1. Buddha alive
2. Buddha passed away

With regard to the actions in the Buddha's lifetime we observe an important difference between the versions. With the exception of the Gāndhārī version, all texts mention only one item to be placed in the Buddha's lifetime. Usually this is the "Order of the monks headed by the Buddha." Only the Pāli version refers to "Both Orders headed by the Buddha." The Gāndhārī version is the only text in which two entries are introduced by an expression referring to the Buddha's life. Unfortunately the fragmentary state of the manuscript forces us to reconstruct the second of these entries. But according to the structure of the entire list there is only one reasonable conjecture possible: the preserved text of the manuscript *///[sa]gado tiṭhamto yaveto buddhapramuḥaṣa///* has to be reconstructed—as suggested above—as *(punavaro anaṃda ta)[sa]gado tiṭhamto yaveto buddhapramuḥaṣa (bhikhunisamḥaṣa daṇo deti aya anaṃda *dudīya sam)[gha]gada dhakṣina . . .* Therefore, we have only two texts—the Pāli version and the Gāndhārī version—that mention the Order of the nuns during the Buddha's lifetime. They do this in a way that is both different from each other and different from all other versions. Thus, the majority of the extant texts have only one item listed under the rubric of "Buddha's lifetime," and

in all cases other than the Pāli this item is the Order of monks. As Schopen's analysis of different versions of a *vinaya* passage has shown (1985; 1997, 25–29), we can no longer assume that the simple fact of agreement between the majority of sources attests to antiquity on the part of the passage in question. However, in this case it does seem probable that the version in the majority of texts is the original. The version in T 84, which is otherwise close to the Gāndhārī version, in this instance agrees with the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda versions. It could well have been the case, of course, following Schopen's logic, that the redactive homogenizing of the passage between traditions occurred after the 1st or 2nd century, thus T 84 was altered and our Gāndhārī text was not. However, such an assumption would hold more weight if the two alternative lists in the Pāli and Gāndhārī were identical. In which case, it might seem reasonable to argue for a cross-traditional redaction in all but two cases. Moreover, as the comparative analysis above showed, the texts of the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda versions and T 84 belong to completely different branches of transmission and do not show any traces of having ever been subject of any kind of common redaction. Given the available evidence, it is therefore hard to avoid the conclusion that these two texts secondarily introduced this item into a given list by disturbing its internal structure. If we consider all available versions the initial list probably comprised the following items (Table 1.5):

Table 1.5

1	Buddha alive Monks' Order
2	Buddha deceased Monks' Order
3	(*Buddha deceased) Nuns' Order
4	(*Buddha deceased) Both Orders
5	(*Buddha deceased) Group of monks
6	(*Buddha deceased) Group of nuns
7	(*Buddha deceased) Group of monks and nuns

The Pāli version corrupted this order by replacing the original word “monks’ Order” (*bhikkhusaṅgha*) by “both Orders” (*ubhatosāṅghe*). The strategy of the Gāndhārī is different: it introduced an additional item—the nuns’ Order headed by the Buddha during the Buddha’s lifetime—into the list. Consequently it had to skip one of the original items. Which one was left out is difficult to say due to the fragmentary state of the manuscript, but according to the internal logic of the list it seems that the Gāndhārī version skipped the last entry—“group of monks and nuns.” The result of both modifications is the somewhat odd idea of a “nuns’ Order headed by the Buddha” (*buddhapramukha-bhikkṣuṅṣāṅgha*), which is otherwise unattested in Buddhist literature, at least as far as I am able to ascertain.

What can this evidence tell us about the textual history of this passage and its implications for the history of the Order of nuns? The most probable scenario seems to be: the original version of this *sūtra* contained a list of gifts to the *saṅgha*, which did not contain any reference to the existence of a nuns’ community during the Buddha’s lifetime. The fact that the list knew the Order of nuns among the communities after the Buddha’s *parinirvāṇa* shows, however, that it was composed after its foundation.

Some versions made independent attempts to revise this list and to include the *bhikkṣuṅṣāṅgha* among the communities that were active during the Buddha’s lifetime.²⁴ In revising the list, these versions did not care for its seemingly anachronistic character within the narrative frame of the robe gift episode. Two of the supposedly earliest versions, which are transmitted in Indian languages, show clear traces of this process. If the *Dakṣiṇāvibhaṅgasūtra* is indeed the result of a merger of different traditions—combining the robe gift story with the various lists of gifts (as assumed by Williams and Anālayo)—this process of revision obviously took place after this merger. The preserved versions of the *Dakṣiṇāvibhaṅgasūtra* clearly show that the lists were already part of the *sūtra* when the revision was carried out.

What are the implications of this scenario for the history of the Order of the nuns? Does it mean that this list contained a kind of “historical

24. A similar explanation was offered by Nānamoli (2005, 1356, fn. 1291): “We might resolve the discrepancy (unnoticed by the commentator) by supposing that the original discourse was later modified after the founding of the Bhikkhūṇī Saṅgha to bring the latter into the scheme of offerings to the Saṅgha.”

memory” about a phase in the history of the Buddhist community, when the Order of the nuns was not yet founded? And did this phase coincide with the lifetime of the Buddha? I see no way to prove such an assumption. Other explanations cannot be ruled out. Thus, it is also possible that the list was from the very beginning composed as a hierarchy—beginning of course with the monks’ Order headed by the Buddha. The expressions referring to the Buddha’s lifetime were in this case mere indicators of the possibility for the monks’ Order to be headed by the Buddha. They would not refer to any historical sequence.²⁵ Of course, in the case of this explanation, we would have to assume that the explicit reference to the Buddha’s *parinirvāṇa* was originally restricted to the second item in the original list, the monk’s Order after the Buddha’s death, before it was secondarily extended to all of the remaining items. As discussed in chapter four of this volume (see page 102), there are *vinaya* rules that present a strict hierarchy in terms of offerings to the *saṅgha*. According to these rules, nuns cannot receive gifts unless or until monks have first received an offering. Further, in preceding passages in all versions of the *Dakṣiṇāvibhaṅgasūtra*, gift giving is conceptualized under a rubric of hierarchy. It is clear that the order of gift giving and the subsequent rewards of it are intertwined with an awareness of the worthiness of the recipient. However, to extend the importance of hierarchy in gift giving procedures to the present problem remains speculative, and so I leave it open to colleagues who are more familiar with the textual sources on the early history of the Order of nuns to evaluate the strength of this evidence.

But the diversity of variants that can be observed in the different canonical versions seem to indicate that the redactors of the canonical traditions already considered this list problematic. If our reconstruction of the original list can be accepted, their discomfort might well have been caused by the missing of the Order of nuns among the communities during the Buddha’s lifetime. In order to harmonize the list with the accepted tradition of the foundation of the nuns’ Order by the Buddha himself, the redactors of the Gāndhārī and the Pāli versions created new versions of this canonical list, each according to their own predilections.

The result of this limited comparative analysis of the versions of an early Buddhist *āgama sūtra* clearly forces us to show extreme caution

25. For this alternative explanation I am indebted to Bhikkhu Anālayo, with whom I had a series of elucidating discussions during the XVIth conference of the International Association of Buddhist Studies, held in Jinshan, New Taipei City, Taiwan in 2011.

when handling these texts. Repeatedly we face the fact that two of our supposedly most valuable sources of early Buddhist literature—and valuable because they are old witnesses—are characterized by obvious traces of a later revision. Without consulting their parallels in other Buddhist traditions it is quite dangerous to draw any historically reliable conclusions on the basis of the evidence of a single text, even one as old as a Gandhāran *sūtra*.

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