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### IV. NOTES AND NEWS

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The Indravarman (Avaca) Casket Inscription Reconsidered: Further Evidence for Canonical Passages in Buddhist Inscriptions

by Richard Salomon and Gregory Schopen

A dedicatory inscription on a Buddhist relic casket in 7 lines of Kharoṣṭhī script in the northwestern Prakrit dialect known as Gāndhārī was first published by Sir Harold Bailey (henceforth B) in JRAS 1978, 3–13. The importance of this inscription was immediately recognized by several scholars, and it has subsequently been re-edited by B.N. Mukherjee (M) in Journal of Ancient Indian History 11 (1978), 93–114; by Gérard Fussman (F) in Bulletin de l’École Française d’Extème-Orient 67 (1980), 1–43; and by Richard Salomon (S) in Journal of the American Oriental Society 102 (1982), 59–68.1

All three later editions overlapped in the press, however, so that they could not refer to each other. The revised text and translation now offered below is intended to synthesize the results of all four attempts, in the hope of establishing a standard version. In several places, we have accordingly adopted the readings and/or interpretations of the other editors; e.g., in the important passage apradithحتابتپراتوه, 1.4, we have accepted F’s version, for reasons which will be presented in detail below. In other cases, we have retained S’s prior readings and translations, as in gahine ya utarae, 1.5; and finally some entirely new interpretations are suggested, for example for kidapadihari aavhiye akethi majimami, 1.1.

Two comments on the treatment of the inscription as a whole may be made here. First, we are now inclined to prefer to refer to it as the “Indravarman Casket Inscription,” as do F and Bivar (note 1), rather than the “Avaca Inscription,” as in B and
S. Second, we have treated the arrangement of the lines as does F, numbering the two lines on the lid of the casket as 1 and 2 but placing them at the end of the text and translation, since they are clearly intended to be read after the 5 lines on the body of the casket.

Finally, it must be pointed out that all the editors after B have worked from the set of photographs printed by him; none of them, evidently, have seen the original piece, which is presently in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. These photographs are generally good, but are somewhat unclear and probably distorted in places, especially near the edges and the bottom. Some of the problematic readings could probably be clarified by an examination of the original casket.

**Text**

3) saṁvatsarae treṣāṭhimae 20 20 1 1 1 maharayasa ayasa
   atidasa kartīasa masasa divasae śodaśae imena cetrike kṣene
   idravarme kumare apracarajaputre

4) ime bhagavato sākyamunīsa śārira pradīthaveti ṭhiae ga-
   bhirae apradīthavitaprave pateśe brammapuṇ[o] prasavati
   sadha mađuṇa rukhunakā ajiiputrae apracarajabharyae

5) sadha maūlenā ramakēna sadha maulaṇīe daśakae sadha
   ṣpasadarehi vasavadatae mahave(?)dae ṇikae ca gahiṇie ya
   utarae

6) pidu a puyae viṣ(ṇ)uvarmasa avacarayasa

7) bhrada vaga stratego puyaite viyayamitro ya avacaraya ma-
   duśpasa bhādata puṣita

1) ime ca śārīre muryakalinate thubute ķidapādihaṇa avhiye
   aheṭhi majimami pratiḥavaṇami pratiḥa(va)(sa) [read ta]

2) vasia pāmcaīśo

**Translation**

3) In the sixty-third (63) year of the late Great King Aya [azes],
   on the sixteenth day of the month Kartia [Kārttika]; at this
   auspicious (?) time, Prince Idravarma [Indravarman], son of
   the King of Apraca,

4) establishes these bodily relics of Lord Śākyamuni in a secure,
   deep, previously unestablished place; he produces brahma-
   merit together with his mother Rukhunakā, daughter of Āji
   (and) wife of the King of Apraca,

5) with (his) maternal uncle Ramaka, with (his) maternal uncle's
wife Daśakā, with (his) sisters and wife—Vasavadatta (Vāsavadattā), Mahaveda (?; = Mahāvedā?), and ṇīkā, and (his) wife Utara (Uttarā).

6) And (this is done) in honor of (his) father Viṣṇuvarma. The king of Avaca (= Apraca)’s
7) brother, the Commander Vaga is honored, and Viyayamitra (= Vijayamitra), [former] King of Avaca. (His) mother’s sister, Bhaidata (Bhagīdattā?) is honored.

1) And these bodily relics, having been brought in procession from the Muryaka cave stūpa, were established in a secure (?), safe, deep (?) depository,
2) (in) the year twenty-five.

Notes to the Text and Translation
3) saṁvatsarae: As in S and M; B and F read saṁvatśa-; but F (12) notes that “je pense que la transcription tsa serait meilleure,” citing GD, 73–4.

imena cetrike kṣene: S formerly read kṣana; but what may be signs of the vowel e can be faintly discerned over both aksaras of this word. F reads the whole phrase as imena cetri-pēksena, “par cette quinzaine brillante,” taking -peksena as = Sanskrit paksena by vowel harmony (13). However, the letter following tri could not be pe. It is true, as F points out, that the construction is irregular, with the conjunction of instrumental and locative (cf. the notes on the use of the instrumental for locative in S 60). Nevertheless, we have retained S’s previous translation, on the grounds of the justification given there (S 60).

4) sakyamunisa: As in B and S; M and F read saka-. F (13) comments “Je ne vois pas la boucle qui incite Sir Harold [i.e., B] à transcrire sakyamunisa.” But there is a discernible, if not too distinct curve to the left at the foot of the character, which is certainly meant to express a subscript y; cf. the similar, though less cursively reduced subscript y in the same word in the Kurram casket inscription, line 1d (K 155 and pl. XXIX-D).

apradithavitaprave: S formerly read a pradithavitaprave = ca *pratisthapitapūrve, as in B and M. But F’s explanation (14) of the phrase as = apratisthapitapūrve is definitely correct, as explained at length below.

pateśe: As in B, S; M has “pate(or -de)še”; F, padeśe. As the
latter notes concerning this inscription in general, “Il est parfois plus difficile de distinguer les dentales simples, qui sont très proches de forme en kharosṭhī” (7). It seems to us, however, that the letter in question is quite clearly t, not d.

brammapuṇ[a]: Here M and B read brammapuṇa, while F has brammapuṇ[a]. But in fact the second letter is not the same as the mu in sakyamunīsa (1.4) and muryaka (1.1). F justifies his reading on the grounds that “la graphic bramn est fréquente en gāndhārī” (11), citing Bailey in Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies 11 (1946), 787–9, (F’s note 1); but in fact, Bailey gives no instance there of such a spelling. The ligature here (which S previously read as mha) is probably a variant of the mma common in Gandhari (GD 70; cf. bramma-miyāva, 128, verse 68). The vowel o on the ū is uncertain.

The significance of the term brammapuṇa will be explained below.

rukhuṇaka ajiputrae: Like all others, F divides the words thus, but notes that “La coupe des mots n’est pourtant pas sûre . . . la coupe rukhuṇaka implique que le mot n’est pas fléchi, ce qui est surprenant. On peut donc songer à couper sadhu maddhuṇa rukhuṇa kaajiputrae ‘avec sa mère Rukhu, fille de Kaaj’” (14). This is possible, but in defense of the reading as given, one could quote F’s own observation of “une tendance à constituer des groupes syntaxiques dont seul le dernier terme est décliné” (12).

apraca: B, M read apraca; F, ap[r]aca. We agree with his observation (14) that a subscript r is faintly visible in B’s photograph (plate IV).

5) mahava(?)dae: The reading here is uncertain. B has mahaphida a-, F mahaphidar, M mahapida e-, and S mahaedae. For reasons described previously (S 61), the third aksara cannot be phi or pi. The two long diagonal lines must be either extraneous marks or, perhaps more likely, correction signs cancelling a wrongly written letter. The preceding letter is still unclear, probably not e as S read before, but perhaps ve.

gahiniya ya utarae: F (unlike B and M) divides the words correctly, but his explanation of gahiniya as “enceinte (garbh-ini)” (15; cf. also 11) is unlikely. We see no reason not to take it as =gahini, as explained in S 61. ya = ca is well-attested in Kharoṣṭhī; see S 60, and also F 15, K Xcix, and GD 110.
6) *pidu a*: The *a* is problematic. M (101) suggests that it may be a scribal error. F (15) says "Je considère *pidua* comme une graphie malhabile de *pidu(n)a* et je traduis 'en l'honneur des mânes', 'en l'honneur de ses ancêtres décédés.'" This is not impossible, but would certainly require further proof. Although references to "ancêtres décédés" occur in Buddhist inscriptions, they never appear in this form. There is never—as far as we know—any reference to an undifferentiated, collective category comparable to "mânes." In Buddhist inscriptions the "ancêtres décédés" are always specific—"father," "mother," etc.—and frequently referred to by name (cf. G. Schopen, "Filial Piety and the Monk in the Practice of Indian Buddhism: A Question of 'Sinicization' Viewed from the Other Side," *T'oung Pao* 70 (1984) (in the press). In light of this we have followed S in taking *a* as a graphic variant of *ya = ca*.

*vis(n)uvarmasa*: The *n* is indicated by a horizontal line above the *s*; cf. the remarks on this and similar diacritic techniques in Kharoṣṭhī in B 12, M 93–4, GD 63, and Salomon, *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik* 7 (1981), 16, 18.

The name Viṣṇuvarman has been treated differently by the various editors, in accordance with their differing divisions of the phrases in this and in the following passages. Here we follow B, taking *visuvarmasa* in apposition with *pidu*, on the grounds that there is a consistent pattern in this (and in other similar Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions) of specifying the co-donors with the term of relation first and then the personal name (S 61).

6-7 *avacarayasa bhrada vaga stratego puyaite viyayamitro ya avacaraya*: Following B, S and M took *vaga* as an honorific title "Lord," from Iranian *baga*. F, however, took it as the personal name of the Avacaraya's brother "Vaga le stratège"; and the new inscription published by Bailey (JRAS 1982 no. 2, 142–55) indicates that this is probably the correct interpretation. This new inscription is dated in the year 77 of an *apacaraja bhagamoya*, who is almost certainly to be identified with Apracaraja Viṣṇuvarman's brother Vaga, since, as is well known, the kingship succeeded from elder brother to younger brother among the Indo-Scythians.

*vigyayamitroya* was taken by B, and by the others follow-
ing him, as an anomalous feminine formation, giving the name of the Avacaraya’s mother’s sister (adopting F’s reading of the following phrase). This is to be rejected (as in S) on both philological and stylistic grounds (as it violates the normal pattern of giving the relational term first and then the personal name). *viyayamitra* is to be taken as a graphic variant of Vijayamitra (S 61), the founder of the Apraca dynasty, who is mentioned in a similar context in the new Bhagamoya inscription at the end of the list of co-donors (1.3, *vijayamitra apacaraja*). He evidently was included along with the living relatives in the donations of the Apracaraja family in recognition of his special status as founding father.

We take *ya* as equivalent to *ca*, as in S. However, in view of the name Bhagamoya in the new inscription, which seems to indicate the existence of a (pleonastic?) name suffix -*(m)o*ya, the name itself should perhaps be read as *viyayamitroya* = Vijayamitra.¹

7) *maduspasa bhaïdata*: This is F’s correction (16, n.6) of B and the others’ *maduka sabhaedata*. F is certainly right that the third *aksara* is *spa*, not *ka*. The previous editors all took the preceding *avacaraya* as compounded with *madu-*, probably on the grounds that the title, already having been used referring (indirectly) to Viṣṇuvarman in 1.3, would not be repeated for Vijayamitra here. But the parallel passage from the Bhagamoya inscription, cited in the preceding note, shows that the title was in fact intended to refer to the (former) King Vijayamitra.

1) *muryaka-*: Here F (4, 16–7) reads *musyaka-*, which he suggests may mean “des souris (*mûšika-*) ou des voleurs (MUS).” This seems to us unlikely both philologically (the alternation of *ś* and *ṣ* would not be expected) and paleographically (the second *aksara* is very similar to that in *bharyae*, 1.4).

*kidapadiharia*: Here B and M read *padiharia*; F has *padi-draria*, with the remark (16) that “Le dr- est maladroit.” Here, however, we retain S’s reading, as the letter in question seems quite clearly to be *ha*, as in the following word *ahethi*. (The two short vertical lines at the top of the letter are probably not significant; there are several such extraneous lines between the top of 1.1 and the groove above it.) But we would
now interpret the compound *kidapāḍihariya* in the light of passages such as that found in the Gilgit text of the *Pañca-vimśati*: *yaś ca tathāgatasyārhatah . . . parinirvāṇasyaśarīram pratīṣṭhāpayet parihareṇ vā satkuryād . . .*, where *parihareṇ* appears to refer to some kind of ritual activity connected with carrying relics (text cited from G. Schopen's review of E. Conze, *The Large Sūtra on Perfect Wisdom*, *Indo-Iranian Journal* 19 (1977), 143 [under C.231.4] and n.3; a similar passage—again from the Gilgit text—is also cited on p. 146 [under C.231.31]). The compound here evidently contains a corresponding nominal form (*parihārita* or *parihārikā*) in a *bhūvṛiḥi* meaning literally “for which the ritual procession has been done;” or, more freely, “brought in procession.” (On the intentionally Sanskritized style and composition of this inscription, see the remarks of F. 9).

*Avhiye:* Here B and S read *avīya*; M, *aviyie*; F, *savhiye*. We now accept F’s reading of the second and third aksaras, but still see the first as *a* rather than *sa*. F (17) remarks that “la lecture me paraît sûre”; but since this part of the text appears near the edge of the photographs (on the left of B’s pl.II and the right of III), it may be subject to distortion. An examination of the original would be necessary to confirm the reading here. F takes *sabhiye* as equivalent to Sanskrit *sa-bhiya*, “avec crainte.” We tentatively accept the equivalence of *vhi = bhi*, but read *abhiye* and interpret this as = *abhīye* or *abhike*, i.e., as an adjective “secure, safe” in the locative modifying the following *pratīṭhavanami*. The equation of Kharoṣṭhī *vh =* Sanskrit *bh*, however, calls for some comment; the Kharoṣṭhī *aṅgara* usually transliterated *vh* and presumed to represent a labial spirant (GD 65–6) generally occurs in inscriptions in Iranian names; e.g. Irīṭavhiha (K77, 1.2, and 74), Guduvhara (= Gondophernes; K 62, 1.1), Daśavhara (K 165, 1.4). In the Gāndhārī *Dhammapada* and other Kharoṣṭhī documents, however, it is well attested as an equivalent of Sanskrit *bh* (e.g. *lavhu = lābha*; GD 96–7). In view of the fact that several other orthographical peculiarities of the non-epigraphic Kharoṣṭhī texts have parallels in inscriptions (see *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik* 7, 13–5), F’s equation of *vh = bh* in this case is acceptable, if not certain.
ahethi: We now follow F in taking this as an adjectival form rather than as part of a proper name, as done by the other editors. However, rather than being interpreted as = ahetha or as an absolutive =*ahethya (F 17), it can more easily be explained as another adjective, “without harm,” i.e., “safe,” in the locative. (For locatives in -i, see K cxiii.)

majimami: This is been taken by all previous editors as a proper name (S) or as “central” (B, M, F), i.e., =majjhima< madhyama (B 10) with anomalous deaspiration (F 11). However, it may be that ahethi majimami repeats the sense of thiae gabhira{e of 1.4, so that majimami would not be = majjhima, but rather is to be connected with √maj “sink” / magna “sunk,” i.e., “deep” (=gabhira), evidently as another adjective (=*majjima) in the locative.

pratitha (vi) (sa): Here B reads pratithavita; M “pratith-avisa (should be -ta)”; S pratitha(vita); and F pradithathisa. As noted by the last three editors (S 62; F 8, “il faut manifestement corriger en praditha[vita]”), the last two aksaras are almost certainly a scribal error. The first of them may be a tha, repeated by dittography from the preceding letter and then imperfectly corrected to vi. The last letter, sa in place of the expected ta, may be a miscopying from an exemplar of the text.

2) vasia: Here F reads nisia, remarking (17) that “Malheureusement, le mot qui précède la date n’est pas clair. Sir Harold [i.e., B] transcrit, avec un ?, vasia = vaise ‘en l’an’, ce que la paléographie et la philologie me paraissent exclure. Je crois que le premier aksara ressemble vaguement à un ni dont la tête serait effacée. Je transcris NISIA, en majuscules d’imprimerie, car je n’ai aucune interprétation sémantiquement plausible à en proposer.” It is true, as F suggests, that the form of the first letter is somewhat irregular, but va still seems a more probable reading than ni. For vasia = varṣa (or vārṣika; or varṣiya, as suggested by M 96), cf. the explanatory notes in S 62; and also compare vaṣaye in the Bajaur casket inscription, line D 2 (S 63). The s in place of ς, however, is admittedly irregular.

pamcaiso: This is F’s reading, correcting the pamcaviiso of the previous editors. “La disparition de -v- est normale” (F 17, note 4), and the meaning, “twenty-five,” remains the same.
Commentary

There is one passage in our inscription which requires additional comment. Beginning at the end of line 3 we find *idra-varme kumare apracarajaputre ime bhagavato sakyamunisa sarira pradithaveti thiae gabhira ev apradithavita-prave pateše bhrmmapun(o) prasavati sadha madun[a] rukhunaka, etc.* It will be obvious from a comparison of B, M, S and F that in regard to the reading *apradithavita-prave pateše* we have followed F. B read *a pradithavita-prave pateše* and translated "in a place having established watering-cisterns." Both M and S followed B in their readings and interpretations, though not exactly in their translations. But F (14), referring to B, noted that "Le sens convient mal." He then went on to say "La 1.5 de 3 [another Kharoṣṭhī inscription published by F in the same paper] me permet de donner une interprétation plus satisfaisante," and he read not *a pradithavita-prave pateše*, but *apradithavitaprave padeše*, which he translated "dans une région . . . où il n'y avait pas de fondation auparavant." In his commentary on this passage (14) he adds: "... Indravarma se félicite de faire œuvre missionnaire en établissant des reliques dans un endroit (padeše) où il n'y avait pas de fondation bouddhique (apradithavita) auparavant (prave pour pruve/purge)." The inscription F refers to as Number 3 in his remarks just quoted reads in part (11.5-6) . . . *apratistavitapruve padhavipradeše pratiḥaveti bhagavato sariram ...*[Ramaka...] dans un endroit de la terre où il n'y avait pas de fondation auparavant, établit des reliques corporelles du Bienheureux." This parallel clearly supports F's reading and interpretation, as B himself has indicated in his notes to the new Bhagamoya inscription (JRAS 1982, 152). In this inscription, we find a second parallel which supports F: . . . *bhagamoyena bhagavato sakyamuni dhatuve pratithavita apratithavita-prave padešami ... *by . . . Bhagamoya, the relics of the Lord Śakyamuni were established in a previously unestablished place. . . ."6 And interestingly enough, these two parallels allow us to locate a third which has not been noted by either F or B. This third parallel occurs in the Taxila copper-plate of Patika (K 28-9): . . . *atra [de] ṣe patiko apratīṭhavita bhagavata sākamunisa sariram [pra]ṭīṭha-veṭeti.* Konow translated this almost exactly as had Bühler7 thirty years earlier: "... in this place Patika establishes a (formerly) not established relic of the Lord Śakyamuni ...." Konow here has made *apratīṭhavita* modify *sariram* rather than [de]ṣe, which
has the effect of disguising the parallelism. But in light of F's inscription no. 3, as well as of the inscriptions of Indravarman and Bhagamoya, it would appear almost certain that apratīṭhāvita in the Patika plate was intended to modify [de]ṣe and not śarīram, and that the passage must now be translated "... in this (formerly) unestablished place Patika establishes a relic of the Lord Śākyamuni."

In terms of the epigraphical evidence alone, F's reading and interpretation of our passage in the Indravarman inscription is, then, firmly supported: there are the two certain parallels in F's inscription no. 3 and in the inscription of Bhagamoya, and there is the almost certain parallel in the Taxila copper plate of Patika. There is, however, more. None of the editors of these inscriptions has noticed that the vocabulary, if not in some cases the actual syntax, of all these passages has been taken over from a canonical Buddhist text, or that—at the very least—there is clear textual authority for the expressions deṣe . . . apratīṭhāvita, or apratīṭstavitaprůve paṭhāvivprādeṣe, or apratīṭhavivaprataprāve pateṣe, in regard to sites on which stūpas or relics are to be established, and for the idea that establishing relics on such sites "generates" brāhmaṇaṇa.

In the Abhidharmakosa of Vasubandhu IV.124, and the Bhāṣya on it we read, in de la Vallée Poussin's translation: "Le Sūtra dit que quatre personnes produisent le mérite 'brahmique', brāhma punya. Quel est ce mérite? . . . 124 c-d. Quatre possèdent le mérite brahmique, parce qu'ils sont heureux dans les cieux pendant un kalpa. Le mérite de telle mesure qu'on est heureux dans les ciel pendant un kalpa, c'est le mérite brahmique, car la vie des Brahmaṇuḥhitas est d'un kalpa." If we had only this it would be interesting, but we could only establish that some idea of brāhma punya was canonical. Fortunately, however, there is more. Yasomitra has been kind enough to cite in his Sphutārtha the full text of "Le Sūtra" referred to in the Bhāṣya. There we find: śūtra uktam—catvāraḥ pudgalaḥ brāhmaḥ punyaḥ prasavanti. apratīṭhite prthīvīprādeṣe tathāgatasya sārīram stūpaṃ pratiṣṭhā-payati—ayaṃ prathamah pudgalaḥ brāhmaḥ punyaḥ prasavati, etc.: "In a Sūtra it was said—'Four [kinds of] persons beget brahma-merit. (One) causes a relic stūpa of the Tathāgata to be established on an unestablished spot of earth. This first (kind of) person generates brahma-merit.' " De la Vallée Poussin,
with his still-astounding erudition, has identified this text with Ekottarāgama 21.5 and Vibhāṣā 82.4. We have to do, then, with a well known Hīnayāna canonical sūtra.

A somewhat developed version of the same basic statement is also found in a short Mahāyāna text entitled Ārya-pratītyasamutpāda-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra. This text unfortunately has not come down to us in Sanskrit, but the Tibetan text is quite clear on the points that concern us. It has rigs kyi bu’am rigs kyi bu mo dad pa can gang la la zhig gis mi gnas pa’i phyogs su mchod rten ni skyu ru ra’i ‘bru tsam srog shing ni khab tsam gdwigs ni ba kul'i me tog tsam zhig byas la / rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba chos kyi dbyings kyi tshigs su bcad pa nang du bsig na de tshangs pa’i bsod nams bskyed par ’gyur te:11 ‘If a devoted son or daughter of good family were to make on an unestablished place (apratisthite desē or pradeśe) a stūpa the size of an āmalaka fruit—with a yaṣṭī the size of a needle and an umbrella the size of a bakula flower—and were to put in it the verse of the Dharma-relic of pratītyasamutpāda, he would generate brahmic merit (brāhma-punyaṃ prasavet).’ There can, we think, be no doubt about the equivalences mi gnas pa’i phyogs su = apratīsthite desē/pradeśe and tshangs pa’i bsod nams bskyed par ’gyur te = brāhma-punyaṃ prasavet.12

These textual sources, then, provide even stronger additional support for F’s reading and interpretation of the Indravarman inscription, and provide additional support for our correction of Konow’s translation of the Taxila copper plate of Patika. Moreover, they prove beyond any doubt that the idea that is explicitly expressed in the Indravarman inscription, and probably to be understood in its three parallel inscriptions—i.e., the idea that establishing relics on a previously unestablished site results in brahmā-punya—has an old and continuous textual authority: the Ekottarāgama, the Vibhāṣā, the Abhidharma-kośa, the Sphuṭārthā and the Pratītyasamutpāda-sūtra all refer to it. But there may be even more here. If we place the passage from the Indravarman inscription, ime bhagavato śākyamunīsa śārira pradīṭhaveti thiaē gabhiræ apradīṭhavitaaprave pateṣe braṃmapuṇ(o) prasavati, beside the Ekottarāgama passage, apratīsthite prthiviṇḍraḍeṣe tathāgatasya śāriṇam stūpaṃ pratiṣṭhāpayati- ayaṃ prathamaḥ pudgalah brahmaḥ punyaṃ prasavati, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that there is some kind of direct connection between the two. If we note that the connection between
establishing relics on an apratiṣṭhitapṛthivipradesā and generating brāhma-puṇya is not a common one in textual sources, and is—as far as we know—found only in this Ekottarāgama passage and the series of texts which either cite it or refer to it; and if we note further that neither the term brāhma-puṇya nor the verb prasavati used in connection with the production of merit are found anywhere else in Indian Buddhist inscriptions, then it is even more difficult to avoid such a conclusion. It would thus seem that we have in the Indravarman inscription, if not a direct quotation of the Ekottarāgama passage from some otherwise unknown redaction of the text, at least a distinct paraphrase or epigraphical adaptation of the passage.

Moreover, there are at least two other aspects of this passage in our inscription, especially in regard to the phrase brammapuṇ[[o] prasavati, which clearly point to the same conclusion. First, in virtually all Kharoṣṭhī donative inscriptions—and in Buddhist donative inscriptions generally—reference to the merit of the act recorded, or to the purpose for which it was undertaken, comes at the end of the inscription, after the donor names himself and those he wishes to associate with his act. The Kalawān copper plate inscription of the year 134 is a good example of this: (1) sampatśaraye 1 100 20 10 4 ajasa śravaṇasa masasa divase treviśe 20 1 1 1 imena kṣuṇena camḍrabhi uasia (2) Dhrammsa grahavatisa dhita Bhadralasa bhaya caḍaśilae šarira praistaveti gahathu—(3) bami sadha bhraduṇa Namdivadhanēna grahavatina sadha putrehi Šameṇa Saïtena ca dhituna ca (4) Dhramae sadhaņu aṣehi Rajaie Idraye ya sadha jivaņmaḍīna Šamapurenēnaya ayaśena ya sarvasti—(5) vaṇa parigrahe raṭhaņikamō puyaṭa sarvasvaṭvaṇa puyaṇa nīvanasa praṭiṣṭe hotu. Another good Kharoṣṭhī example is the Māṇikiāla inscription of the year 18 (K 149–50); and the Sārmāṭhi image inscription of the bhikṣu Bala is an equally good example of the typical pattern in a non-Kharoṣṭhī inscription. The placement of the phrase bramma-puṇ[[o] prasavati in the Indravarman inscription is therefore decidedly odd, not to mention awkward, and it has given most of its translators some difficulty. It is simply stuck into the middle of an otherwise normal enumeration.

The second noteworthy peculiarity of this phrase is that when a donor in a Kharoṣṭhī inscription refers to the merit of his act, or the purpose for which it was undertaken, he every-
where else uses a "dative of purpose" without a finite verb (..da[ṇṇa]makhe Budhorumasa arogadaksi[ṇae], K 124; or, if he uses a finite verb, it is always an imperative (. ..sarīra prāṣṭave-
ti.. nīvanāsa pratīae hotu). A present-tense verb is never used in such a context. A donor never asserts in a declarative sentence that by his act he achieves something. He always says "This is/ was done for the sake of achieving something," or "This is/was done. May it be for the sake of achieving something." These statements are always declarations of intent, never expressions of fact. And yet in our passage from the Indravarman inscription it appears that Indravarman is the subject of the sentence brammapuṇḍro prasavati, and that he is saying "at a certain date he, Indravarman, establishes the relics, and he generates brahma-merit." The second statement here would then be—exactly like the first—a straightforward expression of fact; but this is decidedly odd in light of what we find everywhere else in our Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions.

The fact that we find an accusative and a present-tense construction in the Indravarman passage where everywhere else in donative formulae we find a construction involving a "dative of purpose," or a dative of purpose + an imperative is yet another indication that the phrase brammapuṇḍro prasavati may not belong to the same type of discourse as our other donative formulae; i.e., that it is not a part of a "standard" Buddhist epigraphical language and must therefore have been derived from some other source. The use of the present tense in our passage is also particularly significant if we note that the only instance of the use of a present-tense verb in the Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions edited by Konow—apart from the forms of pratiṭh-
aveti used to express the main act of the donation—occurs in what Konow calls "a quotation from the Buddhist scriptures" in the Kurram casket inscription of the year 20.15

The one other instance in Indian Buddhist inscriptions that is known to us of the use of a present form in regard to the merit resulting from a religious act points us in a similar direction. We refer here to two similar inscriptions found at Ajañṭā. The first occurs in Cave XXII and reads:

1. [siddham] deyadharmmo yaṁ
   śākyabhikṣho[r] ma[hā]yāna....
   .................
Here we have a statement that "Those who have an image of the Buddha made, they are possessed of beauty, prosperity and good qualities, etc." But the present-tense construction here quite clearly occurs not as a part of the donor’s record, but in what appears to be a quotation from an as-yet-unidentified canonical text which is cited at the end of the inscription. Note that in the donor’s statement in regard to the merit of his act, the expected “dative of purpose” construction is used (anuttara-jnāṉānvāptaye). That we have to do here with a quotation from an authoritative—though unidentified—textual source is indicated by the fact that similar verses are found in texts like the Tathāgatabimbakārāpanasūtra, and by the fact that exactly the same verse is used by another donor—this time at the beginning of his record—in an inscription found in Cave X at Ajanta.

Thus, it is not only the vocabulary of our passage (bramma-puñ[o], prasavati) which is foreign to what we find elsewhere in Indian Buddhist inscriptions, but the grammar and syntax as well (the use of the present tense, etc.). Both strongly suggest that we have here a case where canonical material has—as in the Kurram casket inscription and the two inscriptions from Ajanta—been more or less directly transferred into an epigraphical text. In this case, as we have seen above, we have very good reasons for suspecting that the canonical passage came from some redaction of the Ekottārāgama.

The strong likelihood of a direct relationship between our passage in the Indravarman inscription and some redaction of the Ekottārāgama is of significance from a number of points of view. First of all, if we are right, this would be the earliest certain example of a direct contact between Buddhist canonical literature and Buddhist inscriptions. Secondly, if it is fairly certain that there is a direct relationship between our passage in the Indravarman inscription and the Ekottara passage, then it is almost equally certain that this same Ekottara passage lies behind all of the passages from the Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions we
have cited which refer to “establishing relics on previously un-established sites.” This in turn would indicate that our passage, and by extension some version of the *Ekottarāgama*, had wide currency in the Kharoṣṭhī area around the beginning of the Christian era, and perhaps somewhat earlier. Thirdly, the fact that all our inscriptions are written in Gāndhārī Prakrit suggests that the redaction of the *Ekottara* which lies behind our inscriptions may also have been written in Gāndhārī. If this is the case then our inscriptions, and in particular the Indravarman inscription, may be taken as further epigraphical evidence for the existence of a canon in Gāndhārī. Finally, our inscriptions prove beyond any real doubt that the idea that “brahma-merit” results from establishing relics at previously unestablished sites was not simply a “canonical” doctrine, but was an important element in the actual practice of Buddhism in the Kharoṣṭhī area in the early centuries of the Christian era. Given the fact that we rarely know which of the doctrinal assertions and injunctions found in the canonical literature had any impact on actual practice, this may prove to be of particular significance.

Additional note:

After our paper had already gone to press we discovered another version of the *brahmam punyam prasavati* passage preserved in Sanskrit, in the Gilgit text of the Vinaya of the Mūlasarvāstivādin. It does not differ markedly from the version found in Yasomitra’s *Sphūṭārthā*:  

\[
\]

Notice, however, that our passage occurs in a conversation concerning the “splitting” of the saṅgha and that, therefore, it is only the third category of individuals who “produce brahma-
merit”—i.e. yaḥ pudgalah tathāgataśrāvakasaṅghaṁ bhinnam san-
dhatte—which fits the context. This might suggest that our pas-
sage is a part of a set-piece which the compilers of the Vinaya
“borrowed” and that it is not original to the Vinaya.

Notes

1. A.D.H. Bivar has also commented on the historical significance of the
inscription in two recent papers: “The Azes Era and the Indravarma Casket”
in South Asian Archaeology 1979, ed. Herbert Härtel (Berlin: 1981), 369–76,
and “The ‘Vikrama’ Era, the Indravarma Casket, and the coming of the Indo-
Scythians, forerunners of the Afghans,” in Monumentum Georg Morgenstierne

Other abbreviations used in this paper are: GD = John Brough, The
 Gandhāra Dharmapada (London: 1962); K = Sten Konow, Kharosthi Inscriptions
(Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum II. 2, Calcutta: 1929); JRAS = Journal of the
Royal Asiatic Society.

2. Cf. F 8, on the inscription as a whole: “la lecture des traits diacritiques,
-r- and -ra- en particulier, est parfois douteuse.” Thus B has here kṣaṇa; M
 kṣan(e); and F kṣena.

3. A similar pair of diagonals is visible in the first letter in 1.4 of the new
inscription of the year 77 (JRAS 1982, 150 1.4, and pl. V a and b; see notes on
11.6–7 below). Bailey reads this aksara as a ligature ‘gro-nada’; we see it as gro,
written by mistake and then cancelled by the scribe, who then rewrote the
intended letter correctly in the following aksara.

4. The details of the interpretation of the Bhagamoya inscription and its
relation to the Indravarman inscription will be discussed in S’s forthcoming
paper, “The Bhagamoya Relic Bowl Inscription,” in Indo-Iranian Journal 27

5. This is inaccurate; B actually says (10) ‘vasi’a for ‘di-vasi’a, rather than
for vasi’a ‘year.’

6. S’s reading and translation; see note 4 above.


8. L. de la Vallée Poussin, L’Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu, T. III (Paris:

9. S.D. Shastri, Abhidharmakośa & Bhāṣya of Acharya Vasubandhu with Sphu-
tārthā Commentary of Ācārya Vaṣṭumitra, Part II (Varanasi: 1971), 751. (This was
the only edition available to us; de la Vallée Poussin also cites the text of the
Sphuṭārthā (ibid., n. 1), presumably from Mss.).

10. L’Abhidharmakośa, T. III, 250 n. 2.

11. The Tibetan text is cited from N.A. Sastri, Ārya Sālistamba Sūtra,
Pratītyasamutpādavṛttaṁbhāvavimśaṁśāstra and Pratītyasamutpādāgāthā Sūtra (Ma-

12. For tshangs pa’i bsod nams = brāhma-punya see A. Hirakawa et al., Index


19. The date of the inscription, 63 of the Aya (or Azes, = “Vikrama”) era, is equivalent to 5–6 A.D. (See S 60, 65ff.)