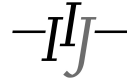




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# Mahākāśyapa, His Lineage, and the Wish for Buddhahood: Reading Anew the Bodhgayā Inscriptions of Mahānāman

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## Abstract

This article investigates the religious message of a set of inscriptions from Bodhgayā issued by Sinhalese monks in the 5th and 6th centuries CE. The long inscription of the hierarch Mahānāman, in particular, allows an in-depth understanding of this monk's self-representation as the heir of a virtuous lineage descending from the Elder Mahākāśyapa, committed to the transmission of the Saṃyukta-Āgama, and related to the ruling dynasty of Laṅkā. Moreover, it provides the rationale behind Mahānāman's aspiration to Buddhahood, as the donor dedicates to this aim the merits of the erection of a temple on the Bodhimaṇḍa itself, hosting a representation of Śākyamuni's Awakening. I argue that Mahānāman is part of a milieu sharing common origins, monastic background, and aspirations, a milieu that was later labelled as \*Mahāyāna-Sthavira by the Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang.

## Keywords

Mahākāśyapa – *adhiṣṭhāna* – Sthāvīrīya/Theriya lineages – aspirations to Buddhahood – Bodhisattvayāna/Mahāyāna – Māravijaya

## Introduction

Je me suis proposé seulement de montrer, par un exemple choisi, à quel point l'épigraphie bouddhique est inséparable de l'étude des textes, quelle lumière elle peut en recevoir et aussi leur apporter.<sup>1</sup>

Sylvain Lévi concludes with these words an article in which, towards the end of his career, he undertakes what he calls an “attempt at exegesis applied to Buddhist epigraphy.” In this article Lévi, who had always been conscious of the importance of inscriptions for writing the history of Buddhism,<sup>2</sup> draws upon impressive knowledge of Buddhist texts to gloss the eloquent opening stanzas of one of the most remarkable epigraphic documents discovered at Bodhgayā. Inspired by the exegetical approach adopted by Lévi, the present contribution takes a fresh look at the very case he studied long ago, which has since been rather neglected by specialists of Buddhist studies.

The inscription, commemorating a temple dedication by the Sinhalese monk Mahānāman, was first edited by John F. Fleet in 1886.<sup>3</sup> It consists of nine stanzas plus a final dating clause. After giving in the first stanza what appears to be a general eulogy of the religious lineage that originates with Śākyamuni,<sup>4</sup> an elaborate description of the lineage of the donor Mahānāman runs through the five following stanzas, in a manner that recalls similar genealogies in royal *praśastis*. Mahānāman himself is eloquently described in the seventh stanza, whose second part records the actual dedication of the pious foundation. The penultimate stanza presents a very interesting formula of assignment of the merit produced, and is followed by the ninth and final stanza containing a pious wish that this residence of the Buddha might last. The following date ends the record (l. 14):<sup>5</sup>

1 Lévi 1929, 47. The article was reprinted in Bacot et al. 1937.

2 See Scherrer-Schaub 2007, 182–183.

3 The edition of the inscription, first published in the *Indian Antiquary* (1886), was reproduced in Fleet's *Inscriptions of the Gupta Kings* (1888), 274–278, among the miscellaneous inscriptions that are absent from Bhandarkar's revised edition of the corpus (1981). The inscription was further reedited by Sircar (1983, 56–58). Tsukamoto's compendium provides the text of Fleet, indicating Sircar's variant readings in the notes. Cf. *IBH*, Bodh-Gayā no. 31.

4 See below, p. 18.

5 Quotations of the inscription are reedited on the basis of the rubbing provided by Fleet (1888, pl. XLla). Variant readings of Fleet (F), Sircar (S), and my own (T) are indicated in the apparatus.

The following editorial conventions are adopted throughout the article:

*samvat*\* 200 60 8 caitra śu di 9 || ॐ»

200 60 8] S T; 200 60 9 F 9] S T; 7 F

Year 268, [month] Caitra, bright fortnight, day 9.

The era adopted by this record, as already stated by Fleet and Sircar, is most probably the Gupta era, and the date would thus correspond to 587 CE.<sup>6</sup> Senarat Paranavitana, who was eager to identify the dedicator of the inscription with the author of the *Mahāvamsa*, preferred to opt for a dating in the Kalacuri-Cedi era,<sup>7</sup> but this hypothesis is highly improbable.<sup>8</sup> The identification of the

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¶	<i>siddham</i>
·	punctuation mark
ॐ»	concluding ornamental sign
*	<i>virāma</i>
[x]	<i>akṣara</i> damaged or whose reading is uncertain
(x)	unreadable <i>akṣara</i> restored by the editor
<x>	sign or <i>akṣara</i> supplemented by the editor
<<x>>	forgotten <i>akṣara</i> inserted by the engraver
<u>x</u>	editorial correction

- 6 Considering the first day of the bright fortnight of the Caitra month as the beginning of the year. Cf. Sircar 1965, 287.
- 7 Paranavitana 1962. The origin of his proposition lies in a hesitation between the two eras found in the index of Fleet 1888, 325. This would allow dating the inscription seventy years earlier and fit better with the known dates of the author of the *Mahāvamsa*.
- 8 Indeed, no inscription dated to this era and belonging to such an early period has been recovered in Magadha. As pointed out by Mirashi, the use of the Kalacuri-Cedi era, which must have originated south of the Narmadā, did not spread to the north until much later. Cf. Mirashi 1955, 1: xxiiif. See also Sircar 1955, 282–283; Salomon 1998, 184–186. A continuity of the use of the Gupta era by the successors of the Guptas in Magadha is thus still the most likely hypothesis. Moreover, in terms of palaeography, the inscription of Mahānāman has been recognised as written in an early form of Siddhamātrkā script, which developed fully in the 7th century. Cf. Bühler 1896, 1: 49–50 and 2: pl. IV; Chakravarti 1938, 358–359, 365; Dani 1963, 114–115 and fig. 12; Salomon 1998, 39. About the shape of the *akṣara ya*, a significant test letter in the period, Chakravarti notes in particular that this inscription “shows the exclusive use of the bipartite form for the first time, which must have immediately preceded the well-developed bipartite *ya* of the Nālandā seal of Harṣa and of the Gañjam grant of the time of Śaśānka (G[u]pta] E[ra] 300 = 619 CE).” It is therefore very difficult to conceive that such a “modern” script was already in use at the beginning of the 6th century CE.

dedicator of the temple with the author of the Sinhalese chronicle appears thus unfounded,<sup>9</sup> and it is safer to assume that these two persons shared what appears to have been a rather common name.<sup>10</sup> Another homonym mentioned in a foundation story of the Mahābodhi-Saṅghārāma has also been wrongly confused with the monk who concerns us.<sup>11</sup> The inscription of Mahānāman,

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- 9 This identity was already suggested by Fleet, but Vincent Smith convincingly argued against it. Cf. Fleet 1888, 275; Smith 1902, 192–197. Paranavitana dedicated much effort to prove this identity in an article rightly estimated by Oskar von Hinüber to contain “fanciful and untenable conclusions.” Cf. Paranavitana 1962; von Hinüber 1996, 319. More specifically, at some point during the 1960s and until his death in 1972, Paranavitana seems to have suffered from some kind of mental disorder, which led him to forge a number of epigraphic documents in Sanskrit, the so-called “interlinear inscriptions,” which he used to justify his earlier theories. This sad alteration of the scholar’s state of mind, leading to damaging consequences on Sinhalese historiography, has been analysed in detail in Guruge 1996, and Weerakkody 1997, 183–195 (I am grateful to Michael Willis for providing me with the latter reference). After Paranavitana’s death, one of his collaborators, Godakumbura, provided Sohoni with a “reading” and translation of yet another interlinear inscription, allegedly found in Rāmakāle near Sigiriya. Cf. Sohoni 1975, 192–204. This alleged 10th century inscription, consisting in a biography in prose of Mahānāman, is used uncritically as evidence in a recent work by Amar (2012, 38), though it is obviously another fake, created to justify *ex post facto* Paranavitana’s interpretation of the Bodhgayā inscription. Paranavitana’s fallacies have no place in a scholarly work and I will spare the time of the reader in mentioning only in passing his views on Mahānāman in what follows.
- 10 This is made evident by the inscription itself, as Mahānāman’s spiritual grandfather bears the same name. The succession of named monks in the inscription is as follows: Bhava (v. 4) → Rāhula → Upasena [I] → Mahānāman [I] (v. 5) → Upasena [II] (v. 6) → Mahānāman [II] (v. 7). Malalasekara’s *DPPN*, s.v. Mahānāma lists eight persons of that name.
- 11 The date of the foundation of this monastery, in which Sinhalese monks were permanently residing, thus being a factor of their lasting influence at Bodhgayā, has remained until now far from clear. While Faxian does not name this monastery, but merely refers to *saṅghārāmas*, Xuanzang mentions it, but does not refer to the period of its foundation. See resp. Deeg 2005, 555–556 and Beal 1884, 133–135; Li 1995, 258–260. The Tang official Wang Xuance briefly explains the origins of the permanent residence of Sinhalese monks at Bodhgayā. According to this record, after two monks had experienced problems during their pilgrimage, Meghavaṇṇa, the king of Laṅkā, requested Samudragupta to let Sinhalese monks reside in a monastery at the site. Incidentally, the elder of the two monks was called Mahānāman. Cf. Lévi 1900, 316–317. Many over- or mis-interpretations were motivated by this thin textual basis. For our concerns, what needs to be clear is that there is no possible way to identify the monk mentioned by Wang Xuance, whom he takes to be a contemporary of Samudragupta, with any of the two Mahānāmans mentioned in our inscription, and therefore no evidence to associate one of them with the foundation of the Mahābodhi-Saṅghārāma.

however, is especially important for the history of Bodhgayā. It deserves to be considered together with other inscriptions, thereby showing how the pilgrim Mahānāman takes part in an important development during the 5th and 6th centuries, namely, the consolidation of the long attested ties between Laṅkā and Bodhgayā.<sup>12</sup> As we shall see, a group of monks connected with the ruling class of Laṅkā appears to have played an important role in the revival of pious foundations at the site.

Besides its relevance for the history of the Sinhalese presence in Bodhgayā, there is still much to be said about the religious message of the Mahānāman inscription, as expressed by means of the elaboration of a spiritual lineage, and by means of an interesting dedicatory formula. In this paper, I will investigate these two aspects, in an effort to clarify the affiliation of Mahānāman. Not only did Mahānāman share his origins with other donors at the site, he also cultivated religious motivations similar to them. The aspirations formulated by Mahānāman in the record of his temple dedication will therefore become more significant by comparing this document with another donative inscription attributed to the same monk, and with related materials from Bodhgayā.

### Mahākāśyapa's Lasting Presence

In order to understand more fully the ideology at work in this inscription, we shall at first investigate the role of the elaborate description of Mahānāman's lineage in the preface of the record. Sylvain Lévi has already recognised the importance of the second stanza, which is dedicated to Mahākāśyapa.<sup>13</sup> This stanza, which was at his time the only surviving piece of evidence in Indian epigraphy of Kāśyapa's legend and cult,<sup>14</sup> still constitutes an exceptional testimony of the circulation between Bihār and Laṅkā of legendary motifs

12 On these connections, see Mitra 1971, 62–65; Gunawardana 1979, 243f.; Dehejia 1988, 89–101; Ahir 1994, 23–33; Fräsch 1998, 71–76.

13 A great part of Lévi's exegetical essay is indeed devoted to the understanding of a problematic *pāda* of the second stanza of the Mahānāman inscription in which the great disciple Mahākāśyapa is associated with the advent of Maitreya. This attention to the "Maitreyan cycle" prefigures his work on "Maitreya le Consolateur" (1932).

14 Beglar had noticed in his survey of the site of Hasra-Kōl, situated about 17 miles east-north-east of Bodhgayā, a small bas-relief containing an inscription mentioning Kāśyapa, of which he gave a rough description and edition. Cf. Beglar 1878, 104–105. When Marc Aurel Stein carried out his expedition in Bihār, in 1899, the piece had however disappeared, thereby making any further study impossible. See Stein 1901, 90.

also recorded in various literary and scholastic sources. Since Lévi's contribution, new evidence has come to light, which allows a better understanding of a crucial factor in the growth of Mahākāśyapa's cult, namely his supernatural preservation during the period between Śākyamuni's *parinirvāṇa* and Maitreya's advent. The second stanza of the Mahānāman inscription, which deals with Mahākāśyapa, reads as follows:

*nairodhīm śubhabhāvanām anusṛtaḥ saṃsārasaṃkleśajit  
maitreyasya kare vimuktivaśitā yasyādbhutā vyākṛtā <sup>15</sup>  
nirvāṇāvāsare ca yena caraṇau [dṛ]ṣṭau muneh pāvanau ·  
pāyād vah sa munīndraśāsanadharaḥ stutyo mahākāśyapaḥ || [2]<sup>16</sup>*

Among the four *pādas*, corresponding to four aspects or moments of Kāśyapa's career, three pose no problems, while the meaning of *pāda* b is not self-evident. *Pādas* a, c, and d may be translated thus:

[v. 2] He who entered a fair meditation of extinction, victorious over the impurities [characterising] *saṃsāra*, [... *pāda* b ...], who saw the purifying feet of the Muni at the occasion of the [latter's *pari*] *nirvāṇa*, may Mahākāśyapa, this praiseworthy holder of the Instruction of the lord among *munis*, protect you.

The main problem of the remaining clause is the word *vimuktivaśitā*, which is not attested elsewhere. Fleet's translation of the *pāda* "whose wonderful subjugation of the passions in final emancipation [is to be] displayed in the hand

15 The punctuation of the inscription appears to follow a perfectly coherent system, whose logic has been overlooked by the former editors, who did not recognise the function, and at times did not notice the very presence, of the sign marked here as ·. In *pāda* c of this stanza, both Fleet and Sircar note that "this mark of punctuation is unnecessary." This horizontal stroke, curved upward, and placed in the middle of the engraved line (Fr. *ligne de gravure*) has been called by Louis de la Vallée Poussin, who observed similar signs in Central Asian manuscripts, "point allongé en virgule." Cf. La Vallée Poussin 1911, 764n1. This is used consistently throughout the inscription to mark the pause at the end of *pāda* b, c and d when they do not end with a *virāma* or a *visarga*. Note that, contrary to what has been observed in the manuscripts studied by Kudō, the *anusvāra* does not seem to assume here a role in the punctuation, as the end of v. 6b proves. Cf. Kudō 2004, 87, 90. It is thus quite remarkable that the complex sign · || appears only at the end of stanzas 6 and 8, where it combines the marker of the pause with the double *daṇḍa* which expresses the end of the verse. For other examples of this usage, see Kudō 2004, 88 and Schopen 1978a, 34.

16 Lines 2–4. Metre: *śārdūlavikṛīḍita*.

of Maitreya<sup>17</sup> does not agree with what we know from other sources about the final meeting of Kāśyapa with Maitreya. Sylvain Lévi remarked that the expression behind this form should have been the well-attested *adhimuktivaśitā*.<sup>18</sup> Judging from the palaeography of the disputed *akṣara*, it may well be that the engraver confused the two *akṣaras vi* and *dhi*,<sup>19</sup> yet one should resort to an emendation only if this is also required by the meaning. Such may not be the case here. Sylvain Lévi has indeed shown that *vimukti* and *adhimukti* somewhat overlap in meaning, as scholiasts use one term to define the other. The two verbs *adhi√muc* and *vi√muc* are also used indifferently, but always with the meaning known for *adhiv√muc*—i.e. to be inclined or devoted to—, in the different versions of a set phrase circulating, among other texts, in the *Śūnyatāsūtras*.<sup>20</sup> This seems to confirm Lévi's assumption and removes the absolute need

17 Fleet 1888, 277.

18 Lévi 1929, 42: "La *Mahāvīyutpatti* XXVII donne une liste des 10 *vaśitā* des Bodhisattva; la *vimuktivaśitā* n'y figure pas, mais on y relève un mot très analogue à *vimukti*, l'*adhimukti* [*My* § 776 = Tib. *mos pa la dbang ba*] qui constitue la sixième des 10 *vaśitā*."

19 The reading of the *akṣara* as *vi* is certain, as noted briefly by Lévi 1929, 44. There is however an important formal proximity between the *akṣaras va* and *dha* in the script of the period considered. The comparison of the two *akṣaras* in *āmradvīpādhivāsī* in our inscription with those of *āmradvīpavāsī* in a contemporary inscription of Mahānāman—the content of which will be considered below—shows how the *dha* in the first case is remarkably similar to the *va* in the latter. Cf. Fleet 1888, pl. XLIB. This makes it possible that the engraver made a mistake in spite of his great care. The fact that the *avagrahas* are not marked elsewhere in the inscription makes the emendation (')*dhimuktivaśitā* unproblematic on a purely palaeographic level.

20 The two verbs alternate at the end of the set phrase *cittaṃ pakkhandati pasīdati santiṭṭhati*—or its negation—in the manuscript traditions, and consequently in the editions, of the two *Suññatasuttas* preserved in the *Majjhima-Nikāya*. Unlike the Pali Text Society's (PTS) former edition, Peter Skilling follows the Chaṭṭhasaṅgīti (ChS) and the Syāmrattṭha (SyR) editions in reading *adhimuccati* throughout his edition of the *Cūlasuññatasutta*, but follows the PTS and the ChS editions against SyR in editing *vimuccati* in the *Mahāsuññatasutta*. Cf. Skilling 1994a, 153, § II.3; 157, § III.2; 213, § V.2–3; 215, § V.8–9. The Tibetan *Mahāśūnyatā-mahāśūtra* in turn reads *mos par mi 'gyur* which renders Skt. *nādhimucyate*. Cf. Skilling 1994a, 210, § 5.2. The reading adopted by Skilling for the *Cūlasuññatasutta* is further confirmed by its commentary, as already pointed out by Lambert Schmithausen, who suggested that the instances of the formula in *vimuc-* are the fruit of a "corruption." Cf. *Ps* 4:151.23; Schmithausen 1981, 234n124. The situation is, however, further complicated by the Sanskrit parallels to this formula found in the *Abhidharmakośa* and in the *Mahāvānasūtrāṅkāra*. The editions of Pradhan and Lee of chapter IX of the *Kośa* both read *na vimucyate* (corresponding to Tib. *rnam par grol bar mi 'gyur*), while Yaśomitra's quotation of the *Kośa* and the *Sūtrāṅkāra* both read *nādhimucyate*. Cf. *Kośa* 466.16; Lee 2005, 76.9,

for an emendation. The necessity to understand *vimuktivaśitā* here in the sense of *adhimuktivaśitā* can be confirmed by showing the importance of Kāśyapa's *adhiṣṭhāna* in connection with the advent of Maitreya, its equivalence with the *adhimuktivaśitā* and, finally, its place in the overall structure of the inscription.

Sylvain Lévi, as he recognised the reference to Kāśyapa's perpetuating power (*adhiṣṭhāna*) in Mahānāman's dedication, was probably the first who perceived its importance within the legendary complex that centred on the great disciple.<sup>21</sup> Since then, important contributions to the understanding of the concept of *adhiṣṭhāna* have seen the light,<sup>22</sup> while a significant quantity of data related to the motif of Kāśyapa's *adhiṣṭhāna* has also become available. This helps to define the actual power to which *adhiṣṭhāna* refers in the case of Mahākāśyapa and its semantic relation with the complex *adhimokṣa/adhimuktivaśitā*. In 1935, the very year that Sylvain Lévi passed away, a pedestal of a broken statue, which once represented Mahākāśyapa, bearing an inscribed versified hagiography of the great disciple, was discovered in the small village of Silao, between Nālandā and Rājagṛha. I have shown elsewhere how this piece, dating from the 9th century CE, is likely to have represented the scene of the transmission of Śākyamuni's robe from Kāśyapa to Maitreya.<sup>23</sup> The third and last verse of the epigraphic document contains a reference to the peculiar mode of conservation of Kāśyapa's body, covered by the three peaks of mount Gurupāda—also named Kukkuṭapāda—, a sepulchre where it will last until Maitreya will visit it:

*nirvṛtaḥ svam adhiṣṭhāya dehaṃ satvārtham eva yaḥ |*  
*gurupāde girau rāmye so 'yam ābhāti kāśyapaḥ || [3]<sup>24</sup>*

77.14; *KośaV* 705.1; Lévi 1908–1911, 1:158.25. It is therefore probably safer to acknowledge an alternation of the two terms in the various versions of the formula, than to standardise the textual tradition.

- 21 See Lévi 1929, 42–46. See also *Kośa LaV* 5:119 and n. 2. In recent years, scholars who have directed some attention to the relationship between Mahākāśyapa and Maitreya did not take this particular power into consideration. Cf. Deeg 1999; Silk 2003; Klimburg-Salter 2005. François Lagirarde highlights the motive of the non-decaying body in his presentation of a Thai version of the *Kassapanibbāna*, but his understanding of the mechanism at work is rather unsatisfactory. Cf. Lagirarde 2006, 86–87.
- 22 See especially Watanabe 1977; Eckel 1992, 90–94; Eltschinger 2001, 62–74. The latter scholar's very interesting contribution on the concept is summarized in English in Eltschinger 2008, 279–281. In the same proceedings, see also Katsura et al. 2008, 419–422.
- 23 The piece was first edited by Chhabra in 1940 in *EI* 25:327–334, no. 35. A new edition and translation, together with a detailed study of the piece, is provided in Tournier 2012c.
- 24 Metre: *anuṣṭubh*.



[v. 3] He who entered [*pari*] *nirvāṇa* after having perpetuated his own body, only for the sake of beings, inside the charming mountain Guru-pāda, that one who shines forth, [that] is Kāśyapa [here]!

This late epigraphic attestation leads us to make an excursion into related textual accounts, in order to come to a better understanding of Kāśyapa's perpetuation. In the *Jñānanirdeśa* of his abhidharmic *summa*, Vasubandhu places the ability of *adhiṣṭhāna* among the first and second "perfections of power" (*prabhāvasaṃpad*) of *buddhas*. The relevant passage makes quite clear that *adhiṣṭhāna* consists in a preserving power of an external object (*bāhya-viśaya*), in the case of the first *prabhāva*, and of the very life (*āyus*) of its agent, the *adhiṣṭhātṛ*, in the second case.<sup>25</sup> Further on, Vasubandhu discusses the attributes possessed non-exclusively by a *buddha*, among which figure the various expressions of *ṛddhi*.<sup>26</sup> In this context, he refers to a debate concerning the actual continuation of *adhiṣṭhāna* after the death of its agent and alludes to the scriptural case of Mahākāśyapa. Incidentally, the passage in question survives in a lacunary fragment from the Turfan oasis, which belonged to a manuscript containing extensive glosses in Tokharian B and Uighur, thus attesting to the

25 Cf. *Kośa* 416, ch. VII, *kār.* 34, transl. in *Kośa LaV* 5:83, quoted in Scherrer-Schaub 1994a, 725n102; Eltschinger 2001, 69 and n. 281. Yaśomitra gives the following gloss of these two powers (*KośaV* 650.9–13):

(1) *bāhyaviśayanirmāṇapariṇāmādhiṣṭhānavaśitvasaṃpad iti ... dīrghakālāvasthānam adhiṣṭhānam iti.* (2) *āyuṣa utsarge 'dhiṣṭhāne ca vaśitvasaṃpad āyurutsargādhiṣṭhānavaśitvasaṃpad iti.*

The second of these powers refers to what is certainly the *locus classicus* of the application of *adhiṣṭhāna* to one's own body, being part of the canonical biographies of the Buddha. After the intervention of Māra, Śākyamuni is indeed said to have rejected his *āyuḥsaṃskāras*. He did so after having "stabilised" or preserved (*adhiṣṭhāya*) his *jīvitasaṃskāras* for thirty more days, thus determining the moment of his *parinirvāṇa*. Cf. Waldschmidt 1951, 210, v. 13; *Dīvy*, 203.7. The Pāli version presents these two actions as occurring in two different scenes. Cf. *DN* 2:99.7–11, 106.21–24. On this episode, see Bareau 1970–1971, 1:170; Kapani 1993. On different opinions regarding the distinction of these two *saṃskāras*, see *Kośa* 44, ch. II, *kār.* 10a, transl. in *Kośa LaV* 1:122 and references quoted therein (n. 4). The issue of the very limited duration of Śākyamuni's life after his rejection of the *āyuḥsaṃskāras*, only thirty days, is reinterpreted in a number of Mahāyānasūtras. See, for example, the interesting passage of the *Buddhabalādhānaprātihāryavikurvāṇanirdeśasūtra* edited in Schopen 1978b, 328–331.

26 Cf. *Kośa* 425 f., ch. VII, *kār.* 48 f., transl. in *Kośa LaV* 5:112 f. Compare, for example, *Paṭiṣ* 2:207–210; Ehara, Soma and Kheminda 1961, 208 f. See also *TGVS* 4:1819n2.

careful reading of this text among multi-ethnic communities along the Northern Silk Road:<sup>27</sup>

*kiṃ jīvita evādhiṣṭhānam anuvartate atha mṛtaś cāpi |*  
*mṛtasyāpy asty adhiṣṭhānaṃ [52a]*  
*āryamahākāśyapādhiṣṭhānena tadasthiṣṭhānkalāvasthānāt\* | tat tu*  
*nāsthiraśya*  
*asthirasya tu bhāvasya nāsty adhiṣṭhānam\* | āryakāśyapena māṃsādī-*  
*nām anadhiṣṭhānāt\* |*  
*apare tu na | [52b]*  
*apare punar āhur nāsti mṛtasyādhiṣṭhānam\* | asthiṣṭhānkalāvasthānaṃ tu*  
*devatānubhāvād iti*

*tadasthiṣṭhānkalāvasthānāt\** M; *tadasthiṣṭhānkalāvasthānāt\** P

Can only the living [being] undergo *adhiṣṭhāna* or also the dead [body]? [kār. 52a] “The *adhiṣṭhāna* also applies to what is dead,” as in the case of the noble Mahākāśyapa’s *adhiṣṭhāna*, because his skeleton perdures.<sup>28</sup>

27 *Kośa* 428.1–9. The fragment, found at Murtoq by the Turfan-Expedition, has been edited in Wille 1995, 165–166, no. 1743. It is written in a variety of “nordturkestanische Brāhmī, Typ b,” according to the typology of Sander 1968, 182 and pl. 29–40. Its reading, when preserved, agrees with Pradhan’s edition (P), except on one occasion, indicated with the siglum M. Upon examining fragment no. 1743 (folio X’), it becomes clear that it used to belong to the same manuscript as fragment no. 1708 (folio X), with which it shares codicological properties and provenance. The folio X’ was appended to the original manuscript in order to fill a lacuna—corresponding to *Kośa* 427.8–429.4—existing between the recto and the verso of folio X. This scenario is confirmed by the fact that, after the last *akṣara* of fol. X, verso, l. 5, the numeral 1 is written, while the first line of fol. X’, recto, starts with the numeral 2. I owe this latter observation to Klaus Wille (e-mail, 28.10.2009) and I would like to thank him for kindly sharing his expertise with me. Moreover, the Uighur gloss of folio X, running through the right margins of the recto and verso, gives recommendations to the reader, thus summarised by Dieter Maue: “Zunächst ist die Vorderseite des Blattes A zu lesen, dann Blatt B ganz, dann die Rückseite von Blatt A. Nachdem Blatt A und Blatt B in der richtigen Reihenfolge abgelegt sind, kann mit blatt C usw. die Lektüre fortgesetzt werden.” For the translation and study of this gloss, see Maue 2009, 12–14. The identification of Maue’s “Blatt B” with folio X’ is now established.

28 Compare *Kośa LaV* 5:120: “C’est ainsi que, par sa protection (*adhiṣṭhāna* ou *adhimokṣa*, résolution) Kāśyapa le Grand fait que ses os dureront jusqu’à l’avènement du Bhagavat Maitreya.” If the underlying narrative, as we shall see, was certainly implied by Vasu-

This however, [*kār.* 52b] “does not [apply] to what is not hard.”

There is no *adhiṣṭhāna* that applies to what is not hard, since there is no *adhiṣṭhāna* involving the flesh and so on in the case of the noble Kāśyapa.

“But others [proclaim: this] is not [the case].”

Others proclaim there is no *adhiṣṭhāna* that applies to a dead [body]. It is because of the deities’ power that [Mahākāśyapa’s] skeleton endures.

The fact that the *Abhidharmadīpa*, which otherwise tends to correct the Sautrāntika leanings of Vasubandhu, preserves a very similar version of this statement shows that the Kośakāra in the opening statement of this passage sets forth the doctrine of the Sarvāstivādin-Vaibhāṣikas.<sup>29</sup> This same view is already expressed in the narrative of Kāśyapa’s *nirvāṇa* preserved in the \**Mahāvibhāṣā/Apidamo dapiposha lun* 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論 (T. 1545).<sup>30</sup>

Louis de la Vallée Poussin, and after him Sylvain Lévi, used the *Maitreyāvadāna* of the *Dīvyāvadāna* to address the narrative background of the scriptural case briefly discussed by Vasubandhu.<sup>31</sup> But as this *avadāna* relates the events that will occur in the time of the future Buddha, it does not inform us about the formal act that conduces to the “preserved” state (*avikopita*)

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bandhu’s short allusion to Kāśyapa’s fate, there is no mention of Maitreya in the Sanskrit passage as it is preserved, nor in Paramārtha’s translation. It is thus probable that the extrapolation is due to the translator Xuanzang, who is also a former pilgrim to the Kukkuṭapāda. I thank Jonathan Silk for having checked the Chinese texts for me.

29 Cf. Jaini 1977, 402.10–13:

*tat punar etad adhiṣṭhānaṃ na kevalaṃ jīvata eva | kiṃ tarhi?*  
*adhiṣṭhānaṃ mṛtasyāpi sthirasyaiva tu vastunaḥ || [530cd]*  
*āryamahākāśyapādhiṣṭhānena tadasthiśaṃkalāpasthānaśravaṇāt sthirasyāsthi-*  
*lakṣaṇasya na māmsarudhirādīnām asti ||*

Vasubandhu does not appear to express his personal disagreement vis-à-vis the Vaibhāṣika tradition on which he mainly relies. Note also that the conception according to which the *adhiṣṭhāna* of a creation (*nirmāṇa*) lasts after the death of the *adhiṣṭhātṛ*, be he a *bodhisattva* or a *buddha*, is also found in the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*. Cf. Wogihara 1930–1936, 64.23–25 quoted in Eltschinger 2001, 68n279. See also Kritzer 2005, 140–141. I have been unable to trace the belief according to which the deities play a role in the process of conservation of Kāśyapa’s body. See, however, my remarks in n. 61.

30 See *TGVS* 1:191–192n1.

31 Cf. *Kośa LaV* 5:112n1; Lévi 1929, 42–43. Note that Lévi also gives the Chinese parallel from the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* to the passage in the *Dīvyāvadāna*, and then refers to another group of Maitreyan texts, which also do not insist on Kāśyapa’s *adhiṣṭhāna*.

of Kāśyapa's skeleton.<sup>32</sup> Only the effects are mentioned, not the cause. The *avadāna* anthology found in Bairam-Ali in the Merv Oasis and admittedly of Sarvāstivādin affiliation allows to complete this image, as it contains the most extensive narration preserved in Sanskrit of Mahākāśyapa's *parinirvāṇa*.<sup>33</sup> In this text, Mahākāśyapa arrives at the mountain that will become his place of burial and settles in the middle of its three peaks. Having covered himself with the "hempen rags" (*śānakāni pāmsukūlāni*) he had been given by Śākyamuni, he "formulates five resolutions" (*pañca adhiṣṭhānāni adhiṣṭhihati*), related to the fate of his body after his *parinirvāṇa* and until the events concerning Maitreya. His second and third vows read:<sup>34</sup>

*traya me parvatā śarīraṃ av(a)ṣṭ(a)bh(e)ta · avagatamāmsaṣṇitam<sup>35</sup>  
ca me śarīraṃ kevalaṃ asth(i)yaṃtraṃ<sup>36</sup> yāvac ca bhagavataḥ śāsanam  
yāvac ca maitreyo anuttarajñānādhiḡgataḥ imaṃ pradeśam upasaṃ-  
kkrāmiṣyā<sup>37</sup> saṃghapariṣṭaḥ*

32 Cf. *Divy* 61.24. For an overview of the various terms related to Kāśyapa's body, see Tournier 2012c.

33 On the circumstances of this discovery and the presentation of the Vinaya text accompanying it, see Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya 1999, 27–30. A preliminary analysis by Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya conduced to date this collection to the 5th century CE and proposes a close relation with the Kashmirian manuscript tradition. See Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya 2000, 23; 2001, 10. The narrative focusing on the *nirvāṇa* of Kāśyapa contained in this collection therefore represents an interesting landmark in the development of the legendary cycle involving Kāśyapa and Maitreya. Its context of production should not be very distant from the one of the *Abhidharmakośa*, since the activity of Vasubandhu may be reasonably situated at the end of the 4th century or the beginning of the 5th century CE. For a summary of the long debate on the Kośakāra's date, see Kritzer 2005, xxii–xxvi. For an audacious attempt at a solution, see Deleanu 2006, 1:186–194. The Bairam-Ali collection is now being edited by Seishi Karashima and Margarita Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya (Forthcoming). I am deeply grateful to the Japanese scholar for bringing this text to my attention and for allowing me to study it.

34 Quotation taken from Karashima and Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya, Forthcoming, fol. 49a5–b3.

35 The word *avagata* is a Middle-Indic form for Skt. *apagata*. Cf. von Hinüber 2001, § 181.

36 The syntax is here rather problematic, and there is a need to supply a verb in the optative mood, such as *tiṣṭheta*. This has been done in the translation.

37 The ending *-iṣyā* is not recorded in *BHSG*. Considering that it appears in a passage where all the other forms are in the optative mood, I suggest understanding it as a 3rd sing. optative of the future. The common optative ending *-eyā* (on which see *BHSG* § 29.28) may have influenced this form.

*maitreya*] em.; *maitroyo* Ms. *anuttarajñānādhigataḥ*] em.; *anuttarah jñānādhigataḥ* Ms.

May the three hills close in upon my body, and [may] my body, [having become] solely a contraption of bones, stripped of its flesh and blood, [last] as long as the Instruction of the Bhagavat [Śākyamuni], until Maitreya, after having obtained the supreme knowledge, shall approach this place, surrounded by his community.

We are able, at present, to better perceive how the “controlling power,”<sup>38</sup> which the word *adhiṣṭhāna* denotes, is in the present case liable to be expressed as a formal resolution.<sup>39</sup> If we turn to accounts of Kāśyapa’s *parinirvāṇa* preserved in Chinese and Tibetan, it appears that some of them mention his making a vow in terms related to the Sanskrit substantive *adhiṣṭhāna* (or the verb *adhi√sthā*).<sup>40</sup> The very meaning of “determining resolution”<sup>41</sup> with which the word *adhiṣṭhāna* is used, is consistent with Vasubandhu and Yaśomitra’s conception.<sup>42</sup> For this reason, Yaśomitra uses the term *adhimokṣa* to explain

38 Eltschinger 2008, 279.

39 Such a meaning of the word is well attested in Pāli literature. Cf. *CPD*, s.v.: “volition (of magical force).” See also, for example, Saddhatissa 1975, 125, 147, 160–161.

40 Besides the passage of the \**Mahāvibhāṣā* already referred to, see *TGVS* 1:192; Beal 1884, 2:144; Li 1995, 256. The version of the events found in the *Kṣudrakavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivādin *Vinayavastu*, preserved in Tibetan, indicates that the cause of Kāśyapa’s preservation is his robe. Mahākāśyapa, once seated between the three peaks of the Kukkuṭapāda, is simply said to think (Tib. *bsams pa*) and it is his *pāmsukūla* (Tib. *phyag dar khrod pa*) that is qualified with *byin gyis rlabs te*. Cf. Peking *bKa’gyur*, ‘*Dul ba*, Ne, 300a7 f. The same expression appears twice afterwards in the narrative, this time qualifying Kāśyapa’s body (301a8f.). Note, however, that in the account of the episode given by Bu-ston in his *Chos ’byung*, which allegedly draws on the Mūlasarvāstivādin *Vinayavastu*, the expression *byin gyis brlabs te* also appears, but it is then rendered by Obermiller as “uttered a blessing.” Cf. Obermiller 1932, 2–3, 86; Schopen 1999, 322m103; Lin Li-kouang 1949, 180–187. On *byin rlabs*, see also Martin 1994, 273–276. Also in the Chinese version of the Mūlasarvāstivādin *Vinaya*, as translated by Przyluski, the robe seems to be conceived as the cause of Kāśyapa’s preservation. However, in the passage corresponding to the other occurrences of *byin rlabs*, it is, according to the translator, the “vertu de l’extase” which is said to explain the preservation of the dead body. Cf. Przyluski 1914, 493–568. See also Przyluski 1923, 531–534.

41 I translate here the French rendering of the term, “résolution déterminante,” used in Ruegg 1969, 45 and n. 1. See also Scherrer-Schaub 1994b, 256 and n. 32.

42 This appears also from the gloss given by Yaśomitra of the *ādhiṣṭhānikī ṛddhi* (*KośaV* 266.11–12):

*adhiṣṭhāna* in his gloss of the just mentioned passage.<sup>43</sup> Thus, we see the transmission of a narrative motif representative of Sarvāstivādin (-Vaibhāṣika) views on Kāśyapa's *post mortem* preservation, within literary and scholastic sources connected with that school, ranging from the \**Mahāvibhāṣā* and the Bairam-Ali *avadāna* to the *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya* and the *Abhidharmadīpa*.

Such legendary motif is arguably at the background of verse 2b of Mahānāman's inscription and this is suggested by the reference to *adhimuktivaśitā*. In the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, *adhimuktivaśitā* is defined as the power to realise whatever is wished for,<sup>44</sup> which is indeed very close in meaning and usage to *adhiṣṭhāna/adhimokṣa*.<sup>45</sup> It is however significant that, while *adhiṣṭhāna*, being related to *ṛddhyabhijñā*, is recognised to be a quality also shared (*sādhāraṇa*) by *śrāvaka*s or even, according to some, by worldlings (*prthagjana*),<sup>46</sup> the *adhimuktivaśitā* is part of a set of masteries that only characterises the *bodhisattva* from the eighth *bhūmi* onwards.<sup>47</sup> If, then, Kāśyapa's determining power is intentionally referred to in Mahānāman's inscription by means of the term *adhimuktivaśitā* (or *vimuktivaśitā* with a similar meaning), this would imply that the great disciple is being considered as possessing one of the powers of a *bodhisattva*. We shall return to this probable shift in the conception of the great *śrāvaka* at the end of this study.

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*ādhiṣṭhānikīm iti. yad adhiṣṭhāti idam evaṃ bhavati iti tad adhiṣṭhānam. tat prajoyanam asyās tatra vā bhavā ṛddhir ādhiṣṭhānikī.*

- 43 Cf. *KośaV* 660.1–2 *ad Kośa*, ch. VII, *kār.* 52a: āryamahākāśyapādhiṣṭhānena iti āryamahākāśyapādhimokṣeṇety arthaḥ, quoted in Lévi 1929, 42. Note also that this equivalence is extensively attested in literature. The comparison of the synoptic recensions of the miraculous reunion of the bowls of the Four Great Kings (*caturmahārāja*) by the newly enlightened Śākyamuni makes it very clear. See *Mvu* 3:304.16–18; Lefmann 1902, 385.4–5; *Dv̄y* 393.17–18.
- 44 Cf. Wogihara 1930–1936, 352.9–10: *yad yad eva vastu yathā 'dhimucyate. tat tathaiva bhavati. nānyathā*. This *vaśitā*, as part of the list of ten given in the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, is explained in a similar way in the *Sāratamā*. Cf. Kimura 1986–2007, 5:59.23–25; Jaini 1979, 176.14–20. For an alternative explanation, see Kondō, *Daśabhūmīśvara*, 143.3–4. The *Mahāvastu* presents a different list of the ten *vaśitās*, in which *abhiprāya* appears to somehow correspond to *adhimukti* of other lists. Cf. *Mvu* 1:282.15–83.6. See also the commentaries by Senart at *Mvu* 1:586; *BHSD*, s.v. *vaśitā* (2).
- 45 Cf. *KośaV* 690.8–9 *ad Kośa*, ch. VIII, *kār.* 34cd. See also *Triṃśikā*, *vṛtti ad kār.* 10, in Lévi 1925, 25.25–29.
- 46 See *Kośa* 421.8–10, ch. VII, *kār.* 41d, transl. in *Kośa LaV* 5:100; 5:97n4; Eltschinger 2008, 280.
- 47 Cf. *Dbh* 142.15–43.9.

We need at this point to further locate the stanza on Kāśyapa within the family of narratives from which it draws a significant number of motifs. This will allow us to understand the logic of the composition of the stanza and its relation with the other introductory verses. As already noticed by Lévi, the first *pāda* of the second stanza contains a clear reference to the “attainment of cessation” (*nirodhasamāpatti*): *nairodhīṃ śubhabhāvanām anusṛtaḥ*.<sup>48</sup> In several texts, a meditative state<sup>49</sup> or preparatory acts leading to a meditative state<sup>50</sup> precede the enunciation of a vow of the *adhiṣṭhāna* type by Kāśyapa. In all these texts, the great disciple is defined as technically “dead.”<sup>51</sup> A second group of texts presents the *parinirvāna* of Kāśyapa at the time of Maitreya, only mentioning the absorption of the disciple in a preserving meditative state, while not referring to *adhiṣṭhāna* at all.<sup>52</sup> The problem for us, then, is to understand to which version of the legend the inscription pertains. The fact that the events referred to in the following—and related—*pāda* (v. 2b) take

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- 48 Cf. Lévi 1929, 45–46. He notes for example: “Le terme *śubhabhāvanā*, employé *metri causa*, est une périphrase exacte de *samāpatti*, car *bhāvanā* est expliqué par Vasubandhu comme *samāhitam kuśalam* [*Kośa* 273.22, ch. IV, *kār.* 123 cd], ‘le bien à l’état de recueillement.’”
- 49 Cf. *TGVS* 1:192–194; Lagirarde 2006, 98. See also Przulski 1923, 332–333. The *Ayuwang zhuan* 阿育王傳 (*T.* 2042) translated by Przulski has been misunderstood by Reginald Ray who, referring to this text, asserts that “Mahākāśyapa is not dead, but plunged in meditation.” Cf. Ray 1997, 136–137.
- 50 See Karashima and Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya, Forthcoming, fol. 49a3–4; Pekin *bKa’ gyur*, ‘*Dul ba*, De, fol. 300a7 f.; Przulski 1914, 524. See also, in the case of the Buddha, André Barea 1970–1971, 2:170 f.
- 51 Note that in the formerly translated passage from the *Kośa*, the dead state of Kāśyapa is a shared presupposition in the discussion on *adhiṣṭhāna*. This does not contradict the fact that a person who fully developed the four *ṛddhipādas* has the power to prolong his life, a perpetuation which is addressed with derivatives of  $\sqrt{sthā}$  or *adhi√sthā*. Cf. *Kośa* 44.17–18, transl. in *Kośa LaV* 1:124. See also nn. 25 and 63.
- 52 The *\*Maitreyamahābodhisūtra/Mile da chengfo jing* 彌勒大成佛經 (*T.* 456) states that Kāśyapa is absorbed in *nirodhasamāpatti*, while the *\*Ekottarika-Āgama/Zengyi ahan jin* 增一阿含經 (*T.* 125) and the so-called *Book of Zambasta* refer to an unspecified *samādhi* (Khot. *samāhā*). See respectively Deeg 1999, 156; Silk 2003, 197–199 and Emmerick 1968, 330–334, ch. XXII, vv. 281–282. Note also that the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-upadeśa/Dazhidu lun* 大智度論 (*T.* 1509) is ambiguous about the time of Mahākāśyapa’s death, as it mentions the imminence of Kāśyapa’s extinction in the *nirupadhiṣeṣanirvāna* at the moment of his going to his burial mountain (being here the *Gṛdhrakūṭa*), but also locates the attainment of his *parinirvāna* while in the presence of Maitreya. Cf. *TGVS* 1:192–195. See also Beal 1884, 2:142–144; Li 1995, 264–265; Deeg 1999, 154–155.

place on the hand of Maitreya (*maitreyasya kare*), confirms that *adhiṣṭhāna* is implied in the inscription. This very motif is indeed only present in a small group of stories that circulated in a Sarvāstivādin milieu,<sup>53</sup> as well as in later texts that were transmitted in Lañkā and South-East Asia.<sup>54</sup> All these texts present Kāśyapa as “dead” and, apart from the *Divyāvadāna* and its parallel from the Mūlasarvāstivādin *Vinayavastu* (which are restricted to Maitreya’s time), the three other texts all present the events that will happen on Maitreya’s hand as the fulfilment of a specific resolution (*adhiṣṭhāna*).<sup>55</sup> In the Bairam-Ali manuscript, this resolution reads:<sup>56</sup>

*bhagavāṃ me śarīraṃ grahāya karatale sthāpayitvā śrāvakānāṃ darśeta  
karatalasthaṃ ca me śarīraṃ vikīrye*

May the Bhagavat, having taken my body and having put it on the palm of his hand, show [it] to his *śrāvakas*, and may my body disintegrate<sup>57</sup> sitting on the palm of his hand.

In the light of the new evidence, it seems that the marvellous (*adbhuta*) power to be displayed on Maitreya’s hand mentioned in v. 2b of the Mahānāman inscription could hardly be anything else than the “determination” (*adhimukti*)

53 Namely the *avadāna* of Bairam-Ali, the *Maitreyāvadāna*, and the parallel narrative recorded in the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivādin *Vinayavastu*. For the latter, see Peking *bKa’ gyur*, ‘*Dul ba*, Ge, 29a–b. On the Chinese version, see Lévi 1929, 43.

54 Two of them are, at least partially, available, namely the Pāli *Mahāsampīṇḍanidāna* and the Thai *Brahmahākāssapatheraḥṇibbān*—with Pāli entries—, on which see respectively Saddhatissa 1975, 43–44 and Lagirarde 2006, 93–105. For these and related texts, see the detailed survey in Lagirarde’s article (81–84).

55 I was unable to consult the unpublished text of the *Mahāsampīṇḍanidāna*. However, judging from Saddhatissa’s translation of the passage, I believe that the three “resolutions” referred to in this text, the third of which mentions Kassapa’s cremation on Metteyya’s hand, render the Pāli term *adhiṣṭhāna*. Moreover, the version of the *Kassapanibbāna* translated by Lagirarde uses the Thai substantive *adhiṣṭhān* together with the Pāli entry *punādhīṭṭhāsi*, in the description of Mahākassapa’s second vow related with Maitreya’s hand. Cf. Lagirarde 2006, 98–99. This illustrates a remarkable continuity in the terminology throughout the history of the accounts of Kāśyapa’s *nīrvāṇa*.

56 Karashima and Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya, Forthcoming, fol. 49b3–4.

57 I take the form *vikīrye* as a 3rd sing. opt. from *vikīratī* in -e, on which see BHSG § 29.12. This verb overlaps in meaning, in Buddhist Prakrits, with *viṣṭy*. Cf. PTSD, s.v.v. *vikaroti*, *vikīratī*. Therefore, there might be some connection between this verbal form and the use of the past participle *vyākṛtā* in v. 2b of the Mahānāman inscription.



of Mahākāśyapa, the fulfilment of which is eventually the spontaneous dissolution of his body.<sup>58</sup> A translation of this *pāda* in this light would be as follows: “Whose marvellous power of determination [is to be] manifested on the hand of Maitreya.”

The impressive power of Mahākāśyapa beyond *parinirvāṇa* is further stressed by the main clause of this stanza, which calls for his protection as a praiseworthy (*stutya*) figure of worship.<sup>59</sup> The scene described in *pāda* 2c may well have been intended to stress this idea. The underlying narrative, which portrays Kāśyapa as seeing the feet of the Buddha,<sup>60</sup> indeed emphasises, in at least one version of the legend, the superior power of the great disciple. The *Mahāvastu* describes both the miraculous extinguishing of the Buddha’s funeral pyre whenever the Mallas try to ignite it, as well as the magical appearance of the Master’s feet at the arrival of Mahākāśyapa, as being due to the fulfilment (*sam√ṛdh*) of a “vow” (*praṇidhi*) taken by the latter, as he had learned of the death of his master. The efficacy of this *praṇidhi* lies in Kāśyapa’s mastery of supernatural powers (*rddhibhāvanā*).<sup>61</sup> The mechanisms at work between the events associating the living Kāśyapa with the “dead” Śākyamuni on the one hand, and the “dead” Kāśyapa with the future Maitreya on the other, may thus be intricately related, given the relation existing between certain kinds of *praṇidhāna* and our type of *adhiṣṭhāna*.<sup>62</sup> To put it differently, both scenes

58 The Pāli and Thai versions of the *Kassapanibbāna*, as well as the *\*Maitreyamahābodhisūtra* (T. 456), speak about Kāśyapa’s cremation. Cf. Saddhatissa 1975, 43; Lagirarde 2006, 98–99; T. 456, transl. in Leumann 1919, 278. This scene is also depicted in Dunhuang caves, where the latter text was particularly influential. Cf. for example Wang 2002, 135, pl. 121–122.

59 A related belief is found in the Silao inscription, which mentions that Kāśyapa, though having entered *nirvāṇa* (*nirvṛta*), still “shines forth” (*ābhāti*). Cf. Tournier 2012c, 393f. This supernatural phenomenon is also reported by Xuanzang. Cf. Beal 1884, 2:144; Li 1995, 262.

60 Cf. Bareau 1970–1971, 2:240f.

61 Cf. *Mvu* 1:66.11–18. The canonical versions of the events differ as to the causes leading to the last homage of Kāśyapa to the Master’s feet. Cf. Bareau 1970–1971, 2:235–237, 246–247. In the *Mahāvastu*, Aniruddha’s explanation to the Mallas mentions, along with Kāśyapa’s particular accomplishment, the goodwill of the *devas*. The latter explanation is also given in the majority of the texts studied by Bareau, except the *\*Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra/Ta ban nie pan jing* 大般涅槃經 (T. 7), his “Chinois D,” which instead explains this event as due to the power of the Tathāgata. These divergences recall to some extent the debate about Kāśyapa’s supernatural preservation as witnessed by Vasubandhu in the passage cited above.

62 Eckel, who noticed the alternation of the words *praṇidhāna* and *adhiṣṭhāna* in the *Stūpaśaṃdarśanaparivarta* of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika*, remarked the connection between

referred to in *pādas* b and c put emphasis on the same kind of numinous power, manifested by Kāśyapa in presence of the two Buddhas on two different occasions. Significantly, this lasting power which is accessible to the devotee who ritually calls for his protection, is also pivotal in the very mission entrusted to Mahākāśyapa and taken over by his lineage: the preservation of the Dharma.<sup>63</sup>

### Kāśyapa's Lineage of Saṃyuktāgamins

The care of the Dharma is indeed a *leitmotiv* in the entire first part of the inscription that describes a religious lineage in which Kāśyapa assumes a central position. The first stanza reads as follows:

[¶] *vyāpto yenāprameyaḥ sakalaśaśirucā sarvataḥ satvadhātuḥ*  
*kṣuṇṇāḥ pāṣaṇḍayodhās sugatipatharudhas tarkkaśastrābhīyuktāḥ*  
*sampūrṇo dharmako[śa]ḥ prakṛtiripuḥṛtaḥ sādḥito lokabhūtyai ·*  
*śāstuh śākyaikabandhor jJayati cirataram tad yaśa[s]sāratāntram\* || [1]*<sup>64</sup>

**1a** *satvadhātuḥ*] S T; *sat(t)va*° F. **1b** *tarkkaśastrābhīyuktāḥ*] T; ° ⟨|⟩ S. See my remarks in n. 15. **1c** *dharmako[śa]ḥ*] T; *dharmakoṣaḥ* F S. The reading is unsure, but the fact that the top of the *akṣara* is closed and the back open rather points to the palatal sibilant, than the retroflex. **1d** *yaśa[s]sāratāntram\**] T; ° *tanttram\** F S. Compare the ligature in *samantāt\**, l. 13.

the two words. Cf. Eckel 1992, 92. Schopen already linked the *prañidhāna* of the type *yadā/tadā* + resolution (in optative mood) with the *satyavacana/satyādhiṣṭhāna*. Cf. Schopen 1978a, 191–193. The mechanism at work may thus be summarised as follows: the formulation of a wish (*prañidhi/adhiṣṭhāna*) that relies on a given power (*ṛddhibhāvanā/adhimuktivaśitā*) is fulfilled beyond the death of its object (feet of Śākyamuni/body of Mahākāśyapa).

63 Note that the “perdurance of the Dharma” (*dharmasthīti*) is the first of two reasons expressed by Vasubandhu for the prolongation (*adhiṣṭhā*) of their life elements (*āyuh-saṃskāra*) by *arhats*—including *buddhas*—, the second being the well-being of others (*parahitārtha*). Cf. *Kośa* 43.25–26, ch. II, *kār.* 10. *KośaV* 105.3–4 reads: *parahitārtham buddhā bhagavantaḥ. śāsanasthityartham eva śrāvakaḥ*. Compare Kritzer 2005, 42–43. For a narrative expression of both these ideas, see the *\*Nandimītrāvadāna/Da aluohan nantimiduoluo suoshuo fazhuji* 大阿羅漢難提蜜多羅所說法住記 (*T.* 2030) translated in Lévi and Chavannes 1916, 6–24, and especially the following passage (12): “C’est ainsi que ces seize grands Arhat protégent et maintiennent la Loi correcte (*saddharma*) et sont profitables aux êtres vivants.”

64 Lines 1–2. Metre: *sragdhāra*.

This stanza is the most elaborate and difficult of the inscription, and a certain amount of double entendre was certainly intended by its composer. Guided by the contents of the following verses, we may tentatively translate this stanza as follows, freely admitting that this is not the only way to understand it:<sup>65</sup>

[v. 1] That army, whose essence is glory, of the unique relative of the Śākyas, the Teacher, which, resplendent as the full moon, has pervaded an immeasurable mass of beings,<sup>66</sup> [which] crushed the heretic fighters obstructing the path of welfare,<sup>67</sup> skilled [as they were] with the sword of discursive reasoning,<sup>68</sup> [and which] retrieved, for the good fortune of people, the complete treasure of the Dharma that had been stolen by its natural enemies,<sup>69</sup> may [it] endure for a very long time.

Two related expressions of *pāda* d are rather ambiguous and worth considering closely. By following the various military metaphors that run through *pādas* b and c, *yaśa[s]sāratantra*, the grammatical subject of the sentence, can be rendered as “army whose essence is glory.”<sup>70</sup> This may well be a way to refer to the glorified lineage described in the subsequent verses. The expression *śāstuh śākyaikabandhoḥ* stresses that it originates with Śākyamuni. The latter term of this expression is admittedly unusual, and must be a substitute *metri causa*

65 See Lévi 1929, 38–40 for another interpretation.

66 Modified by *aprameya*, it seems that *dhātu* refers here to a quantity of people, and does not have the meaning of “l’élément de l’être animé” or “le monde des êtres” that it bears elsewhere. See respectively Ruegg 1969, 183; *TGVS* 3:1550. Compare *BHSD*, s.v. *dhātu* (6).

67 In this context, *sugati* might have the second meaning “good understanding,” an ambivalence that, as it is well known, characterises also the epithet *sugata*. See also *BHSD*, s.v. *gati* (3).

68 This passage seems to imply a pun between *tarkaśāstra* and *tarkaśāstra*, the lore in which the heretics, often despised as *tārkikas*, were considered well versed. Considering the Buddhist group described in the Mahānāman inscription to be the one possessed with dialectic skills, one could also understand the compound as “assailed by the sword of discursive reasoning.” In the so-called “Jetavanārāma Sanskrit Inscription,” actually coming from the Abhayagiri monastic complex, and estimated to belong to the 9th century CE, the expression *catvāriṃśat śāstrābhīyuktās tapasvinaḥ*, “forty ascetics who are versed in the *śāstras*,” describes here Buddhist monks. See *EZ* 1:5-34.

69 Following Lévi’s understanding of *prakṛtiripu* (1929, 39).

70 The element *tantra* has previously been understood as “doctrine” by Fleet (1888, 277), and “le ‘traité’, le ‘livre’ ou la doctrine est énoncée” by Lévi (1929, 37). The attested meaning of “army, troop” given in *MW*, s.v., and “Heer” in *PW*, s.v., l, has been here preferred.

for the epithet *śākyaputra*, “member of the Śākya clan,” usually appearing in set phrases qualifying the historical Buddha.<sup>71</sup> The two last *pādas* of the first stanza thus anticipate the stipulation set forth in the following verses, namely that Kāśyapa and his lineage assume the role of protecting the Dharma proclaimed by the Buddha, referred to here as the “treasure of the teachings” (*dharmakośa*).<sup>72</sup> At the end of the following verse, Kāśyapa’s role as protector of the Dharma is stressed again. It is well known that, in the events referred to in v. 2c, Mahākāśyapa assumes the role of the legitimate “elder son” of the Buddha<sup>73</sup>

71 Cf. Cousins 2003, 12–13 and n. 46. See also Gnoli 1977–1978, 1:167.4, 2:137.18; *Mvu* 1:194.5–7. Lévi argued that behind the expression lies a hidden reference to Vasubandhu. Cf. Lévi 1929, 38–39. This interpretation is not altogether impossible, but it is difficult to prove.

72 In the narration of the first council in the *Mahāvamsa*, Ānanda is qualified as *kośārakkha*. Cf. *Mhv* 19 (ch. III), v. 34. A similar mission is referred to in parallel words in the *Rāṣṭrapālapariṣecchā* (*RP* 6.9–10):

*nirvṛtau ca sthiti dharmā yādṛṣī yādṛṣī ca jinadhātupūjanā |*  
*dharmakośadhara tatra yādṛṣā tān prajānasi narottamākhilān\* || [24]*

This can be translated as follows:

“And, after the extinction [of each of the Mahārṣis, referred to v. 23], of what kind is the duration of [his] Dharma, of what kind is the honour paid to the Jina’s relics and of what kind are, at that time, the holders of the treasure of the teachings, you know all of this completely, oh best of men!” Compare Ensink 1952, 7; Boucher 2008, 117. A related statement is found in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, Cf. Kern and Nanjio 1908, 109.7–8:

*bhagavāṃś cāsmākam upāyakausābyenāsmiṃś tathāgatājñānakośe dāyādān saṃ-*  
*sthāpayati |*

It seems therefore unsure that the expression *dharmakośa* must have invariably evoked the *Abhidharmakośa*, as stated in Lévi 1929, 38. On another level, the clause containing this word seems to have some Arthaśāstric echo. While addressing the various threats to the treasury (*kośa*), Kauṭilya’s *Arthaśāstra* mentions the robbing by neighbouring kings or forest tribes (*sāmantātāvīhṛta*), which very much recalls the comparable stealing by “natural enemies” (*prakṛtirīpūhṛta*) found in our inscription. Cf. Kangle [1960] 1969, 213.22–23. For a summary of the treatment of the *kośa* notion in the *Arthaśāstra*, see Bowles 2007, 68–71.

73 This expression is used by the Mahāsāṃghika *Vinaya*, Cf. Przyluski 1923, 203. The chapter dedicated to the renunciation of Kāśyapa in the *Mahāvastu*, and its Pāli parallel, ingeniously insert in their narratives the well-known formula presenting the disciple of brahmanical ascent as the “legitimate son” (*putra orasa*) of the Bhagavat and his “heir with regard to the Dharma” (*dharmadāyāda*). Cf. *Mvu* 3:48–56; *SN* 2:217–222. On Chinese parallels to these narratives, see Silk 2003, 183f. A similar occurrence of the former epithet appears in the Kāśyapa section of the *Anavataptagāthā*, while the latter appears in the *Thera-* and *Therīgāthās* attributed to Kassapa and Bhaddā. Cf. Wille 1990, 79, v. 15; *Th* 94 v. 1058 and *Thī* 130, v. 63. Maybe the “confusion of persons” at work in the conception of

who, as such, is the only one entitled to lead the funerals of his “father.”<sup>74</sup> Thereafter, he takes upon himself the role of the Buddha’s heir by presiding over the Rājagṛha council, a function that is explicitly referred to by his epithet “holder of the Instruction of the lord among *munis*” (*munīndrasāsanaadhara*) in v. 2d.<sup>75</sup> As we shall now see, this function is also crucial in the description of Kāśyapa’s lineage (*paramparā*) in the third stanza:<sup>76</sup>

*saṃyuktāgamino viśuddharajasah satvānukampodyatāḥ*  
*śiṣyā yasya sakṛd vicerur a[ma]lāṃ laṅkācalopatyakām\**  
*tebhyah śīlaguṇānvitāś ca śataśah śiṣyapraśiṣyāḥ kramāj*  
*jātās tuṅganarendravamśatilakāḥ protsṛjya rājyaśriyam\* || [3]*<sup>77</sup>

3a *satvānukampodyatāḥ*] S T; *sat<t>va°* F 3b *laṅkācalopatyakām\**] T; °(|)  
 S. See remarks in n. 15.

[v. 3] His [i.e. Mahākāśyapa’s] disciples transmitting the *Saṃyukta-Āgama*, purified of impurities, moved by compassion for beings, once roamed over the immaculate lower slopes of the mountain Laṅkā. From those were born [i.e. were ordained], a hundred times successively, disciples and disciples’ disciples possessed of the qualities of moral conduct, who were the ornaments of a dynasty of prominent kings, in spite of having renounced the splendour of royalty.

Such a vivid retrospective helps us to better locate one of the lineages that claimed to originate with Mahākāśyapa.<sup>78</sup> Keeping alive the memory of its

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heritage—on which see Mus [1935] 1990, \*12—lead to Kāśyapa’s qualification as “similar to the Teacher” (*satthukappa*) in the narrations of the first council given by the *Dīpavaṃsa*. Cf. *Dīp* 34, v. 2. See Silk 2003, 181 and n. 17 for references to Kāśyapa referred to as a “second Bhagavat” (Tib. *bcom ldan ’das gnyis*) at the moment of his death.

74 See Bareaux, 1970–1971, 2:242, 254–255; Schopen 1992, 31146; Silk 2003, 180.

75 The *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti* of Candrakīrti uses similarly the epithet \**maunīndrapravacana* (Tib. *thub pa dbang po’i gsung rab*) to refer to the Master’s teaching. See Scherrer-Schaub 1991, 23, 114 and n. 37. For other epithets referring to Kāśyapa’s function, see Tournier 2012c.

76 Note also that the first individual to be mentioned in Kāśyapa’s lineage, the monk Bhava, is described in stanza 4 with a pun as “immensely versed in the Saddharma” (*saddharmā-tulavibhava*).

77 Lines 4–6. Metre: *śārdūlavikrīḍita*.

78 Such a claim is obviously unoriginal, since Mahākāśyapa is universally recognised as the convener of the Rājagṛha council, thus naturally constituting a common point of refer-

Indian origins, this religious group established itself long before in Laṅkā<sup>79</sup> and displays intimate ties with the reigning dynasty.<sup>80</sup> These roots are further stressed when in v. 7a–b Mahānāman, the last descendant of this lineage, is described:

*āmradvīpādhivāsī pṛthukulajaladhis tasya śiṣyo mahīyān\**  
*laṅkādvīpapasūtaḥ parahitanirataḥ sanmahānāmanāmā*.<sup>81</sup>

ence. Lamotte, widening the enquiry by Przyluski, has shown how the list of five Masters of the Dharma starting with Kāśyapa was firmly implanted on the Indian mainland where it was used as a kind of “brevet d’orthodoxie.” Cf. Lamotte 1958, 222–232, 770–775. See also Wang 1994, 261–270. Besides these lists, Bu-ston, in a famous passage on the divisions of the Buddhist schools, places Mahākāśyapa as the head master of the Mahāsāṃghikas. Cf. Obermiller 1932, 100; Vogel 1985, 105–110. See also Ruegg 1985, 114–119. Mahākassapa is also alluded to in Pāli commentaries such as Dhammapāla’s *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī-purāṇa-tīkā*, within the gloss of what the “lineage of the elders” (*theravaṃsa*) stands for. Cf. Gethin 2012, 19. On the more specific claim that Kāśyapa serves as the patron of those monks who were in charge of the *Samyukta-Āgama*, see below.

79 I do not find any good reason to doubt, as does Ramadas, that the *laṅkācala* referred to in our verse is located in Laṅkā. Cf. Ramadas 1928, 345–346. Paranavitana proposed to identify this mountain with Adam’s Peak in Rohaṇa. Cf. Paranavitana 1958, 16–17. Kāśyapa’s lineage is also related to Rohaṇa in late histories such as the *Jinakālamālinī*, that preserve a narrative remotely echoing that of stanza 3. This text relates the acquisition by Mahākassapa of the forehead bone relic (*nalāṭa-dhātu*) of the Buddha, and its transmission within the patriarch’s lineage, first to various sites in India, then to Laṅkā. In the sixth generation of Kāśyapa’s disciples, the elder Mahādeva flew to Mahāgāma in Rohaṇa with the precious relic. It later came under the possession of king Kākavaṇṇa Tissa, father of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī, who enshrined it at Sēruvila, in the Trincomalee district. Cf. *Jinak* 52–55; Strong 2004, 81 and references cited therein. Another tradition alluded to by Indrapala (1979, 155) has it that the relic stayed instead in Rohaṇa and was enshrined within the Tissamahārāma *thūpa*. On this *vihāra*, see below, n. 87.

80 This is reminiscent of the monk Prakhyātakīrti’s claim, in the 5th century CE inscription from the same site, to be “born in the family of the kings of the Laṅkā Island” (*laṅkādvīpanarendrānām ... kulajo*). See *infra* p. 34. The formula of the Mahānāman inscription presents a parallel between the golden legend of Śākyamuni and the personal history of the members of the Samyuktāgamin lineage. A similar wording to the one found in the last *pāda* is indeed found elsewhere in reference to the Buddha. The expression *tyaktvā śrīyaṃ* appears, for example, in the *Buddhacarita*, ch. III, v. 24 with reference to the future renunciation of the Bodhisattva, while the Sugata is described as *śākyarājatilaka* in the introductory verse of a Sanskrit inscription from the Girikaṇḍika Caitya in Laṅkā, dated to the late 7th century or the beginning of the 8th century CE. See respectively Olivelle 2008, 66 and *EZ* 4:312–319, no. 39.

81 Lines 9–10. Metre: *sragdharā*.

His [i.e. Upasena's] foremost<sup>82</sup> disciple, who resides in Āmradvīpa, the ocean of whose family was vast, who was born on the island of Laṅkā, who delights in the well-being of others, is the well-named Mahānāman.

The localisation of Āmradvīpa has been the object of a long debate,<sup>83</sup> and the toponym as such is not attested except in another record probably commissioned by the same Mahānāman.<sup>84</sup> Considering, however, that *dvīpa* is attested as referring to a sandbank in the middle of a river,<sup>85</sup> in which meaning it overlaps with *tīrtha*, there is good reason to think that the monk Daṃṣṭrasena from Āmratīrtha who dedicated a statue at Bodhgayā in the same period<sup>86</sup> actually came from the same monastery as Mahānāman. This toponym may in turn be identified with Ambatittha(ka) located near Mahiyaṅgana in central Laṅkā, referred to in the *Mahāvamsa* and later Sinhalese chronicles.<sup>87</sup>

82 Fleet's translation of *mahīyān* as "greater [even than himself]" appears quite inappropriate, considering the reverence to his master (*gaurava*) one would expect from a disciple. Cf. Fleet 1888, 278; Smith 1902, 196. Note the etymologic construction around the monk's name.

83 Relying on Cunningham's personal communication, Fleet proposed the identification of Āmradvīpa with Laṅkā, on the basis of "its resemblance in shape to a mango." Cf. Fleet 1888, 275. However, this has been rightly considered by Lévi (1929, 47) as unfounded, in the absence of any attestation in the literature. Paranavitana proposed to see in Āmradvīpa a monastic establishment in Magadha, "subsidiary to the Sinhalese Saṅghārāma at Bodh-Gayā" (1962, 285). Unconvinced by this hypothesis, Sohoni (1975, 203) suggested to identify the toponym with Ambatthala, near the Cetiyaḡiri.

84 The latter record will be considered in detail below. Cf. *infra*, p. 36 f.

85 Bōthlingk and Roth give indeed "Sandbank im Flusse" as one possible meaning for *dvīpa*, Cf. *PW*, s.v. Another occurrence of such usage in inscriptions is found in the Kasiā seal, which mentions the *viṣṇudvīpavihāra*. See Vogel 1950, 30, quoted in Schopen 1990, 195–196.

86 The first sentence of this inscription whose formula is very similar to the short dedicatory inscription of Mahānāman reads: *deyadharmo (')yaṃ śākyabhikṣvos tiṣyāmratīrthavāsīkadharmaḡuptadaṃṣṭrasenayor*. Cf. Fleet 1888, 282. The editor took *tiṣyāmratīrtha* as one toponym, but the compound should probably be understood as a distributive *dvandva*, giving the respective origins of the two *śākyabhikṣus*. The sentence may thus be translated as follows: "This is the pious gift of the *śākyabhikṣus* Dharmagupta and Daṃṣṭrasena, residing [respectively] in Tiṣya and Āmratīrtha."

87 Cf. *Mhv* 197, ch. XXV, v. 7; *Thūp* 211.2, transl. p. 82 and n. 3. See also *DPPN*, s.v. Āmbatitthaka. The Tiṣya referred to in the Bodhgayā inscription as the place of residence of Daṃṣṭrasena, might be identical with the Tissamahārāma located in the Rohaṅa province. See for instance *Mhv* 197, ch. XXV, v. 2; *DPPN*, s.v. Tissamahāvihāra. Ambatittha(ka) might have been a stop on the road for a pilgrim coming from Rohaṅa, and heading north to the harbour of Mahākoṇḡa to embark for India. Such a route used by pilgrims willing "to

The school-affiliation of Mahānāman's lineage is difficult to determine. The fact that the various branches of the Sinhalese Sthaviras/Sthāvīras (or Sthāvīrīyas, P. Theriyas)<sup>88</sup> were vying for royal support in the period preceding the great unification under the reign of Parākramabāhu,<sup>89</sup> leads one to suspect that a lineage claiming familial ties with the ruling power should belong to one of these schools. To be sure, non-Theriya schools were present at the time in Laṅkā as well, even if very little is known about the history of their presence and the extent of their influence.<sup>90</sup> The description of Mahānāman's lineage, in v. 3a, as “transmitting the *Samyukta-Āgama*” (hereafter *SĀ*), at first sight does not correspond with the most common appellation of this division of the Mahāvihāra canon—the only extant Theriya canon—that is *Samyutta-Nikāya*.<sup>91</sup> My attempt at locating the references to Kāśyapa's legend in the second stanza within a specific family of narratives brought to light a close relationship with the texts of the Sarvāstivādins and the Mūlasarvāstivādins,<sup>92</sup> and

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pay homage to the *bodhi*[-tree]” (*bodhiṃ vandanatthāya*) at Bodhgayā is described in the *Sihalaṅavatthupakkaraṇa*. Cf. *Sih* 35.1–3. On the difficult question of dating this text, surmised by some to be prior to Buddhaghosa, see *Sih*, ii; von Hinüber 1996, 192–193.

- 88 On the various expressions used in Pāli, Sanskrit and Tibetan texts to refer to this school, see Skilling 2009, 66, and Gethin 2012, 5–14. Following the latter, I refrain here from employing the overused and rather inappropriate label Theravāda. I prefer here to use the word Theriya to refer to the Sinhalese religious lineages derived from the Sthāvīrīyas, and which came to be identified to them, at least from the 7th century on. On this identification, see Bareau 1955, 24 f., and Skilling 1997, 93–96.
- 89 On the division of the Theriyas into two, and then three *nikāyas*, see Cousins 2012, 68–85. The three schools centered upon the Mahāvihāra, the Abhayagirivihāra and the Jetavanavihāra are well attested at the period considered here, but it should be kept in mind that this tripartition probably obliterates the actual religious diversity of the Theriyas. See the remarks in Bechert 1976, 30–32; Crosby 1999, 517–519; Gethin 2012, 55–57.
- 90 On the affinities existing between the Mahīśāsakas, whose Vinaya was brought back from Laṅkā by Faxian, and the Theriyas, see Bareau 1955, 207–208. See also below n. 154. On the famous reference to the contingents of the four *mahānikāyas* in the Sanskrit inscription from Abhayagiri, see *EZ*, 1:5.33–34; Gunawardana 1979, 250–256; Bechert 1998, 3–4; Gethin 2012, 50–54.
- 91 This was possibly also the way this section was called in the canons of the Abhayagirikas and the Jetavanīyas. Very little is known about the structure of the Tipiṭakas transmitted by these schools, though it is generally admitted that they were very similar to the Mahāvihāra's collection. See Bareau 1955, 241–244; Bechert 1976, 27–30; 1977, 361–362. On the much debated issue of the scriptures and teachings of the Abhayagirivāsins, see also Norman 1991; von Hinüber 1996, 22–23; Skilling 1993 and 1994b; Crosby 1999; Cousins 2012.
- 92 For the period preceding that of our inscription, the particular motif of the “hand of Maitreya” (v. 2b) is only found in this body of literature. Cf. *supra*, p. 16.



there is indeed a high probability that (Mūla-)Sarvāstivādin scriptures were transmitted in Laṅkā, and in particular a *SĀ* of that school.<sup>93</sup> It might therefore be suggested that the branch of the *Sūtrapiṭaka* transmitted by the lineage of Mahānāman did not belong to a Theriya canon.<sup>94</sup> However, there is a fair possibility that the use of the word *āgama* in the inscription was determined by the transposition in Sanskrit of its Pāli technical equivalent—i.e., the term *nikāya*.<sup>95</sup> The inscription's reference to this section of the canon, interesting as it is, does not allow a definitive conclusion about the school affiliation of Mahānāman and his lineage. Because of their connexion to the ruling dynasty, I am inclined to favour the hypothesis that these monks were indeed Theriyas—probably non-Mahāvihāravāsins, as what follows will illustrate. Being in con-

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- 93 There is indeed evidence showing that the manuscript which was the basis of the translation of a (Mūla-)Sarvāstivādin *SĀ*, the *Za Ahanjing* 雜阿含經 (*T.* 99), by Guṇabhadra around 435–436 CE, was brought to China by Faxian after his stay in Laṅkā (in ca. 410–411). Cf. De Jong 1981. Fumio Enomoto (2001) argued that the translator Guṇabhadra brought instead the Sanskrit original from the region of Mathurā, but Andrew Glass (2010) has provided convincing arguments in favour of its Sinhalese origin. On the three Chinese *SĀ* (*T.* 99–101) and the question of their affiliation, see also Mayeda 1985, 99–101; Enomoto 1986, 23–25; Hiraoka 2000.
- 94 De Jong, drawing on earlier comments by Lévi on the term *saṃyuktāgamin* in our inscription, went on to suggest that Mahānāman might have been a Sarvāstivādin. Cf. Lévi 1929, 46–47; De Jong 1981, 113.
- 95 Among the southern Mahāsāṃghika sub-schools, which transmitted a canon in Prakrit, there is epigraphical evidence that at least the Apamahāvīnaseliyas also called the divisions of their *Sūtrapiṭaka nikāya*. Cf. *IBH*, Nāgārjunakoṇḍa no. 6, 14; Bareau 1955, 104. But when Candrakīrti introduces in his *Prasannapadā* a quotation, given in its Prakrit original, from the canon of another branch of the Śāilās, that of the Pūrvaśāilās, he refers to his source as a “*sūtra* from the *Āgama*” (*āgamasūtra*). Cf. La Vallée Poussin 1903–1913, 548.6. Similarly, and as remarked already by Lamotte, while the account of the first council in the *Samantapāsādikā* refers to the four main canonical divisions with the word *nikāya*, the recension of this text preserved in Chinese has *a-han* 阿含, which renders the expression *āgama*. Cf. *Sp* 1:16.14; *T.* 1462, 675b22, transl. in Bapat and Hirakawa 1970, 9; Lamotte 1958, 167. The eclectic nature of *T.* 1462, and especially an influence from the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*, could also explain the specific lexical choices in the translation of the Pāli terminology, Cf. Heirman 2004. We may also note that in the Pāli *suttas* and *Vinaya*, the word *āgama* is found, most commonly inside the compound *āgatāgama*, where it refers in most cases to undetermined scriptures. On these occurrences, see Anālayo 2011, 2:864n45. In the commentarial literature, moreover, *āgama* is at times used in lieu of *nikāya*, or next to it. For instance, in the introductory verses of the *Sāratthappakāsinī*, and in the following gloss in prose, the collection commented on by Buddhaghosa is referred to as *saṃyuttāgama*. Cf. *Spk* 1, v. 5, 2.22–24. See also, *CPD*, s.v. *Āgama*.

tact with (Mūla-)Sarvāstivādin monks in their homeland as well as in Magadha, they seem to have accepted as authoritative that school's narrative of Kāśyapa's *nirvāṇa*, and were involved in its transmission in Laṅkā.

There is further reason to think that Mahānāman's lineage was particularly active in the diffusion of Kāśyapa's legend. The Pāli *Samyutta-Nikāya* and the Chinese \**SĀ/Za Ahan jing* 雜阿含經 (T. 99), whose Indic text probably came from Laṅkā, are among the few sections of the extant canonical scriptures which dedicate much space to the great disciple.<sup>96</sup> Within both collections, a thematic chapter, the \**Kāśyapasamyukta* (P. *Kassapasamyutta*), is dedicated to him.<sup>97</sup> This affinity of the transmitters of the *Samyukta* branch of the *Sūtrapīṭaka* with the great disciple is further echoed by an assertion of Buddhaghosa's *Sumaṅgalavilāsīnī*, according to which Mahākassapa was entrusted the charge to transmit (P. *vāceti*) the *Samyutta-Nikāya* to his personal followers (P. *nissitaka*) after its collation at the first council.<sup>98</sup> In transmitting this very branch of the canon, the lineage of Mahānāman therefore most probably conceived itself as the bearer of Mahākāśyapa's legacy. As such, it may well have played a role in the diffusion of an account of Kāśyapa's *nirvāṇa* in Laṅkā, where the narrative continued to live and was incorporated in later texts of the Mahāvihāra circulating on the island.<sup>99</sup>

Beside the transmissional specialty of this religious group, its portrayal in the third stanza<sup>100</sup> clearly shows the tendency to depict the spiritual qualities of

96 It has already been recognised by Frauwallner and Bareau that, moreover, Kāśyapa plays a prominent role in the second part of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa* narratives. Cf. Frauwallner 1956, 161; Bareau 1970–1971, 2:216–217, 264–265.

97 Cf. T. 99, no. 1136–1144; SN 194–225. Another collection of SĀ translations (T. 101), attributed by Paul Harrison to An Shigao, does not record such a thematic chapter. Note that its third *sūtra* shares some material with one *sutta* otherwise recorded in the *Kassapasamyutta* (XVI.7), without however including the same frame story involving Kāśyapa. Cf. Harrison 2002, 6–7.

98 Cf. Sv 1:15.7–10:

*tato anantaraṃ bhāṇavārasataparimāṇaṃ samyuttanikāyaṃ saṃgāyitvā mahākassapattheraṃ paṭicchāpesuṃ, 'bhante imaṃ tumhākaṃ nissitake vācethā tī'.*

This passage is mentioned and commented on briefly by Anālayo 2009.

99 A secondary transmission of such an account, translated in Pāli, from Laṅkā to South-East Asia is likely, though it is not impossible to think of an independent transmission. See the remarks in Lagirarde 2006, 91. On these issues, see also Skilling 2007. The role of Indian monks in the diffusion in Laṅkā of other narratives connected with Maitreya is also evinced in a story recorded by Faxian during his stay on the island. See Deeg 2005, 570–571.

100 Note that this stanza was most probably conceived to form a textual unit with the pre-

Mahānāman's lineage in complete conformity with its eminent "forefather."<sup>101</sup> In particular, its characteristic of being "purified from their impurities" (*viśuddharajas*) appears to be directly connected, not only to a personal quality of Kāśyapa, but also to his "interregnal" mission. The epithet *viśuddharajas* is identical in meaning, and is probably a *metri causa* substitute for (*vi*)*dhutara-**jas*. In turn, this term is the equivalent of *dhutakleśa* (P. *dhutakilesa*),<sup>102</sup> and both belong to the conceptual realm of ascetic practices, i.e. the *dhutaḡaṇas* (or *dhūtagaṇas*).<sup>103</sup> Interestingly, in the *Daśabhūmika* of the *Mahāvastu*, the term *dhutarajas* occurs twice to qualify Mahākāśyapa,<sup>104</sup> among other epithets qualifying the great disciple as the paragon of ascetic values and practices.<sup>105</sup>

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ceding one. This is shown by the use of the syntactical link *yasya* in v. 3b, referring to the character described in v. 2. Moreover, the fact that both stanzas are written in the same metre *śārdūlavikrīḡita* results in a unity of scansion, since otherwise in the inscription the metre changes at each stanza.

- 101 Note the use of *jāta* in v. 3d to indicate the succession of disciples within Kāśyapa's lineage.
- 102 Maybe it is not necessary to recall here that impurity (*rajas*) is nothing other than the three *kleśas*, namely *rāga*, *dveṣa* and *moha*. See for instance *Sn-a* 1:255.17. The epithet *viśuddharajas* thus parallels the description of Kāśyapa as *saṃsārasaṃkleśajit* in v. 1a.
- 103 While commenting on the various terms pertaining to ascetic vocabulary, Buddhaghosa's *Dhutaṅganiddesa* of the *Visuddhimagga* glosses the entry "ascetic" (*dhuta*) as follows: *dhuto ti dhutakilesa vā puggala, kilesadhunano vā dhammo*. Cf. *Vism* 80.23–24. The same gloss also occurs in the commentary of the *Etadaggavagga* in Buddhaghosa's *Manorathapūraṇī*, Cf. *Mp* 1:161.21. The overall passage is similar, but note that the figure who exemplifies the ascetic (*dhuta*) and, at the same time, professes asceticism (*dhutavādo*) is Sāriputta in the *Visuddhimagga*, while it is logically Mahākassapa in the *Etadaggavagga* commentary, where the great disciple is recognised as *dhutavādānaṃ aggo*. Cf. *Vism* 81.9–21; *Mp* 1:162.12–14.
- 104 Cf. *Mvu* 1:66.20, 71.11. Reginald Ray has apparently misread—and therefore misunderstood—this epithet, as he says that "[i]n the *Mahāvastu*, Mahākāśyapa is [...] called *dhutarāja*, 'king of the *dhutaḡaṇas*.'" Cf. Ray 1994, 105. All the manuscripts consulted by Senart and by myself read however *dhutarajas*. This mistake of detail and many others (see also my remarks in n. 49) undermine Ray's treatment of Kāśyapa.
- 105 The most relevant epithets for our purpose are perhaps *dhutaḡaṇa-agrapāraga* (1:64.14), literally "the foremost of those who have mastered the ascetic practices," *dhutadharmasu-viśuddha* (1:69.13) "well-purified by the ascetic attributes," and again *dhutadharmadhara*, "holder of the ascetic attributes," which occurs seventy-eight times (from 1:85.11 onwards) in the vocative. The first of these epithets is reminiscent of Kāśyapa being called *dhūtagaṇavādināṃ agro* in *Dīvy* 61.28–29 or *dhutavādānaṃ* (v.l. *dhūtaṅgadharānaṃ*) in the *Etadaggavagga* (*AN* 1:23.19). The term *dhutaḡaṇa* might then be equated in this context with *dhutadharmā*, as suggested by Edgerton (*BHSD*, s.v.). Note, however, that the *Visuddhimagga* (81.9–21) glosses *dhutadhamma* as referring to five "attendant" qualities

Also, behind the terms (*vi*)*dhutarajas* and *viśuddharajas*, in both the *Mahāvastu* and our inscription, probably lies the idea that ascetic practices are beneficial to the preservation of the Dharma, while laxity leads to its loss.<sup>106</sup> Therefore, *viśuddharajas* may be linked with another epithet given to the lineage, namely *śīlaguṇānvita*, “possessed with the qualities of moral conduct” (v. 3c).<sup>107</sup> The same epithet is used in the description of the period of decline in the *Rāṣṭrapālapariṣṭhā* to depict virtuous ascetics contrastively with lax monks, the main agents of the Dharma’s disappearance.<sup>108</sup> Finally, the epithet *dhutara-**jas* occurs once more in the second part of the second *Bahubuddhakasūtra* (III.241–250)<sup>109</sup> of the *Mahāvastu* to qualify the triple community of Maitreya’s disciples.<sup>110</sup> The fact that the lineage of Mahānāman is described in the same way as the patriarch Mahākāśyapa, and as the future community of Maitreya in a text most probably circulating in Magadha at the time that our inscrip-

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(*parivāra*) not to be confused with the thirteen *dhutaḡuṇas*. The first two elements of the list, *appicchatā* and *santutuṭṭhitā* are, together with *dhutavādīn*, the three qualities in which Kāśyapa is foremost, according to *Dīvy* 61.28–29. The \**Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra* lists four qualities, adding *araṇyavāsīn*. Cf. *TGVS* 1:195.

- 106 I have shown elsewhere how this idea operates in the context of the *Daśabhūmika* of the *Mahāvastu*. Cf. Tournier 2012a, 303f. On the laxity as cause of the Dharma’s decline, see also Nattier 1991, 120–126; Silk 2003; Boucher 2008, 66–67.
- 107 In the paragraph dedicated to the *silānussati* in the *Visuddhimagga*, the *śīlaguṇas* are listed as follows (*Vism* 221.22–26):

silānussatiṃ bhāvetukāmena pana rahogatena paṭṭisallīnena aho vata me silāni akhaṇḍāni acchiddāni asabalāni akammāsāni bhujjissāni viññāppasatthāni aparāmatṭhāni samādhisaṃvattanikāni ti evaṃ akhaṇḍatādiguṇavasena attano silāni anussaritabbāni.

Note also that in the *Dhutaṅganiddesa* of the same text (*Vism* 59.1–10), *śīla* is said to be purified by *appicchatā* and *santutuṭṭhitā*, the two *dhutadhammas* mentioned *supra* in n. 105.

- 108 The lax monks, though proclaiming their unequalled possession of these qualities are depicted as actually “very distant from the qualities of moral conduct” (*śīlaguṇeṣu sudūre*), while those who are possessed with these qualities will abide in the forest, practising the *dhutaḡuṇas*. Cf. *RP* 17.11, 14; 31.18. The above mentioned passage from the *Visuddhimagga* invites us to understand *śīlaguṇa* as a *tatpuruṣa* compound, as does Ensink 1952, 18, but unlike the same author later on (30) and Boucher 2008, 127, 140.
- 109 I follow here the name given by the manuscript Sa of this text (fol. 361a4), while the edition reads *Bahubuddhasūtra*. Cf. *Mvu* 3:250.7. On manuscript Sa, see below n. 139.
- 110 Cf. *Mvu* 3:246.17–247.2/Ms. Sa, 359a5–6. On this passage, see Tournier 2012a, 142–144. The transfer of the qualities of Mahākāśyapa to the community of Maitreya is found more explicitly in a text like the *Maitreyāvādāna* of the *Dīvyāvādāna*. The disciples are indeed said to obtain Arhathood and to “realise” (*sākṣātkṛta*) the *dhutaḡuṇas* after their meeting with Mahākāśyapa’s “preserved” (*avikopita*) skeleton. Cf. *Dīvy* 61.19–62.4.

tion was composed, may not be a pure coincidence. It could well be a means to create a connection between these three actors of the preservation of the Saddharma. The Sinhalese lineage might therefore have conceived itself as a reflection of its past model, and the anticipation of a future idealised community.

With this better understanding of the background of Mahānāman and the manner in which he defines his descent, it is interesting to look at another aspect of this monk's self-representation, the aspirations expressed in the second part of the inscription, which formally records his religious foundation.

### The Monk Mahānāman and His Aspirations

Mahānāman's pious gift and the assignment of the merit generated by it are obviously connected with each other:

*tenoccair bbodhimaṇḍe śaśikaradhavalaḥ sarvvato maṇḍapena ·  
kā[nta]ḥ prāsāda eṣa smarabalaḥ jayinaḥ kārito lokaśāstuh || [v. 7]<sup>111</sup>  
vyapaḡataviṣayasneho hatatimiradaśaḥ pradīpavaḍ asaṅgaḥ  
kuśalenānena jano bodhisukham anuttaraṃ bha[ja]tām\* || [v. 8]<sup>112</sup>*

[v. 7cd] He [Mahānāman] caused to be erected on the exalted terrace of Awakening a temple—together with a pavilion—of the conqueror of Smara's army, the teacher of the world, which was white like a moonbeam and pleasing from all sides.

[v. 8] By this meritorious act may people [or: may this person], having removed the attachment to sense-objects and having destroyed the condition of [mental] darkness, being detached, like lamps [or: like a lamp], *the oil of whose receptacle has gone [consumed] and whose wick was spent and black*, enjoy the ultimate bliss of Awakening.

Besides the use of literary clichés and of a refined double entendre (*śleṣa*), reminiscent of Kālidāsa's *Raghuvamśa*,<sup>113</sup> the overall construction of the formula of

111 Lines 10–11. Metre: *sragdharā*.

112 Lines 11–12. Metre: *āryā*.

113 Kielhorn has convincingly suggested that the composer of the inscription may have drawn and twisted a *śleṣa* at play in the first *śloka* of the *Raghuvamśa*, chapter XII:

assignment of merit is characteristic of its genre. The combination of an instrumental (*kuśalena anena*) with a third person imperative (*bhajatām*) is indeed well represented from an early period onwards,<sup>114</sup> and it is also attested in an inscription from Bodhgayā probably belonging to the late 4th century CE.<sup>115</sup> It is worthy of note that what is probably the earliest unequivocal attestation of Mahāyāna-type thought in Indian epigraphy, the famous Govindnagar inscription, dated from the 26th year of the Kaniṣka Era, has the same construction.<sup>116</sup> The fact that another fragmentary inscription from mid or late 6th century Nepal preserves a similar construction,<sup>117</sup> shows, together with our inscription, the lasting usage of such a formula in epigraphy.<sup>118</sup> This type of construction is not exclusive to inscriptions, for it also occurs both in the canonical litera-

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*nirviṣṭaviṣayasnehaḥ sa daśāntam upeyivān |*  
*āsīd āsannanirvāṇaḥ pradīpārcir ivoṣasi ||*

Cf. Divedi 1976, 192; Kielhorn 1891, 190. See also *EI* 6:3–4, no. 1. The 7th century Apsad inscription from the Gayā district, giving the genealogy of the later Gupta kings, draws on a similar reservoir of literary clichés, but to convey a different image. The poet there connects the metaphor of moonlight with the motif of the destruction of obscurity that we found separately in verses 7 and 8 of the Mahānāman inscription. See Fleet 1888, 202.1–2:

*sakalaḥ kalaṅkarahitaḥ kṣatatiniras toyadheḥ śaśaṅka iva |*  
*tasmād udapādi suto devaḥ śrīharṣaguṇta iti ||*

- 114 For example, an inscription of the Jamālpur mound at Mathurā bears the formula *an[e]n[a] deryadharmmaparityāgena sarvveṣ[a]ṃ pr[ā]hanikānaṃ arogyadaḥsin[ā]ye bhavat[ā]ṃ*. Cf. Lüders 1961, 82, no. 46 = *IBH*, Mathurā no. 34.
- 115 Cf. Barua 1934, 70, no. 10 = *IBH*, Bodh-gayā no. 18.
- 116 It reads in Schopen's edition: *im[e]na k[u]śalam[ū]lena sa[rvasat](v)ā anut[t]ara[m] bud[dh]ajñānaṃ prā[prv]aṃ[tu]*. Cf. Schopen 1987, 101, 104–110, 120–124. Compare Fussman 1999, 541. The fourth line of the inscription is damaged and therefore its reconstruction is problematic. The syntactic construction of the dedicatory formula is however quite certain. On this inscription, see also Ruegg 2004, 13117; 2005, 515; Acharya 2010, 24–2613. On another famous piece from the Kuṣāna Era, the undated inscribed image from Gandhāra which may well have represented Amitābha and Avalokiteśvara, see Brough 1982, 65–70; Fussman 1999, 543–549; Salomon and Schopen 2002; Murakami 2008, 126–131; Allon and Salomon 2010, 5.
- 117 The fragmentary inscription dated (*Śaka*) *saṃvat* 479 reads: ..... *mānenārdha* ... [...] ... *sarvajñajñānāvāptaye bhavatu*. Cf. Vajracharya 1975, 185, no. 43, quoted in Acharya 2010, 36–37.
- 118 The Nepalese inscription referred to is almost contemporaneous with another inscription from Nepal using the phrase *yad atra puṇyaṃ tad bhavatu* ... On this inscription and the problem of its dating, see Acharya 2010, 37–38. This seems to show a lasting coexistence of the older formula using an instrumental construction with the more common formula using the relative-correlative construction. Compare Schopen 1985, 41.

ture of the Śrāvakayāna as well as in texts labelled as Mahāyānasūtras.<sup>119</sup> But, as we shall see, the benefit implied in the formula of the inscription is certainly connected with a path that is actively promoted in the latter kind of sources.

The manner in which the benefit and the beneficiaries are dealt with in the *āryā* stanza of our inscription merits to be clarified by its context of enunciation, before considering to what extent it is related to other epigraphical and literary evidence. Considering this formula in relation to the preceding stanza, it appears that it has been phrased in such a way as to correlate the benefit of the produced merit to the very experience of the night of Awakening commemorated by the pious foundation. The mention that the temple has been erected on the Bodhimaṇḍa is very significant in that regard, as this very spot of earth (*pr̥thivīpradeśa*)<sup>120</sup> retains the “quintessence” of Śākyamuni’s Awakening,<sup>121</sup> as well as that of his predecessors and successors. The *prāsāda* is dedicated to the “conqueror of Smara’s army,”<sup>122</sup> which makes it likely that the temple hosted a

119 Schopen 1985, 41n93.

120 Schopen has noticed that, in a number of sources, the two words *pr̥thivīpradeśa* and *bodhimaṇḍa* were closely linked in meaning. The first *Avalokitasūtra* of the *Mahāvastu*, for example, consistently uses the former word for the latter. Cf. Schopen 1975, 173 and n. 49. The passage of this *sūtra* listing the sixteen characteristics (*aṅga*) of the “spot of earth” (also called “circle of earth,” Skt. *pr̥thivīmaṇḍala*) makes it particularly clear that it is a functional equivalent of the *siṃhāsana* and *vajropama/vajrāsana*. Cf. *Mvu* 2:262.9–263.14. Xuanzang also equates *bodhimaṇḍa* and *vajrāsana*. Cf. *Datang xiyuji* 大唐西域記 (T. 2087) transl. in Lamotte 1962, 198–200n105; Beal 1884, 2:115–116; Li 1995, 244–245. All this leads to understand *bodhimaṇḍa* primarily as the restricted area where the Bodhisattva sits before his Awakening. See also the remarks in Yuyama 1968, 490. Unless the inscription of Mahānāman uses this expression in a wider sense, or the locative case is used with a nuance of proximity, the temple established on the *bodhimaṇḍa* could well be the main temple of the site, as proposed by Asher (1980, 28; 2008, 8–9). The plan of the building, a *prāsāda* augmented by a *maṇḍapa*, agrees with the description of the temple given by Xuanzang and with the structure of the miniature reproductions of the temple produced at the site and spread all over Buddhist lands, principally during the Pāla and Sena periods. Cf. Beal 1884, 2:118–119; Guy 1991, 356–367. Considering, however, the tendency towards the multiplication of the *bodhimaṇḍas*, this identification remains unsure and the temple could well have been located in the precincts of the *vajrāsana* itself. For our purpose, we must rest content that the pious foundation was at least *conceived to be* on this very place. For a similar claim in the inscription of Ghosrāwā, see Kielhorn 1888, 310.14–15.

121 The word *sāra* is a commonly used synonym for *maṇḍa*, *bodhimaṇḍa* being rendered as *byang chub snying po* in Tibetan. Cf. Lamotte 1962, 198–200n105; BHSD, s.v. *bodhimaṇḍa*.

122 Note also that the ninth stanza addresses the temple as the “residence of the great Muni” (*bhavanam urumuneh*).

statue of Māravijaya, as similar expressions occur in inscriptions engraved on pieces depicting such an event.<sup>123</sup> In this context, the word *bodhisukha* of the dedicatory stanza naturally recalls the experience of the Buddha immediately following his Awakening.<sup>124</sup>

The succinct way in which the beneficiary of this bliss is denoted with *jana* in our inscription is ambiguous and can be understood in three ways: it can qualify all human beings or an undetermined group among them,<sup>125</sup> but it can also be understood as equivalent to a personal pronoun pointing to the last person referred to in the preceding stanza, namely Mahānāman.<sup>126</sup> The soteriological perspective would vary accordingly: the first option points towards the theory of universal Awakening, while the second may imply that the only people who will benefit from such a reward, are those who will be connected

123 Maybe it is unnecessary to recall that Smara is another name of the god Kāma, who is identified here with Māra. The three epithets appear together in the *Amarakośa*. Cf. Ramanathan 1971, 19, vv. 25–26. On some aspects of the process of identification between the two gods, see Norman 1998, 135–142. The following stanza has been found in an inscription whose palaeography is very similar to the one of our inscription, engraved on the pedestal of a statue recovered at Bodhgayā:

*idam atitaraṃ citraṃ sarvasatvānukampine |  
bhavanaṃ varam udāraṃ jītamārāya munaye ||*

The figure is estimated by Leoshko, on stylistic grounds, to belong to the 7th century CE. Though missing its head, it is one of the best pre-Pāla examples of Māravijaya found at the site. Cf. Mitra 1878, 132, 192, no. 6 = *IBH*, Bodh-Gayā no. 19; Cunningham 1892, 62; Leoshko 1988a, 34 and fig. 8. The fact that the “resident” of the temple is described as *vajrāsanaśtha* in the Yaśovarmadeva inscription of Nālandā is also evocative of the victory over Māra, and Śākyamuni was most probably represented there in the same manner. Cf. *El* 20:44.9, no. 2, cited in Schopen 1990, 188.

124 The *Mahāvagga* of the Pāli *Vinaya* opens with a description of the Buddha experiencing the bliss of liberation (*vimuttisukhapaṭisaṃvedī*) immediately after his Awakening. Cf. *Vin* 1.1.4; Bareau 1963, 33. The *Bodhisattvabhūmi* defines the *saṃbodhisukha* as follows (Wogihara 1930–1936: 26.17–19):

*sarvakleśātyantaviśaṃyogāj jñeyavastuyathābhūtābhisāmyogāj jñeyavastuyathā-  
bhūtābhisāmbodhāc ca yat sukham idam ucyate saṃbodhisukhaṃ.*

125 According to Ruegg, in commentaries on the *Abhisamayālamkāraloka* of Haribhadra, the expression *sarvo janaḥ*, appearing in a passage of this text central for the theory of universal Awakening, has been understood in these two distinct ways. Cf. Wogihara 1932–1935: 131.11–12: *anuttarasāmyaksāmbodhiparyavasāna eva sarvo janaḥ*, commented on in Ruegg 1969: 191f., 200n1.

126 Cf. *PW*, s.v. *jana*, (γ). This entry gives a number of examples where *jana*, “ohne nähere Bezeichnung durch ein Pronomen,” may have the following meanings: “die im Augenblick J[e]m[an]d zunächst stehende Person, diese Person hier.” See also Hara 1968, 267–269.



with the pious foundation of Mahānāman by ritually approaching the living manifestation of Awakening hosted in the temple.<sup>127</sup> If we understand *jana* to have a pronominal function, this would constitute an example of an individual wish for perfect Awakening. Note that the compassionate component, which is central in the portrait of Mahānāman and his lineage,<sup>128</sup> is compatible with any of the three options as the individual wish for Awakening is concomitant with the benefit of living beings. As the three kinds of soteriological scenarios are met with in sources connected with the Mahāyāna<sup>129</sup>—and, except in retrospective contexts, in these sources only—it is difficult on these grounds to determine which of these three possibilities was intended by the dedicator of the inscription.

In any case, the inscription of Mahānāman offers a conscious attempt to equate the Awakening embodied in the particular iconographic type of the Māravijaya established in the temple with the state aimed at by its dedicator, be that benefit enjoyed by himself alone or by “people.” Other examples will show how, in the very period characterised by the diffusion of the Māravijaya iconographic type at the site,<sup>130</sup> a good number of epigraphical records stresses the donor’s wish for Awakening. Mahānāman’s aspiration is indeed far from original, and what appears to be a very interesting quotation of a *praṇidhāna* set-phrase occurs in an inscription found on a coping stone of the railing that surrounded the main temple of Bodhgayā. It is palaeographically datable to the second part of the 5th century CE and reads:<sup>131</sup>

127 The act of worship might itself have been a way to re-enact the original gift of the sponsor, cf. Schopen 1984, 125–126.

128 Mahānāman’s description as “delighting in the well-being of others” (*parahitanirata*) at v. 7b is preceded by the description of his lineage as “moved by compassion for beings” (*satvānukampodyata*) at v. 3a. This value is also central in the description of Mahānāman’s immediate master, Upasena, in v. 6.

129 For examples of the first kind see *RP* 4.7–8, 7.19–20. For the second, see for example Kimura 1986–2007, 2:69.28–70.2. For the last kind of transference of merit, see for example Vaidya 1961, 155.5–7; Skjærvø 2004, 50, v. 55.

130 On this development, from the late 6th century on, see Leoshko 1988a, 32 f.; 1988b, 46–48.

131 The detailed palaeographical analysis carried out by Panday led him to correct the original dating by Bloch, who assumed the inscription to be from the 6th–7th cent CE. Cf. Bloch 1912, 156; Panday 1918, 405–407. The text given here is based on Panday’s edition that was counter-checked against the rubbing published by him, and corrected in a few minor instances. Only the readings of Bloch (B), Panday (P), and my own (T) are here given, as Barua 1934, 71–72, no. XII, reproduced the problematic edition of Bloch (with translation by Panday!). In *IBH*, Bodh-Gayā no. 15, Bloch’s edition is also reproduced.

*laṅkādvīpanarendrāṇām śramaṇaḥ kulaḥ* (<')*bhavat*\* <|>  
*prakhyātakīrttir ddharmmā*(<tmā>) *svakulāambaracandram*[ā]h <||> [1]  
*bhaktiyā tu bhikṣuṇānena buddhatvam a*[dhi]kāmṣatā <|>  
*kārā ratnatraye samyak kārītā*[h] *śāntaye nṛṇām*\* <||> [2]<sup>132</sup>  
*ito mayā yat kuśalaṃ hy upārjitaṃ* <|>  
*tad astu bodh*(ā)y[a] ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ <|>  
 ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ <|>  
*śubhena tenaiva* [pha]lena *yujyatām*\* <||> [3]<sup>133</sup>

**1c** *prakhyātakīrttir*] PT; *prakhyātakīrttir* B. **2b** *a*[dhi]kāmṣatā] T; *abhikāmṣatā* BP. The rubbing surely does not read *bhi*, as the *aḥṣara* clearly forms a closed loop. It has rather the shape of a *dhi*, even if the loop generally touches the foot of the *aḥṣara* in this script.<sup>134</sup> **2c–d** *samyak kārītā*[h] T; *samyakkārītā* B. **3a** *ito*] PT; *tato* B. *upārjitaṃ*] PT; *upārjitaṃ* B. **3b** *astu bodh*(ā)y[a] T; *asty upād*h[yā]ya B; *astu bo*[dhāya] P. **3d** *yujyatām*\*] T; *yujyatām*\* | P, who specifies that “the vertical stroke is employed to mark the end of the record.” I cannot see anything else than the peculiarly shaped *virāma* on the *aḥṣara ma*.

[v. 1] There was a *śramaṇa*, born in the family of the kings of the Laṅkā island, Prakhyātakīrti, who dedicated himself to the Dharma [and, as such,] was a moon in the sky of his own family.

[v. 2] With devotion, this *bhikṣu*, longing for Buddhahood, properly performed acts of worship<sup>135</sup> to the three jewels, aiming at the peace of men, [with the following vow:]

[v. 3] “Whatever merit I have acquired from this [pious act], may it be for Awakening. ... .. May this be enjoyed together with its excellent fruit.”

132 The first two stanzas are in *anuṣṭubh* metre.

133 Metre: *vaṃśastha*.

134 The form *abhi*√*kāmṣ* would appear at first sight more common, but there is a certain fluctuation in coeval texts, and some interchange in the use of the two prefixes *abhi*- and *adhi*-. Good examples of the use of *abhi*- in the *Prātimokṣasūtra* of the Mahāsāṃghika (-Lokottaravādin) from Bāmiyān, for the more common *adhi*- found in the so-called Patna manuscript of the same text may be found in Karashima 2008, 82, fol. 109a3, 84, fol. 112a4; 85, fol. 13a2 etc.

135 On the meaning of *kāra*, see Panday 1918, 409–410. Chandawimala completely misses the meaning of this word, as he summarizes the inscription's contents thus (2008, 39): “According to the inscription he had scarified [sic, for sacrificed] his life (*dehatyāga*) for the Triple Gem and committed suicide by cutting his neck ‘*kara*.”

The reference to Prakhyātākīrti's connections with the Sinhalese royal dynasty recalls the description of Mahānāman's spiritual lineage, and therefore makes it likely that he belonged to a similar milieu, a milieu that was particularly zealous in making pious gifts and foundations at Bodhgayā.<sup>136</sup> The use of the expression *buddhatvam a[dhi]kāṃkṣatā* in relation with *sāntaye nṛṇām* is very explicit as to the nature of the monk's wish.<sup>137</sup> It agrees in meaning with what was the third possible understanding in the case of Mahānāman's inscription, namely an individual aspiration to Buddhahood for general welfare. This is evocative of the state of mind preceding the formulations of a *praṇidhāna* by a *bodhisattva* in narrative accounts. The first part of the third stanza, in *vaṃśastha* metre, also appears to be a variant of the type of *praṇidhāna* we find in various instances in a text like the *Mahāvastu*.<sup>138</sup> For example, the following two half-verses from this text are part of a set of stanzas inserted in the narrative, and ascribed (artificially) to Śākyamuni after he has offered gruel and water to his predecessor of a remote past:<sup>139</sup>

*te upetya vararūpadhāriṇo*  
*bodhaye upajanenti mānasam |<|*  
*yam mayā kuśalam ārjitaṃ purā*  
*tena me bhavatu sarvavaśitā |*

1a *vararūpadhāriṇo*] Sb Ta Senart; *vana*<sup>o</sup> Sa 1d *sarvavaśitā*] Sa Sb Ta; *sarvadarśitā* corr. Senart.<sup>140</sup>

- 136 This is corroborated by the foundation story of the Mahābodhi-Saṅghārāma recorded in Xuanzang's *Datang xiyuji*, and in particular in the copperplate grant of the new establishment reported by the pilgrim. Cf. Beal 1884, 2:133–135; Li 1995, 258–260.
- 137 This very characteristic formula was already quoted in Ruegg 1969, 31n2.
- 138 The difference in metre suggests that the stanza of the inscription cannot be a direct borrowing from this very text, though the similarity of wording is striking. A direct quotation of a similar *praṇidhāna* has been identified by Schopen 1989, 149–157.
- 139 The passage, corresponding to *Mvu* 1:48.1–4, is quoted from my new edition of the *Bahubuddhakasūtra*, based on Ms. Sa, the common ancestor of all the manuscripts recovered so far from Nepal, as well as on Mss. Sb and Ta. Cf. Tournier 2012a, 399. On Mss. Sa and Sb, see Yuyama 2001; on Ms. Ta, see Tournier 2012b, 96–100.
- 140 Senart's emendation *sarvadarśitā* fits better with the *rathoddhatā* metre, but lacks manuscript attestation. The variant of the formula found in the *Daśabhūmika* of the *Mahāvastu* reads *sarvadarśitā* and uses, instead of *ārjitaṃ*, its synonym *upacitaṃ*. Cf. *Mvu* 1:81.20–21/Ms. Sa, 24a4–5. The fact that both formulas in *ārjita* and *upacita* are synchronically transmitted in the manuscript tradition of the *Mahāvastu* prevents us from emending *sarvavaśitā* to *sarvadarśitā* as a more “correct” reading. An inscription engraved on

Having approached those beautiful ones [i.e. the Buddhas], they conceive the thought directed towards Awakening:

“Whatever meritorious act I have formerly acquired, by virtue of that may I become possessed of all masteries.”

Turning back to Mahānāman and his time, there is other evidence from Bodhgayā that is worth considering in relation to our inscription. Nearby the find-spot of Mahānāman’s slab, an inscribed pedestal of a broken statue was found by General Cunningham within the walls of a temple, located to the north of the main temple.<sup>141</sup> It reads:<sup>142</sup>

¶ *deyadharmmo* (')*yaṃ śākyabhikṣoḥ āmradvīpavāsisthaviramahānāmasya* (|) *yad atra puṇya[ṃ] tad bhavatu sarvasatvānām anuttarajñānāvāptaye* (')*stu* (||)

*āmradvīpavāsisthaviramahānāmasya*] T; *amradvīpavāsi*° F. The *ā* marker at the foot of the *akṣara* appears clear to me. *sarvasatvānām*] T; °*sat*(*t*)*vānām* F.

There has been some debate about whether to identify the dedicator of the statue with the one who founded the temple. While John F. Fleet and Alexander Cunningham, followed by Sylvain Lévi, assumed this Mahānāman to be the same person as the Mahānāman of the long inscription,<sup>143</sup> Vincent Smith has argued against this interpretation. The dissimilarity between the two inscriptions in terms of language led him to reject this identification.<sup>144</sup> However,

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another coping stone of the same railing as the one of Prakhyātakīrti, and sharing similar palaeographical features, is exemplary of such a synchronism, as it ends with a dedication of merit using a formula in *upacita*. I quote here the edition by Bloch, which I could not improve, since the rubbing published by Cunningham has apparently been corrected, thus making unsafe a new reading on its basis: *tad etat sarvvaṃ yaṃ mayā puṇyopacitasambhāraṃ mātapitroḥ p(ūrvāṅgamaṃ kṛtvā)*. Cf. Bloch 1912, 153–154; Cunningham, *Mahābodhi*, pl. XXVII.1. Dhammika assumes that both inscriptions constitute one and the same record by the Sinhalese monk, but does not offer any argument in favour of his identification. Cf. Dhammika 1992, 51–52; Ahir 1994, 33n4. This hypothesis therefore needs to be further evaluated.

141 See Cunningham 1892, 60, and the sketch of the Mahābodhi’s courtyard (pl. XVIII) where the temple in question is marked by the letter H.

142 Only the readings of Fleet (F) and my own (T) are here noted. Cf. Fleet 1888, 278–279, no. 72 = *IBH*, Bodh-Gayā no. 21.

143 Cf. Fleet 1888, 278; Cunningham 1892, 60; Lévi 1900, 408–409.

144 Lévi 1900, 409, also noted the “curieux contraste” emerging from the confrontation of the

the linguistic argument is not decisive, and may actually be insignificant if we acknowledge the possibility that Mahānāman was not the composer of both dedicatory inscriptions and that two different mediums may have been used according to the importance of the donation. While he may have put great care in composing (or having composed) a panegyric to commemorate the foundation of the temple, he may merely have ordered a formulaic donative inscription to be engraved to record the gift of the statue.<sup>145</sup> Moreover, the palaeographic features of the two inscriptions are closely related,<sup>146</sup> and the main observation to be drawn by comparing the two scripts is that the long inscription was engraved with more care and flourish, which may well be explained by an original intention that it be ostentatiously exposed to a public. Finally, the way in which Mahānāman is referred to in the two inscriptions rather shows a difference in genre than in person. While the short inscription lists, in a frozen formula, his title, status, and provenance, the ornate epigraph is more concerned with his eminent origins and moral qualities. I therefore assume a unity of intention, and consider the formula of the small donative inscription in the light of the parallel formula in the longer inscription. Considering what precedes, it seems quite certain that *anuttarajñānāvāpti*, though ambiguous in itself, should *in this context* at least be understood as *anut-tara(buddha)jñānāvāpti*, the “attainment of the supreme knowledge [of a Buddha],”<sup>147</sup> which is naturally connected with the obtainment of the ultimate bliss

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two epigraphs and, while still accepting the identity of the two Mahānāmans, remarks: “Le génitif Mahānāmasya pour Mahānāmnas, en face du nominatif régulier Mahānāmā employé dans le premier texte [v. 5], suffit à déceler un rédacteur plus familier avec le pracrit qu’avec le sanscrit.” On this common feature of Buddhist Prakrits, see *BHSG* § 17.14. Smith, who seems to have been shocked by this disjunction, makes a lot of this irregular genitive ending and expresses the following question: “If they were identical why should pure paṇḍit’s Sanskrit be used in the one inscription, and Prakritized Sanskrit in the other?” Cf. Smith 1902, 198. Smith therefore suggested that “the donor of the image may have been the Mahānāman who was the spiritual grandfather of the builder of the temple” (193). In his second article, Lévi (1929) did not address this question anymore and seems to have accepted most of Smith’s criticisms.

145 It is tempting to speculate that the fragmentary statue was the Māravijaya described in the long epigraph, but I have not been able to consult a picture of the remaining pedestal that is preserved in the Indian Museum, Kolkatta. Cf. Patil, *Antiquarian Remains in Bihar*, 65, no. X.

146 Cf. Fleet 1888, 278; Smith 1902, 198.

147 On the *anuttarajñāna* formula, see Ruegg 2004, 13–14 and n. 17; 2005, 5–7; Schopen 1979; 1985, 41–43. For a very early—though lacunary—occurrence of a similar formula, see Falk

of Awakening (*bodhisukha*). Though formulated in a different way in the two Mahānāman inscriptions, they certainly point to similar benefits.<sup>148</sup> The fact that the *anuttarajñāna* formula was engraved on the pedestal of a Māravijaya in the case of the donative inscription of Dharmagupta and Daṃṣṭrasena,<sup>149</sup> and probably also in Mahānāman's short record, further illustrates the identity between the supreme knowledge characterising Buddhahood referred to in the engraved formulas and the embodiment of its realisation represented by the dedicated pieces.<sup>150</sup> The very expression *anuttarajñāna* seems to fit all the more with a depiction of the Māravijaya since it appears—in connexion with *adhi√gam*—with a noticeable frequency in the narrative of Śākyamuni's victory over Māra, as told in the *Saṅghabhedavastu*.<sup>151</sup> Therefore, the concomitance at the site of the Māravijaya iconographic type with inscriptions recording the *anuttarajñāna* formula or its variants forms a two-fold expression of an aspiration directed towards Awakening.<sup>152</sup> Their contemporary diffusion accounts for the popularization of this aspiration within devotees associated

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2000, 32–34. Cousins' argument against Schopen, based on late Pāli commentaries, that the compound *anuttarajñāna* may apply to both a *buddha* and an *arhat*, does not seem to be relevant in our context. See Cousins 2003, 21 and n. 21.

- 148 In a similar way, the *Ajitasenavyākaraṇanirdeśa* manuscript from Gilgit records the formula *anena kuśalamūlena sarvasatvā anuttarāṃ samyaksambodhim abhisambudhyante* (Dutt: *abhisampadyante*), while its colophon records a fragmentary version of the *anuttarajñāna* formula. See Dutt 1939, 129.10/Ms. fol. 33a2–3. On the colophon, see also Schopen 1979, 13; von Hinüber 1980, 63–64, no. VI = 2004, 79, no. 39. As in most of the colophons from Gilgit, this dedication formula is however not written by the same hand. See the remarks in Schopen 2009, 201–202.
- 149 This inscription is indeed engraved on a pedestal of a statue which, though lost, certainly depicted a Māravijaya. On this piece, see Anderson 1883, 2:54, no. B.G. 119; Leoshko 1988b, 46 and fig. 8.
- 150 Jacob Kinnard, who developed the idea that the diffusion of the Māravijaya iconographic type expresses a focus on *prajñā* (1999, 107–113), would have found some grounds for confirmation in these epigraphical documents.
- 151 Cf. Gnoli 1977–1978, 1:114.19–31, 119.7–21. For further reference from this Vinaya, see Schopen's additional note to the reprint of his 1979 paper (2005, 241n14). All these occurrences point unequivocally to the understanding of *anuttarajñāna* as a synonym of *samyaksambodhi*. Similarly, the *avadāna* of Bairam-Ali defines Maitreya's Buddhahood at the time of his meeting with Kāśyapa with the compound *anuttarajñānādhiḡata*. See the passage cited above, p. 12.
- 152 While Leoshko is aware of the peculiar concern of inscriptions of this period, she does not seem to have correlated this evidence and the icons of the Māravijaya as revealing two expressions of the same religious attitude. Cf. Leoshko 1995, 45–46. The correlation

with the Bodhimaṇḍa. Among these devotees, pilgrims from Laṅkā were particularly active, as our evidence suggests. This forceful tendency among Sinhalese Buddhists is confirmed by coeval inscriptions recovered in the island itself, which also assign the merits of pious actions to Buddhahood.<sup>153</sup> The author of the *Jātakanidāna* was probably aware of the motivations of his compatriots travelling to Magadha when, writing from the conservative point of view of the Mahāvihāra,<sup>154</sup> he insists on the fact that the meeting with a living Master (P. *satthāraddassana*) is one of the eight necessary conditions for the aspiration to Buddhahood (P. *abhināhāra, patthanā*) to be fulfilled. He asserts:<sup>155</sup>

*hetusampanna pi sace jīvamānakabuddhass' eva santikā patthentassa  
patthanā samijjhati parinibbute buddhe cetiyasantike vā bodhimūle vā pat-  
thentassa na samijjhati.*

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between the commission of a statue of the Buddha in Māravijaya and the fulfilment of wishes is also witnessed by the foundation story of the main temple by Xuanzang. Cf. Beal 1884, 2: 119–120; Li 1995, 247–248. For a stimulating interpretation of the adornment of this statue with movable *regalia*, see Mus 1928, 165–170, 200–207, 270–276. Although I cannot follow the author in all the aspects of his prolific argumentation, the following statement (270) about the Māravijaya of Bodhgayā retains here its relevance: “La statue de Çākyaṃuni ne serait donc qu’ un élément d’ un culte complexe où le Maître historique, appuyé sur ses prédécesseurs, est surtout un gage de l’ avenir. Auprès des vestiges de ces *buddhas* on pensait atteindre quelque chose de la manifestation future, conçue à leur image.”

- 153 A good example is a Sanskrit inscription from Kuccavēli near Trincomali, dated by Paranavitana as “later than the fifth and earlier than the eighth century,” which refers to the conquest of Māra and the attainment of “the state of Lord among Jinās” (*jinendratā*). Cf. *EZ* 3:160–161, v. 2. Two Sinhala inscriptions from Vessagiriya of the 6th–7th century similarly dedicate the merits produced to all beings, and to Buddhahood (Sih. *budubava*, Skt. *buddhabhāva*), Cf. *EZ* 4:132–133, no. 15/2–3. For a later instance of similar aspirations, see also *EZ* 4:149–150, no. 17/7. Other inscriptions from Abhayagiri, containing similar aspirations, have been published in Kulatunga 1996, which I have been unable to consult. See (with due caution) Chandawimala 2008, 36–40.
- 154 The author explicitly states, in the prologue, that his commentary on the *Jātaka* is in accordance with the tradition of the Mahāvihāravāsins. The same prologue also states that the work was composed at the request of three masters, one of whom belonged to the Mahīmsāsaka (i.e. Mahīśāsaka) school. Cf. *Ja* 1, v. 8–11; von Hinüber 1996, 131 and n. 456.
- 155 Cf. *Ja* 14.24–26. The *Buddhavamsa-aṭṭhakathā* has a similar, slightly extended formula, containing interestingly a reference to such aspiration in front of images (*paṭimā*), living *paccekabuddhas* and *buddha*’s disciples. Cf. *Bv-a* 91.32–92.2. See also *Cp-a* 282.26–33.

Even if he is endowed with the [two preceding] causes [i.e., human existence and the possession of the male attributes], if [his] resolution is made in presence of a living *buddha*, it is fulfilled, but not if it is made, when the *buddha* has entered *parinibbāna*, at a *cetiya* or near the *bodhi*-tree.

An important aspect of this set of practices connected with the Bodhimaṇḍa, namely the number of people expected to reach Awakening through the benefit of the pious foundations of Mahānāman and his fellow monks, is still unclear. Indeed, there seems to exist in the short dedicatory formula of Mahānāman an ambiguity regarding these beneficiaries parallel to the one already observed in the case of the long inscription.<sup>156</sup> Lance Cousins has pointed out the syntactical ambiguity of the second phrase of what Schopen calls the “‘classical’ form of Mahāyāna inscriptions” (in *tad bhavatu sarvasattvānām anuttarajñānāvāptaye*). He argued that *sarvasattvānām* is not necessarily linked with *anuttarajñānāvāptaye* since the latter is sometimes omitted.<sup>157</sup> There is indeed a small number of cases that seem to show an undeveloped version of the dedication formula, ending with *sarvasattvānām*.<sup>158</sup> The autonomous existence of this simple *tad bhavatu sarvasattvānām* formula seems to be confirmed by

156 Similar problems of interpretation regarding the recipients of benefits such as *nirvāna* or *amṛta-dhātu* have been encountered in the much earlier inscriptions of Senavarman and Kalawān. See esp. von Hinüber 2003, 37, 47–48; Ruegg 2005, 3–9.

157 Cf. Cousins 2003, 20. The only reference Cousins provides (n. 65) in support of this is Cohen’s 2000 article (30n68), which *mentions* (it does not “give” or list, much less quote) six examples from Ajaṇṭā. In fact, when we look at the ninety-nine inscriptions gathered in Cohen’s corpus of Ajaṇṭā inscriptions (2006), there are actually only two instances where the *anuttarajñāna* element might have lacked from the beginning. Cf. Dhavalikar 1968, 149–150, no. 3; 152–153, no. 5 = Cohen 2006, 289, no. 64; 307, no. 27. Other inscriptions (such as Cohen’s no. 12, 63, 95) are too fragmentary to prove anything. Cohen’s edition of inscription no. 89 is problematic, but the rubbing provided by Dhavalikar makes it impossible to check. Cf. Dhavalikar 1968, 150–151, no. 4 and fig. 4. Even if Cohen’s reading were to be accepted, the formula recorded would be somewhat odd and diverging from the more common construction. Therefore, there remain only the two inscriptions from Ajaṇṭā, which were already considered by Schopen (1985, 39n88), together with three others from other sites. On these five cases, see the following note.

158 The exact number of cases is very difficult to evaluate, since the end of the inscriptions are often lacunary. Schopen, after having at first admitted a short version of the formula, has already critically addressed five such cases, in order to show that “the simplest certainly attestable form of the formula appears now to be *yad atra punyaṃ tad bhavatu sarvasattvānām anuttarajñānāvāptaye*.” See respectively Schopen 1979, 5 and 1985, 39. It seems, however, that among the five cases considered by Schopen, at least two should



the inclusion of the imperative (')*stu* which governs *anuttarajñānāvāptaye* in a number of inscriptions—among them Mahānāman's short record.<sup>159</sup> Considered together, these occurrences suggest that the verb (*a*)*stu* is not to be

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be accepted as expressions of a shorter formula in *sarvasattvānām*. The first one, from Phophnar Kalan (Madhya Pradesh), is already admitted by Schopen, who however insists on its unusual character. The second one is an inscription from Ajañtā, found in Dhavalikar 1968, 150–151, no. 3 = Cohen 2006, no. 64. It is difficult to think with Schopen that the latter inscription had a fourth line, which Dhavalikar has omitted, since a look at the reproduction of the inscription (Dhavalikar 1968, fig. 3) clearly shows that there is no room for a fourth line in the cartouche on which the inscription has been painted. It is also quite likely that the fifth inscription edited by Dhavalikar—corresponding to Cohen 2006, no. 27—was exactly of the same type as his no. 3, but the reproduction provided by the Indian scholar makes it impossible to check.

- 159 The inscription of Dharmagupta and Daṃṣṭrasena bears the very same formula, inserting however the optional clause *mātāpī(ta)rāv ācāryyopādhyāyau pūrvaṅgama[m] kṛtvā*. Cf. Fleet 1888, 281–282, no. 76, and pl. XXII d = *IBH*, Bodh-Gayā no. 22. A similar formula is met with in an inscription from Sārnāth, estimated by Marshall and Konow to date from the 8th cent CE. Cf. Marshall and Konow 1911, 75 and pl. XXI, 5 = *IBH*, Sārnāth no. 206. A related formula was in circulation in Maharashtra, though the exact number of witnesses is uncertain. At Ajañtā cave I, while Chakravarti read the formula painted on cave XVI [...] *tad bhavatu mātāpitros sarvasattvānāñ cānuttarajñānāvāptaye ssuḥ*, Burgess and Cohen read the last word as *stu* ; and I am inclined to follow them. Cf. Chakravarti 1946, 95 (with pl. VIIa); Burgess 1883, no. 27; Cohen 2006, no. 70. Moreover, at cave XI, an inscription newly edited by Cohen 2006, no. 65 records the phrase *anutta[ra]jñānāvāpta[y]e stu*. I personally checked the reading on the spot [12/2012] and, though there are important flaws in Cohen's edition, this part of his reading is secure. I however disagree with Cohen reading *stu* in Is. no. 17 at cave IV, an important inscription already published by Sircar (*EI* 33: 259–262, no. 49). I will return to Iss. no. 17 and 65 in a future publication. Finally, another inscription of the *anuttarajñāna* type and ending in *stu* might be found in Pitalkhorā, if we accept Morrissey's edition of it. Cf. Morrissey 2009, 208, no. 78. The black and white reproduction given as Fig. 49 makes it difficult to check the reading. To the five or six epigraphical cases recording fairly certainly the imperative *astu* should be added evidence from the colophons of the Gilgit manuscripts. The colophon of the *Aṣṭādaśasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā* reads similarly *anuttarajñānavāptaye stu*, while a colophon written with a very careless hand on an independent folio, possibly added after *Bhaiṣajyaguru* Ms. Z—following Schopen's classification—reads *a(nu)ttarajñānavāpnuyāstu*, without being preceded by *sarvasattvānām*. Cf. von Hinüber 1980, 54–58, no. 1; 60–62, no. 4 = 2004, 17–18, no. 6; 77–78, no. 38B; Schopen 2009, 193. This formula is thus well attested and may be related with the more ancient type of dedication associating an instrumental with a third person imperative, such as in the following inscription from Mathurā: *anana* [corr.: *anena*] *d[e]yadharmmaparityāgen[a]* [...] [*n*] *īrvā[n]ā[va]ptaye* [*s*] *t[ū]*. Cf. Lüders 1961, no. 27 = *IBH*, Mathurā no. 17, cited in Schopen 1985, 31. See above n. 116.

discarded as being redundant in view of the presence of *bhavatu*, as it was by previous scholars.<sup>160</sup> Rather, it is to be understood in the aforementioned cases as the mark of an extension of a more simple formula ending in *sarvasattvānām*. Therefore, our inscription should be translated as follows:

This is the pious gift of the *sākyabhikṣu*,<sup>161</sup> the venerable (*sthavira*) Mahānāman who resides in Āmradvīpa. Whatever merit there is in this [gift], may it be for all beings. May it be for the/their attainment of supreme knowledge.

### Conclusion

Even if some uncertainties remain, there are a number of conclusions that can be drawn at this point. First, it is fairly certain that the dedicatory formulas used in the large Mahānāman inscription and in the smaller one show that Mahānāman represents himself as *en route* for Buddhahood, an expectation that is characteristic of the Bodhisattvayāna and certainly constitutes one of the unifying ties of the Mahāyāna nebula.<sup>162</sup>

Moreover, the foregoing offers new evidence that this kind of thought was entertained by someone who, at the same time, stressed his affiliation to a religious group of specialists transmitting a significant portion of the *Sūtrapīṭaka*,

160 See Fleet 1888, 279n3, 282; Chakravarti 1946, 95n2. When Schopen mentions our Mahānāman short inscription, he does not notice the presence of the verb *'stu*. Cf. G. Schopen 1979, 5; 1985, 39n88. Von Hinüber did not take into consideration the double-imperative construction in his translation of the *Aṣṭādaśasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* colophon, but rightly remarked elsewhere, about the colophon of *Bhaiṣajyaguru's* Ms. Z, that in *anuttara-jñānavāpnuyāstu* "sind zwei Formulierungen gekreuzt." Cf. von Hinüber 1980, 54; 2004, 78. The interpretation given in Cohen 2006, 316, according to which *stu* would be "an orthographic symbol" that "indicates that the inscription continues after the physical break" is unconvincing, and contradicted by his own data (see his no. 70).

161 Much has been written on this title in recent years and I do not wish to enter into this debate. See in particular Cousins' article (2003) and Schopen's corrections to it in the addenda to the reedition of his 1979 article (2005, 244–246). See also Ruegg 2004, 13–14. I would content myself here to remark the title's appearance, once again, in a context that is in complete agreement with conceptions of the "newer trend," without taking it *per se* as a criterion of affiliation. On the expression *nouveau courant*, see Scherrer-Schaub 2009, 158n28.

162 See for example La Vallée Poussin 1930, 21–23; Wangchuk 2007, 21f.

i.e. the *Samyukta-Āgama* of a certain *nikāya*.<sup>163</sup> The monk Mahānāman situates himself as the heir of an elaborate lineage devoted to the faithful transmission of the teachings received directly from Mahākāśyapa and promoting the legacy of that illustrious patriarch. Both the lasting presence of Kāśyapa and the rigour of his descendants guarantee the preservation of the Dharma.

The exact *nikāya* affiliation of Mahānāman's lineage—i.e. the school in conformity with whose Vinaya he was ordained and whose core scriptures he transmitted—is difficult to establish. While the inscription conveys motifs that seem indicative of a certain influence of Sarvāstivādin sources on the ideas of this Sinhalese group, this does not account for an affiliation. If, as is likely, this religious movement were to belong to a subschool of the Theriyas,<sup>164</sup> probably non-Mahāvihāravāsins, the inscription would provide genuine Indian evidence of a reality otherwise only known through a Chinese reflection of it. Mahānāman and his compatriots, who express their wish for Awakening in the inscriptions of the period concerned, could indeed be representatives of the group

163 Although this school is not named, the small inscription of Mahānāman could well represent an occurrence of the *anuttarajñāna* formula in a context that points towards a “mainstream monastic order” (the expression is Schopen's). Compare Schopen 2000, 15–17.

164 One could think, following Lévi 1900, 404, and contrastively to the former understanding by Fleet (1888, 278–279), that the word *sthavira* in the short donative formula could refer to “l'école à laquelle Mahānāman se vante d'appartenir.” If we look for parallel attestations in epigraphy, however, it seems clear that *sthavira* occurs in composition with the name of the donor in most cases unambiguously to designate his status as a monk. See for example, *IBH*, Sārnāth nos. 17, 92; Bihār no. 1, l. 5. The indicator of status may be abbreviated as *stha* as in *IBH*, Kurkihār nos. 6, 32 and 79. In all these cases, *sthavira* is without doubt a title, like *bhadanta*, which occurs in similar formulas. Cf. for example *IBH*, Ajaṅṭā nos. 22, 26 = Cohen 2006, nos. 35, 36. See also Schopen 1979, 18n25. When the element *sthavira* occurs, as in our case, in the middle of a complex compound having as first element a toponym—i.e. the place of origin of the monk—, the absence of syntactical marker makes its understanding less certain. See for example the inscription from Kurkihār, reading *deyadharmo 'yam kāñcisthāvīramāñjuśrīvarmmanāḥ*. Cf. Banerji-Sastri 1940, 242, no. 18 = *IBH*, Kurkihār no. 18. Compare Banerji-Sastri 1940, 245 = *IBH*, Kurkihār no. 51. There is however no good reason to understand differently *sthavira* in complex compounds and in twofold ones. The formula recorded in a 10th century inscription from Bodhgayā has the compound *śrīmatasomapuramahāvihāriyavinayavītsthāvīravīryendrasya*, clearly showing that *vinayavid* and *sthavira* should be understood as titles insisting on the eminent position of the monk Vīryendra. Cf. Bloch 1912, 158 = *IBH*, Bodh-Gayā no. 28. Cf. also *IBH*, Hilsa no. 3, and also the references quoted in Skilling 2009, 65–66 and nn. 15–16. To conclude, though the scenario of a Sthavira affiliation is likely *per se*, Mahānāman's title cannot be used in favour of this interpretation.

which, according to Xuanzang, writing a few decades later, dominated the Bodhgayā religious landscape, namely the Mahāyāna-Sthaviras (Chin. *dasheng shangzuo* 大乘上座) residing at the Mahābodhi-Saṅghārāma.<sup>165</sup> As this label seems essentially the product of a foreign taxonomy<sup>166</sup> and does not convey much by itself, one should beware not to subsume under a frozen category the complex identities evinced by the Bodhgayā materials. Some scholars have raised the possibility that the group that was prominent in Bodhgayā upon Xuanzang's visit might have been affiliated to the Abhayagiri *nikāya*.<sup>167</sup> Tempting as this hypothesis is, given the Abhayagirikas' known openness towards the new doctrines, there remains insufficient evidence to sustain this hypothesis.

Lastly, we can return to the place ascribed to Mahākāśyapa within the ideological system of Mahānāman's long inscription. Being addressed as an accessible figure of worship, he assumes a crucial role in the definition of Mahānāman's identity. The spiritual ancestor imbued with *auctoritas* sustains the monk Mahānāman as he expresses an aspiration belonging to a trend of thought that distances itself from an older theory of salvation. A figure belonging to that older system of ideals is at the very centre of this shift, as he is redefined to fit in another soteriology.<sup>168</sup> The fact that the term *adhimuktivaśitā* (or *vimuktivaśitā*

165 Cf. Beal 1884, 2:133; Li 1995, 258. The same school is also mentioned in reference to Kalinga, Bharukaccha and Surāṣṭra, Cf. Deeg 2012, 151. It is said to dominate in Lan kā as well, an island to which Xuanzang did not travel personally. Beal 1884, 2:247; Li 1995, 307. On the various interpretations of the expression 大乘上座, see Watters, *Yuan Chwang's Travels*, 2:136–138, 235; Lévi and Chavannes 1916, 46–49; Bareau 1955, 37, 243, 254–255; Lamotte 1958, 596–597; Wang 1994, 177–178; Bechert 1973, 13–14; 2005, 60–61. See also Walser 2005, 41–42, who however misunderstood Lamotte's actual definition of the Mahāyāna-Sthaviras, (confusing his no. 5, p. 596 with no. 7, p. 597): his criticisms against the Belgian scholar are thus unfounded.

166 Max Deeg, who recently returned to the issue of the Mahāyāna-Sthaviras, goes as far as to suggest that this label was an invention by Xuanzang, “an attempt to upgrade the otherwise, at least in a Chinese context, low-ranked Hinayāna-*sthaviras* to the respected status of Mahāyāna-monks.” Cf. Deeg 2012, 150–156. The author does not explain, however, what could have motivated such an “upgrade.” It seems more likely to me that it was the encounter with a specific kind of Buddhist Sthāviriya group transmitting ideas identified as “Mahāyāna” that led to the emergence of this notion. As to whether Xuanzang was the “inventor” of this label, the description of a group of monks in such terms in an 11th century Khmer inscription from Lopburi in Central Thailand makes this rather unlikely. Cf. Cœdès 1929, 22–23, no. 19; Skilling 2004, 154n15.

167 See, for instance, Bareau 1955, 243; Cousins 2003, 116.

168 Lévi and Chavannes, and after them Lamotte, have already paid attention to the surfacing

standing for the same) is used to refer to Mahākāśyapa's power of determining the perdurance of his body (*adhiṣṭhāna*) could indeed well illustrate a conscious attempt to dress the *arhat* in a *bodhisattva* garb.<sup>169</sup>

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of the type of *arhat* who postpones his *parinirvāṇa* to protect the Law and benefit people, and have shown how it constitutes a "tentative d'accommodation," or else a "point d'intersection" between the commonly opposed ideals of the two vehicles. Cf. Lévi and Chavannes 1916, 50, 270–271; Lamotte 1958, 770.

- 169 The very concept of "inclination" (*adhimukti*) is crucial for the theme of the "conversion" of the *arhats* to the path of Buddhahood in chapter IV of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*. Kāśyapa and three fellow *mahāśrāvakas* realise how the Buddha, after their preliminary training through skilful means (*upāyakaśālyā*), acknowledges in due time the force of their dispositions (*adhimuktibala*), and reveals for them the jewel of omniscience: *asmākaṃ cedānīṃ bhagavān adhimuktibalaṃ jñātvedam udāhṛtavān*. As a consequence, Kāśyapa is the first in the *Śrāvakavyākaraṇaparivarta* (ch. VI) to receive the prediction of Buddhahood. Cf. Kern and Nanjio 1908, 110.8; 144–146. Besides the tendency (referred to in n. 73) to identify Mahākāśyapa with the Buddha, he is at times described as possessing attributes distinctive of *buddhas* and *buddhas-to-be*. In the *Pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthitasamādhisūtra*, Kāśyapa is said to have "gained mastery [*dbang du ggyur pa*, which may render Skt. *vaśitva*, following *Mvy* § 4561] from this *samādhi*," an attribute which he shares with a group of *bodhisattvas*. Cf. Harrison 1978, 32.16–18; 1990, 38, § 3G. Note also that the *Mahāvastu* describes how Kāśyapa looks at the nun Sthūlānandā with the "gaze of the elephant who [turns] entirely his body," a gaze which is characteristic of the Buddha. Cf. *Mvu* 3:55.18–19, reading with Ms. Sa, 286b1: *sarvāvantaṃ tena kāyena nāgāvalokitena*, while Senart emends *sarvāvantaṃ tena kālena*. See also *TGVS* 5:2318 and references quoted therein (n. 1); *Dīvy* 208.16–26; Sander and Waldschmidt 1980, 30, no. 412, fol. 10a2–3 (*Māratarjanīyasūtra*). In the *Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra* (Vaidya 1960, 46.11–13), this gaze is displayed by Mañjuśrī.

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### Abbreviations

NB: Unless otherwise stated, references to Pāli texts are to the editions of the Pali Text Society, using the abbreviation system set up in Helmert Smith's "Epilegomena" of *CPD*, vol. I, 5\*–15\* and expanded in von Hinüber, 1996.

- BHSD/BHSG* Edgerton, Franklin. 1953. *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, 2 vols. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- CPD* Trencker, V. et al. 1924–2011. *A Critical Pāli Dictionary*, vols. I, fasc. 1–III, fasc. 8. Copenhagen: Royal Danish Academy of Science and Letters; Bristol: Pali Text Society.
- Dīvy* Cowell, E.B. and R.A. Neil. *The Dīvyāvadāna. A collection of early Buddhist Legends*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1886.
- DPPN* Malalasekara, G.P. 1974. *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names*. 2 vols. London: Pali Text Society. First published 1937–1938.
- EI* Burgess, James et al. 1892–1978. *Epigraphia Indica*. 42 vols. Calcutta; Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India.
- EZ* de Zilva Wickremasinghe, Martino et al. 1904–1991. *Epigraphia Zeylanica*. 6 vols. London: Henry Frowde; Colombo: Dept. of Govt. Printing, Sri Lanka.
- IBH* Tsukamoto Keishō. 1996. *Indo Bukkyō Himei no Kenkyū* [A Comprehensive Study of the Indian Buddhist Inscriptions]. Vol. 1. Kyoto: Heirakuji-Shoten.
- Kośa* Pradhan, P. 1975. *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyaṃ of Vasubandhu*. Patna: K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute. First published 1967.
- Kośa LaV* 1971–1972. *L'Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu*. 6 vols. Bruxelles: Institut belge des hautes études chinoises. First published 1923–1931.
- KośaV* Wogihara Unrai. 1971. *Sputārthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā by Yaśomitra*. Tokyo: Sankibo. First Published 1932–1936.
- Mvu* Senart, Émile. 1882–1897. *Le Mahāvastu, texte sanskrit publié pour*

- la première fois et accompagné d'introductions et d'un commentaire.* 3 vols. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale.
- Mvy* Sakaki Ryōzaburo. 1962. (*Bon-Zō Kan-Wa shiyaku taikō*) *Honyaku myōgishū (Mahāvyutpatti)* 梵藏漢和四譯對校翻譯名義集 [(Sanskrit, Tibetan, Chinese, Japanese Four Language Edition of) The *Mahāvyutpatti*]. 2 vols. Tokyo: Suzuki Research Foundation. First published 1916.
- PTSD* Rhys Davids, T.W. and William Stede. 1921–1925. *Pāli-English Dictionary*. London: Pali Text Society.
- PW* Bōhtlingk, Otto and Rudolph Roth. 1855–1875. *Sanskrit-Wörterbuch*. 7 vols. St. Petersburg: Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften.
- MW* Monier-Williams, Monier. 1899. *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- RP* Finot, Louis. 1977. *Rāṣṭrapālāparipṛcchā. Sūtra du Mahāyāna*. Tokyo: Meicho–Fukyū-Kai. First published 1901.
- Sih* ver Eecke, Jacqueline. 1980. *Le Sīhaḷavatthuppakkaraṇa. Texte pāli et traduction*. Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient.
- TGVS* Lamotte, Étienne. 1944–1980. *Le traité de la grande vertu de sagesse (Mahāprajñāpāramitā Śāstra)*. 5 vols. Louvain-la-Neuve: Institut Orientaliste.

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