A Brief Note on the Newly Found Sanskrit Fragments of the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*

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Until recently the *Vinayavastu* of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* has been known in three versions: a Sanskrit manuscript found in Gilgit in the first half of the last century, a Tibetan translation, and a Chinese translation. Recently, however, another Sanskrit manuscript, albeit in a fragmentary state, was found apparently near Gilgit, and most of it is now kept in a private collection in Virginia, USA. The newly found manuscript is close to the Gilgit manuscript in both its text and script (Gilgit/Bamiyan Type II), and many of the fragments were identified by Klaus Wille and Jens Uwe-Hartmann as belonging to the *Bhaiṣajyavastu*, the sixth chapter of the *Vinayavastu*. These new fragments supplement the text of the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* as preserved in the previously known Gilgit manuscript, more than half of which is lost today. This paper is intended as a report on one of the folios, which shows several significant agreements and disagreements with the Tibetan and Chinese translations.

In the middle of the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* there is a very long story of a journey made by the Buddha, the early part of which intermittently corresponds to part of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* of the *Dirghāgama* (i.e. MPS 134–202). The correspondence ends with a scene of the Buddha’s stay at a village called Venu at a time of famine. We cannot obtain any information about this section from the Gilgit manuscript because about fifty folios, including this part, have been lost, and there are notable differences between the Tibetan and Chinese versions. After the opening lines of the passage in question, we find indications of textual abridgment with references to several titles of *śūtras* in the Chinese version: “As explained in detail in the teachings of the *Jijian jing* 飢儉經 (Śūtra of Famine), and also as [in] the *Daoping chuanlai jing* 道品傳來經 (Śūtra of the Tradition of the *Mārgavarga*), *Liuji jing* 六集經 (Śūtra of the Group of Six) and *Daniepan jing* 大涅槃經 (*Mahā[pari]nirvāṇa-sūtra)*” 如飢儉經廣說. 亦如道品傳來經, 六集經及大涅槃經等法行. In contrast, the Tibetan version gives the passage, which corresponds to *Samyuttanikāya* 47.9 and part of
the Mahāparinirvānasūtra, in full without reference to the titles of any sūtras. It was suggested by Hosoda Noriaki that a counterpart of this passage in the Tibetan version belonged to the now lost twenty-fifth volume of the Chinese Samyuktāgama (Taishō No. 99).

Nishimoto Ryūzan long ago pointed out the discrepancy between the Chinese and Tibetan versions in this section and offered the explanation that the Chinese translator, Yijing, himself omitted the passage, naming each part of it Jijian jing, Daoping chuanlai jing and Liuji jing, and that these parts are all included in the Daniepan jing. Hosoda, agreeing with Nishimoto about who made the omission, assumed that the Jijian jing, Daoping chuanlai jing, and Liuji jing and Daniepan jing correspond to SN 47.9.1–2, 3–4, and 5–11 respectively. I once mentioned the possibility that the omission might have originated in the Sanskrit text used by Yijing on the grounds that it is fairly common in the Bhaisajyavastu for both the Sanskrit and Chinese versions to omit a sūtra while the Tibetan version gives the same sūtra in full. Then I expressed the view that the original Sanskrit version used by Yijing may actually have given the titles of two sūtras: the “Sūtra of Famine” in the *Mārgavarganipāta of the Samyuktāgama and the *Mahā[pari]nirvānasūtra in the Śatsūtrakānipāta of the Dirghāgama.

As it turns out, evidence supporting my previous suggestions has now surfaced in two fragments of the newly found manuscript, numbered F19.3 and F19.4 and belonging to the same folio. Fragment F19.4 looks like several folios stuck together. However, we can be fairly certain that it is one folio folded lengthwise with the verso side on the outside since the upper right of side A forms a join with the lower right of side B. A few letters of the recto are visible from behind the verso. The following is a transliteration of the two fragments.

Recto

F19.3B (bold), F19.4.2, F19.4.1B-2 (italic), F19.4.1B-3 (italic with underline), F19.4.1B-4 (italic with dotted underline)

1 /// + .. āroci .. /// /// .. hitā .. ///

2 /// .. yā abhaya ///

3 /// + k. kt .. ///

4 /// + + .. grā .. + /// + + .. m. .. .. + + ///
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8 /// [m a] bhūt kṛcchraṁ [k]. /// /// .. [ṇḍa] ko yācanakena .. ///

1.8: Cf. MPS §13.5: tena khalu samayena durbhikṣam abhūt kṛcchrah kāntāro durlabhah pindako yācanakena/

Verse

F19.4.1B, F19.3A (bold), F19.4.1A (italic), F19.4.3 (italic with underline)

1 /// (r) bh (i) kṣ (a) sūtraṁ yathā mārgavargani [p]āte • śaṭṣūтриkānipāte .. ///

2 /// (r) [au] Śi .. .. bhagavān anyatamasiṃ pra[de]ṣe smitam (a)[k]ā[rṣ]i ///

3 /// + + + .. .. .. [ath] āyūṣmān āna[n] do kṛṣṭakaraputo .. ///

4 /// + + p, .. .. tvam ān (a) nda [i] maṁ pradeśam evam bhadanta ///

5 /// + + datu bhagavān prajñapta evāsane [e]vam ayam ///

6 /// mayānanda yena mithilety evam bhada[n] (t) e⟨ty⟩ [n] āyūṣmā [n]. ///

7 /// + na yathā madhy⟨am⟩āgame rāja[s] (a) myuktanipā ///

8 /// + + + + + + .. [v] aidehake .. ta⟨ma⟩ smiṁ prade.v, e .. ///

1.2: Bhv (GM 66.13–14; GBM 986.1): anāgadikāyām anyatamasiṃ pradeśe smitam akārsit

1.3: Cf. Sbhv II 162.32–34: atha tā arciṣo bhagavantam triḥ pradakṣiniṃkṛtya bhagavata ūrṇāyām antarhitah; athāyūṣmān ānandah kṛṣṭakaraputo bhagavantam papraccha

1.4: Cf. Bhv (GM 2.1–2; GBM 952.2–3): paśyasi tvam vajrapāne bāladarākāṃ pāṃstu-pakaih kṛidataḥ (MS: kṛidanta)/ evam bhadanta

1.5: Cf. Bhv (GM 74.17–18; GBM 990.7): nisidatu bhagavām prajñapta evāsane evam ayam prthivipradaśo dvābhyām samyakṣaṃ-buddhābhhyām paribhuko bhavisyati/

1.6: Cf. Bhv (GM 3.12–13; GBM 952.10–953.1): āgamayānanda yena mathurety evam bhadantety āyūṣmān ānandho bhagavatāḥ pratyaśrausid

1.7: Cf. Bhv (GM 217.12–13; GBM 1071b5): (vi) stāreṇa yathā madhyamāgame rā-jasamyuktanipāte

1.8: See 1.2.

Translation

r8: . . . calamity . . . broke out. (It became difficult) for a beggar to obtain food. (Derge Kha 49a6; Taishō 24.29c13–14)

v1: . . . as the sūtra of famine in the *Mārgavarganipāta; in the Śaṭṣūтриkānipāta (—;
29c15–17)

v2: (Ānanda) replied, The Blessed One smiled at a certain place. (51a6; 29c18–19)

v3: ... Then the Venerable Ānanda, with his hands joined, ... (52a7; 30a19)

v4: “Ānanda, did you see this place?” “Yes, Reverend One.” (52b4–5; 30b1–2)

v5: “The Blessed One should sit on the prepared seat. In this way, this ...” (52b6; 30b3–4)

v6: “Come with me, Ānanda, to Mithilā.” “Yes, Reverend One,” (replied) the Venerable Ānanda. (52b7; 30b5–6)

v7: ... as in the Rājasamuyuktakanipāta of the Madhyamāgama (—; 30b8)

v8: ... in a certain place of Videha ... (56b7–58a1; —)

The last line of the recto corresponds to a sentence in the opening part of the scene in Veṇu. In the first line of the verso, we read part of the very titles of the sūtras in question. The damaged letters located at the left end of the fragment can be safely restored to Durbhikṣasūtram, “Sūtra of Famine,” based on Yijing’s translation. Thus we see that this Sanskrit manuscript shows a similar abridgment to that reconstructed from Yijing’s version above.

This folio contains further valuable information about a series of narratives following the passage discussed above. Although the second line of the verso corresponds to the opening of a long stock passage describing the Buddha’s smile, the third and fourth lines show that the stock passage is abbreviated, contrary to the Chinese and Tibetan versions, both of which present the passage in full. The seventh line of the verso refers to the Rājasamuyuktakanipāta of the Madhyamāgama, agreeing with Yijing’s translation, which abbreviates the narrative by referring to “the *Mahādeva (sūtra) in the *Rājasamuyuktakanipāta” 廣如 莫訶提婆及國王相應品中說, while the Tibetan version gives the story of King *Mahādeva in full without mention of its title. The eighth line shows that this manuscript has a scene set in a place in Videha similarly to the Tibetan version as opposed to the Chinese version, which does not have this scene.

To sum up, this folio shows three patterns of correspondence with the two translations: it disagrees with the Tibetan version while it agrees with the Chinese version (line 1, 7 of verso); it agrees with the Tibetan version while it disagrees with the Chinese version (line 8 of verso); and it disagrees with both the Tibetan and Chinese versions (lines 2–4 of verso). Such agreements and disagreements are also found between the Gilgit manuscript and
the two translations. Although Yijing’s translation has been frequently assumed not to be exact, the newly found manuscript seems to make it increasingly clear that his translation faithfully conveys the contents of its original. To put it another way, the Sanskrit texts on which the Chinese and Tibetan translations were based seem to have differed from each other, and this suggests that there was much more variation (or much less standardization) in the textual traditions of the Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya than previously thought. Furthermore, another fragment, which cannot be discussed here for lack of space, presents us with a case in which the newly found manuscript disagrees with the Gilgit manuscript while agreeing with the Chinese and Tibetan versions (Fragment G17.9 recto). All this evidence reminds us that the extant sources of the Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya represent only the tip of the iceberg.

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2) Klaus Wille, “Further Identified Manuscripts in the Private Collection, Virginia” and “Private Collection, Virginia, USA: Transliteration by K. Wille” (both unpublished, dated September 2011).

3) Taishō 24.29c11–17.

4) Derge, 'Dul ba Kha 49a4–51a5.


8) To be precise, Šatāsūrāikanipāta, though I once spelled it "-sūraka-" (Yao, op. cit., p. 264).

9) See Sbhv II 161–163 for the complete Sanskrit text of the stock passage.


〈Abbreviations〉

Bhv Bhaiṣajyavastu.
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GBM/GM See note 1.

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