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Jikido TAKASAKI,

*Between translation and interpretation – Cases in the Chinese Tripiṭaka* – (Presidential address at the XIVth Conference of the International Association of Buddhist Studies, London, August 29 – September 3, 2005) . . . . . 3

•

Ben BROSE

*Crossing thousands of Li of waves: The return of China's lost Tiantai texts* . . . . . 21

William CHU

*Syncretism reconsidered: The Four Eminent Monks and their syncretistic styles* . . . . . 43

Johan ELVERSKOG

*The Mongolian Big Dipper Sūtra* . . . . . 87

Juhyung RHI

*Fasting Buddhas, Lalitavistara, and Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka* . . . . . 125

Martin SEEGER

*The Bhikkhunī-ordination controversy in Thailand* . . . . . 155

•

Notes on the contributors . . . . . 185

SOME TEXTUAL PARALLELS FOR GANDHĀRAN ART:  
FASTING BUDDHAS, *LALITAVISTARA*, AND *KARUṆĀPUNḌARĪKA*\*

JUHYUNG RHI

I

The relationship between text and image is hardly as simple as unsophisticated explorers may presume. When conspicuous parallels are found between a text and a visual image, one may be naturally tempted to ascribe it to the text as being a source for the visual image. But the dependency of an image upon a textual account varies widely in its mode and extent according to diverse regional traditions or periods as well as individual circumstances. (Obviously it was more marked in the East Asian tradition than that of the Indian subcontinent in the early periods.) It is also equally possible that the relationship was in reverse with an image being an inspiration for a text or a text being a testimony to an image. Or a textual account and a visual image may have been derived from a common source; or they simply represented a shared idea with or without mutual awareness. Without explicit evidence, even in the most fortunate instances the relationship between the two is usually hard to establish beyond one that is simply inferred on the basis of relative precedence. Still, the issue fascinates us immensely.

As regards visual images from Gandhāra, a number of texts have attracted our attention. The Larger *Sukhāvāṭīvyūha*, the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*, and the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā*, are a few of them, which I hope to be able to examine more carefully in relation to visual images on other occasions.<sup>1</sup> My primary concern in

\* I would like to thank Professors Richard Salomon, Hubert Durt and Joanna Williams for giving me valuable suggestions during the revision work on this paper, which was initially presented at the 14<sup>th</sup> IABS conference in 2005.

<sup>1</sup> The Larger *Sukhāvāṭīvyūha* has been noted as a possible source for the famous Mo-

this paper is the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka-sūtra*, a Mahāyāna text. The *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka* exists in several versions that comprise some eight Sanskrit recensions and one Tibetan and two Chinese translations:

- *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka*.<sup>2</sup>
- *Dasheng beifentuolijing* 大乘悲分陀利經, trans. anonymous, late 4<sup>th</sup> century, T158, 3:233c–289a.
- *Beihuajing* 悲華經, trans. Dharmakṣema, 419, T157, 3:167a–233c.
- *'Phags pa sñiñ rje pad ma dkar po śes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*, trans. Jinamitra (from Kashmir), Surendrabodhi, Prajñāvarman et al., 9th century, Pe 780.

Of these, the two Chinese translations, which date from the late fourth to early fifth centuries, are the earliest extant recensions, while the Tibetan translation dates from the ninth century and the extant Sanskrit manuscripts, most of them datable to the 19th century, reflect the latest stage of its philological history.<sup>3</sup> On this basis, as well as the observation that it presupposes the knowledge of such texts as the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, the Larger *Sukhāvativyūha*, and the *Akṣobhavyūha*, the composition, or compilation, of this sutra has been generally attributed to a period not far from the translations in Chinese, perhaps during the third to fourth centuries.<sup>4</sup> Chinese Buddhist catalogs record that already from the second century on various parts of the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka* existed as a number of smaller separate sutras in Chinese translations; thus they could have contributed

hamed-Nari stele in Lahore Museum by a number of scholars such as John Huntington (1980), Aramaki Noritoshi (1999) and Paul Harrison (2000). The *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* has been discussed by Gregory Schopen (2005, 108–153) for its reference to Bodhisattva images under the Jambu tree. The *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā* has been discussed by me on a few occasions (e.g., Rhi 2005, particularly 204–205).

<sup>2</sup> Yamada (1968).

<sup>3</sup> Yamada (1968, II) 8–10, 21.

<sup>4</sup> Supposedly two more translations of this sutra, *Xianyoujing* 閑遊經 (1 volume) by Dharmarakṣa and another *Beihuajing* (10 volumes) by Daogong 道龔 are listed in Chinese Buddhist catalogs. But the former is regarded as a different sutra in modern scholarship. See *Busshō* (1964) 9: 127; Yamada (1968, I) 18–20.

to the compilation of the larger sutra as its base materials, predating it by one or two centuries.<sup>5</sup> But there is a question whether they were indeed earlier translations of separate parts or they were simply excerpts of the larger sutra, which were attributed in later periods to the translators who lived earlier.<sup>6</sup> In any case, overall this sutra seems to have enjoyed considerable attention in China between the fourth and seventh centuries and perhaps fairly wide circulation outside China as well in whatever form.<sup>7</sup>

The sutra mainly tells a story of the *brāhmaṇa* Samudrarenu, a previous incarnation of Śākyamuni Buddha, who led thousands of living beings to develop *anuttarasamyaksambodhi* and took a vow to attain enlightenment in the Sahā world, which had much more harsh and rugged conditions compared to paradises of supreme happiness such as Sukhāvātī. While examining this sutra in search of a parallel for the installation of a relic in Gandhāran Buddha images,<sup>8</sup> I was struck by a number of passages that strongly recalled visual images from Gandhāra. The most prominent of them concerned the austerities (*duṣkaracaryā*) of the Buddha, which are lavishly extolled in a short biographical account of Śākyamuni Buddha presented in the vow by Samudrarenu.

As is well known, the popularity of fasting Buddha images<sup>9</sup> is one of the most distinctive features in Buddhist art of Gandhāra. The Buddha's austerities were a common theme in narrative reliefs of the

<sup>5</sup> Yamada (1968, I) 167–174.

<sup>6</sup> For a negative assessment, see Sanada (1957).

<sup>7</sup> Previous works on this sutra, mostly by Japanese scholars, treated its limited aspects, particularly focusing on its relationship to the *Sukhāvātīvyūha* and the Amitābha cult. Several notable works are: Nishio (1931), Sanada (1955), Inagaki (1963), Ujitani (1969), Narimatsu (1975).

<sup>8</sup> Rhi (2005) 184–203.

<sup>9</sup> Strictly speaking, Gautama while practicing fasting is not yet a Buddha, and thus it would be more accurate to call his representation of this stage “the fasting Bodhisattva” rather than “the fasting Buddha.” But since the appellation “Buddha” has been commonly – and naturally – used for the pre-enlightenment period as well and the term “fasting Buddha” has also been customarily applied, I follow this convention in this paper avoiding unnecessary complication.

Buddha's life,<sup>10</sup> and were also represented in a magnificent form in larger independent statues, whose foremost examples are preserved in museums in Lahore and Peshawar (Figures 1, 2). Nowhere outside Gandhāra did the theme enjoy such prominence. Up to the Gupta period in India proper, absolutely no example is known. In Chinese Central Asia we find several examples at such cave sites as Binglingsi, Dunhuang (Mogao caves) and Kizil datable as early as the fifth century, but they were evidently derived from the Gandhāran prototypes.<sup>11</sup> An ivory carving from Kashmir dated to the eighth century in the Cleveland Museum of Art also appears to have a source in Gandhāra.<sup>12</sup> Otherwise, during the seventh century, Xuanzang recorded the presence of a fasting Buddha image in a shrine at Bodhgayā, which is the first recorded example from the middle Gangetic valley.<sup>13</sup> We know nothing about its origin and stylistic features except for the description "thin and withered away," but I am tempted to suspect that some influence was felt from the Northwest at least in idea if not form. The image at Bodhgayā probably stimulated the creation of other examples in eastern India. A fasting Buddha appears in one of small scenes from the Buddha's life surrounding a *bhūmisparśa* Buddha in a stele possibly made in Burma under the Pāla influence.<sup>14</sup> A similar scene is also found in a metal piece from Nepal.<sup>15</sup> The famous image at the Ananda temple in Pagan may also have an origin at Bodhgayā.<sup>16</sup> But this image is in the *bhūmi-*

<sup>10</sup> For examples, see Foucher (1905) figs. 192c, 193, 200a; Ingholt and Lyons (1957) pl. 55. There are many other pieces in various collections that include those of questionable authenticity.

<sup>11</sup> For these examples as well as one at Yungang, see Jin (2004) figs. 6-15.

<sup>12</sup> Czuma (1989) 69-72.

<sup>13</sup> Beal (1884, II) 128, cf. T2087, 51:917b; Brown (1997) 112.

<sup>14</sup> While opinions regarding the regional origin of this piece are divided between eastern India and Burma, Robert Brown supports the latter. See Brown (1997) 25-27; Brown (1988) 114-115.

<sup>15</sup> Pal (1985) 104 (S23).

<sup>16</sup> For this image, see Duroiselle (1917) 90-91 and fig. 45. Enthusiasm for Bodhgayā of Burmese Buddhists from Pagan is well known, as attested in the Mahābodhi Temple built in Pagan during the thirteenth century in imitation of the great shrine of Bodhgayā. Cf. Brown (1988) 101-124.

*sparsāsamudrā* unlike all other extant examples, which invariably take the *dhyānamudrā*, and may well be defined as a reinterpretation of an image of enlightenment rather than a fasting image, although we do not know how the fasting Buddha at Bodhgayā would have looked.

The prominence of fasting Buddha images in Gandhāra has long puzzled me. It is not just the matter of regional prominence but the question of why the theme gained such conspicuousness despite the negative implication with which the austerities of the Buddha were imbued in his sacred biography. It is a common knowledge that, although he practiced extreme austerities including fasting for six years (or seven years in some traditions), the Buddha gave them up with a realization that they were not the right way that leads to enlightenment.<sup>17</sup> The moment is described in the *Mahāvastu* in the following words:

*ye kecid bhavantaḥ śramaṇā vā brāhmaṇā vā ātmopakramikāṃ śarīropatāpikāṃ duḥkhāṃ tīvrāṃ kharāṃ kaṭukāṃ vedanā vedayanti ettāvātpāramite imaṃ pi na kenāpi saṃbhūṇanti / atītaṃ bhikṣavaḥ adhvānaṃ etarahiṃ pi bhikṣavaḥ pratyutpanne ye kecid bhavanto śramaṇā vā brāhmaṇā vā ātmopakramikāṃ śarīropatāpikāṃ duḥkhāṃ tīvrāṃ kharāṃ kaṭukāṃ vedanā vedayanti ettāvātpāramite imaṃ pi na kenāpi saṃbhūṇanti / na kho punar ahaṃ abhijānāmi imāye duṣkaracārikāye kaṃcid uttarimanuṣyadharmāṃ alam āryaṃ jñānadarśanaṃ viśeṣādhigamaṃ sāksātkartuṃ nāyaṃ mārgaṃ bodhāya / (Senart 1890, II, 130)*

Those worthy recluses (*śramaṇas*) and *brāhmaṇas* who undergo unpleasant, bitter, cruel, and severe feelings which torment their souls and their bodies do so to gain perfection (*pāramitā*), but in no wise do they attain it. Those worthy recluses (*śramaṇas*) and *brāhmaṇas* who have in the past undergone, as well as those who now undergo, unpleasant, bitter, cruel and severe feelings which torment their souls and their bodies, have done so, and do so, to gain perfection, but in no wise have attained it. Neither I, also, with all this practice of austerities am aware of the state of “further man” (*uttariya-manuṣya*), which enables one to realize the distinct achievement of truly *āryan* knowledge and insight. This is not the way to enlightenment (*bodhi*).<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Thomas (1927) 64–66; Bareau (1963) 55; Nakamura (1992) 259–281.

<sup>18</sup> After Jones (1952, II, 125), with slight modifications including the insertion of parentheses. According to the account of this text, when Siddhārtha reached Mt. Gayāśīrṣa, he



This kind of remark, although varied in expression, is not limited to the *Mahāvastu*, but also found in the majority of sources of the Buddha's life.<sup>19</sup>

How could, then, the Buddha emaciated to the extreme through severe austerities be represented with such magnificence as in the famous fasting Buddha in Lahore? Was it simply meant to provide a lesson for a path not to be taken? I am strongly skeptical.<sup>20</sup> One can sense immediately in this image that the austerities are glorified with utmost importance. In the extreme physical state almost reduced to a skeleton covered with withered skin, the Buddha still engages the viewer with a penetrating gaze; his body is upright without any sign of weariness; the veins are full of energy and tension. The Buddha is truly overcoming physical obstacles in a heroic manner. I have often been at a loss with how to explain the image properly in light of the course taken by the Buddha in his life; for, in our general understanding, it was not austerities but the renouncement or rejection of it that was highlighted in the sacred biography of the Buddha.<sup>21</sup> My provisional answer has been that perhaps the Buddhists in Gandhāra may have wished to see a more concrete and vivid symbol for the highest level of practices the Buddha pursued, although it may not have concerned a direct cause to enlightenment, and they chose fast-

started austerities with a thought, "I shall live with both body and mind withdrawn from sensual pleasures, and with my thoughts of them, my fondness for them, my feverish longing for them and my attachment to them subdued. Although I undergo unpleasant, bitter, cruel and severe feelings which torment my soul and my body, I shall be capable of the state of 'further men,' of knowledge, insight and enlightenment" (Jones 1952, II, 119, cf. Senart 1890, II, 123). This is quite contrastive to the remark cited above, and his concession of a failure in this approach is clear enough.

<sup>19</sup> For particularly similar accounts found in the *Majjhima-nikāya* and *Lalitavistara*, see n. 30 and pp. 134–135 in this paper.

<sup>20</sup> The scene carved on the pedestal of the Lahore Buddha shows six monks in the pose of veneration toward what appears to be a fire altar (Figure 1). Rather than simply a scene of fire worship, it more likely represents monks offering *pūja* to the fasting Buddha above with fire or incense burning in the altar. It is unthinkable that the fasting accompanied by such a scene was presented with a negative meaning.

<sup>21</sup> Interestingly enough, previous works on the Buddha's life in Gandhāran art is almost silent on this problem. For example, see Foucher (1905) 379–382, cf. Foucher (1987) 137–139; Zwalf (1996): 169–171.

ing Buddha images as a most powerful visual reminder, more readily comprehensible than a simple image of *samādhi*.<sup>22</sup>

## II

The Buddha's austerities are invariably referred to in diverse accounts of the Buddha's life in extant textual sources, and those textual accounts exhibit fairly uniform features. However, as I examined them more carefully, an interesting pattern has emerged, which seems to provide a clue for understanding perceptions of the incident among early Buddhists. They are classifiable largely in the following three groups.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Rhi (2003) 62. Robert Brown has suggested that emaciated Buddhas from Gandhāra actually represented another period of long fasting after enlightenment prior to receiving food from two merchants. See Brown (1997) 106–111. However, one wonders whether – and for what reason – the Buddha's fasting in the post-enlightenment period, which instantly appears quite insignificant compared to the fasting during austerities, would have been presented in such a glorified manner and with such magnitude. Although Brown cites in support of his argument a passage from the *Nidānakathā* that the Buddha fasted for seven weeks after enlightenment, the fasting period was merely seven days in texts datable early enough – and probably more relevant to Gandharan fasting image – such as the *Taizi ruyingbenqi jing* (trans., early 3<sup>rd</sup> century; T185, 3:479a) and the *Puyaojing* (the earlier Chinese translation [dated 308] of the *Lalitavistara*, T186, 3:526b; in this account the Buddha even eats right after enlightenment and eats again a week after, taking the food presented by the two merchants), and apparently only in later traditions including the account from the *Nidānakathā* (ed. Fausbøll 1877, 77–80, cf. trans. Rhys Davids 1925, 200–205), it was expanded to seven weeks (e.g., *Fanguang dazhuangyanjing* [the later Chinese translation of the *Lalitavistara*, dated 683], T187, 3:601bc; the extant Sanskrit edition of the *Lalitavistara*, ed. Lefmann 1902, 379–381; *Fobenxingjijing*, T190, 3:801a; the extant Sanskrit edition of the *Mahāvastu*, ed. Senart 1890, II, 272–303, cf. trans. Jones 1952, II, 261–291). Given that the account of seven weeks' fasting after enlightenment was most probably an elaboration that came at a late stage in the accounts of the Buddha's life, it is hardly likely that Gandhāran Buddhists chose to represent the Buddha of the post-enlightenment period in such an emaciated form. Although a scene of two merchants offering food carved on the pedestal of the Peshawar fasting Buddha (Figure 2) is presented as another piece of evidence for Brown's argument, the fact that the Buddha in the scene is in a non-emaciated form, as Brown admits, obviously undermines it. The offering of food to the Buddha could have been carved in contrast to the great fasting of the Buddha, but not in a direct narrative sequence.

<sup>23</sup> Julius Dutoit produced in 1905 an admirable work on textual accounts of the *duṣkaracaryā*, making detailed comparisons between various versions. But his work

## A

- *Jātaka (Nidānakathā)*, Fausbøll (1877, I) 67–69.<sup>24</sup>
- *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya-saṃghabhedavastu*, Gnoli (1977, I) 100–111.
- *Genbenshuoyiqieyoubu pinaiye posengshi* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶破僧事 (trans. Yijing 義淨, 700–711), T1450, 24:119c–122c. Translation of *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya-saṃghabhedavastu*.
- *Sifenlu* 四分律 (trans. Buddhayaśas and Zhu Fonian 竺佛念, 408), T1428, 22:780c–781a. Translation of *Dharmaguptakavinaya*.
- *Buddhacarita*, XII, Johnston (1984, I) 139–143.<sup>25</sup>
- *Fosuoxingzan* 佛所行讚 (trans. Dharmakṣema, 414–426), T192, 4:24b–c. Translation of *Buddhacarita*.
- *Mahāvastu*, Senart (1890, II) 123–130, 202–205, 231–232, 263–264, 299.<sup>26</sup>
- *Fobexingjijing* 佛本行集經 (trans. Jñānagupta, 587–591), T190, 3:764c–771b.
- *Fobexingjing* 佛本行經 (trans. Baoyun 寶雲, 421–453), T193, 4:75a.
- *Lalitavistara* XVII, XVIII, Lefmann (1902) 243–264.<sup>27</sup>
- *Fanguang dazhuangyanjing* 方廣大莊嚴經 (trans. Divākara, 683), T187, 3:580c–584a. Translation of *Lalitavistara*.
- *Guoqu xianzai yinguojing* 過去現在因果經 (trans. Guṇabhadra, 435–443), T189, 3:638b–639a.

treated quite limited sources available to him – the *Majjhima-nikāya*, the *Mahāvastu* and the *Lalitavistara* – and, in reflection of his time, mainly concerned the process of the canonization of the accounts.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Rhys Davids (1925) 182–187.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Johnston (1984, II) 182–187.

<sup>26</sup> Jones, trans. (1952, II) 119–129, 193–196, 219–220, 248, 280.

<sup>27</sup> The account in the Tibetan translation (Foucaux 1884: 210–228) is almost identical to the Sanskrit version.

- *Zhongxi mohedijing* 衆許摩訶諦經 (trans. Faxian 法賢, 1001), T191, 3:948c–949b.

## B

- *Majjhima-nikāya*, XII (*Mahāsīhanādasutta*), Trenckner (1888) 77–83; XXXVI (*Mahāsaccakasutta*), Trenckner (1888) 240–251.<sup>28</sup>
- *Zengyiahanjing* 增一阿含經 (trans. Gautama Saṃghadeva, 397), XXX1-8, T125, 2:670c–671c. Translation of *Ekottara-āgama*.

## C

- *Xiuxing benqijing* 修行本起經 (trans. Zhu Dali 竺大力 and Kang Mengxiang 康猛祥, late 2nd century), T184, 3:469b–470a.
- *Taizi ruiyingbenqi jing* 太子瑞應本起經 (trans. Zhi Qian, early 3rd century), T185, 3:476c–477a.
- *Puyaojing* 普曜經 (trans. Dharmarakṣa, 308), T186, 3:511a–512a. Translation of *Lalitavistara*.

The majority of them, classified in Group A, have a well-known standard format:

- 1) The Bodhisattva<sup>29</sup> (Siddhārtha) practices austerities.
- 2) He realizes that performing the austerities is not the right way.
- 3) It occurs to him that enlightenment should be achieved through a meditation such as the one he conducted under a Jambu tree when he was a prince.
- 4) He renounces the austerities and takes food for himself.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Horner (1954, I): 103–110, 295–305. Dutoit (1905, 1–15) also cites the *Ariyapariyesanasutta* (26), the *Bodhirājakumārasutta* (85) and the *Saṅgārasutta* (100) from the same text, but the accounts in these *suttas*, often repeating the words of the other two *suttas* above, are not much significant as narratives recounting the austerities.

<sup>29</sup> In this paper, whenever it is used – unless otherwise specified – the “Bodhisattva” means exclusively Siddhārtha, or Śākyamuni before attaining enlightenment, as invariably so in the literary accounts of the Buddha’s life listed above.

- 5) Five fellow practitioners leave him.
- 6) He takes bath in the Nairāñjanā River.
- 7) He eats food offered by a daughter (or daughters) of a village householder at Uruvilvā.
- 8) He advances to the Bodhi tree.

In all the sources of this group, the most notable feature for our concern is that the Bodhisattva gives up austerities and chooses to pursue an alternative path. In a number of small details, however, naturally there are variations attributable to transformations of the narrative in diverse regional, temporal or individual circumstances. Although I do not intend to dwell on this, in the *Nidānakathā*, for instance, the practice of austerities, which is depicted with lengthy details elsewhere, is considerably reduced, while the offering by Sujātā is elaborately magnified; overall I suspect that this text shows a relatively late form in the development of this narrative. In the Chinese *Fobenxingjijing*, which also reveals signs of lateness, the Bodhisattva continually eats (!): before starting austerities, during austerities, after renouncing them, and before proceeding to the Bodhi tree.

In Group B, the *Mahāsaccakasutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya* as well as its equivalent part in the Chinese *Ekottara-āgama* tells basically the same story as Group A. The austerities are abandoned by the Bodhisattva also in a negative spirit. But unlike Group A, there is no remark on the Bodhisattva receiving food from Sujātā or any girl equivalent to her, as he just proceeds to meditation after feeding himself; it is possible, however, that the Sujātā story may have been deemed an unnecessary detail in the context of this *sutta*. In the *Mahāsīhanādasutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*, the practices conducted by the Bodhisattva during austerities are lengthily described – but with little delineation of narrative details – followed by a remark about their futility, which is quite similar to the one cited above from the *Mahāvastu*.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> The relevant part in the *Mahāsīhanādasutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya* reads: “*santi kho pana sārīputta eke samaṇabrāhmaṇā evaṃvādīno evaṃdīṭṭhino: āhārena suddhīti ... | taya pi kho ahaṃ sārīputta iriyāya tāya paṭipadāya tāya dukkarakārikāya nājjhagamaṃ uttarim*”

What interests us more with regard to the Gandhāran images is Group C. In the Chinese *Xiuxing benqijing* (trans. second century) there is no negative remark at all on austerities. Through austerities, the Bodhisattva attains the third meditation (*tr̥tīyam dhyānam*), and then receives a bowl of rice milk from Sujātā; having regained power, he moves to the Bodhi tree and reaches the fourth meditation (*caturtham dhyānam*). There are absolutely no words that the Bodhisattva decides to receive the milk rice because the austerities are not the right way. The account in the *Taizi ruiyingbenqijing* (trans. third century) is more brief, but no negative perception of the austerities is found here as well.

This is more clearly exhibited in the *Puyaojing*, the earliest extant Chinese translation of the *Lalitavistara* by Dharmarakṣa from the beginning of the fourth century. The account of austerities starts at the end of the chapter titled “Three False Teachers (*parapravādin*)” after the description of diverse practices conducted by heretics.

*manussadhammā alamariyañāḍassanavisesaṃ, taṃ kissa hetu: imissā yeva ariyāya paññāya anadhigamā yā 'yaṃ ariyā paññā adhigatā ariyā niyyānikā niyyāti takkarassa sammā dukkhakkhayāya l'* (Trenckner 1888, 80–81) (There are, Sāriputta, some recluses and brahmins who speak thus and are of this view: “Purity is through food.” ... But I, Sāriputta, even by this procedure [=extreme fasting], by this course, by this mortification [*dukkarakārikā*], did not reach states of further-men or the excellent knowledge and insight befitting the *ariyans*. What was the cause of this? It was that by these there is no reaching the *ariyan* intuitive wisdom which, when reached, is *ariyan*, leading onwards, and which leads onwards the doer of it to the complete destruction of anguish. – trans. Horner 1954, I, 107–108, with slight modifications and the insertion of brackets). A similar remark is also found in the *Mahāsaccakasutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*: “*na kho panāhaṃ imāya kaṭukāya dukkharakārikāya adhigacchāmi uttariṃ manussadhammā alamariyañāḍassanavisesaṃ, siyā nu kho añño maggo bodhāyāti*” (Trenckner 1888, 246) (But I, by this severe austerity, do not reach states of further-men, the excellent knowledge and vision befitting the *ariyans*. Could there be another way to awakening? – trans. Horner 1954, I, 301). The account in the corresponding part in the Chinese *Ekotara-āgama* is slightly different further from the two: “At the time I thought, ‘This is not the foundation for attaining enlightenment. Thus, there must be a different path ... O monks, although I had, of old, thus practiced austerities, I was not able to grasp the foundations of the four things. What are the four? That is, I was not able to attain the *āryan* precepts, the *āryan* wisdom, the *āryan* liberation, and the *āryan samādhi*’ (爾時我復作是念 非我成道之本 故當更有餘道 ... 比丘 吾昔苦行乃至於斯 然不獲四法之本 云何爲四 所謂賢聖戒律難曉難知 賢聖智慧難曉難知 賢聖解脫難曉難知 賢聖三昧難曉難知 – T125, 2:671b).

Now I will show the pure conduct (*brahmacarya*) to convert those who follow false teachings. As I disclose the true act and have them remove defilements, they will not follow the false teachings and will convert to the teaching of the Buddha. (今我寧可示現清行 以用攝取外學之等 顯正眞業使捨迷惑 所當應行 欲界色界不從彼教來入佛道 – T186, 3:510c–511a)<sup>31</sup>

The Bodhisattva's austerities are presented as if an expedient to deliver heretics who devote themselves to harsh or bizarre asceticism; and it is a great expedient. The next chapter "Austerities" starts with the following words of the Buddha:

At the time, the Bodhisattva reflected, "For six years, the great industrious austerities will be performed. Why are they called 'industrious austerities'? It is because they are hard to reach and impossible to obtain. Among living beings, *devas* and humans are not capable of achieving this task; only a Bodhisattva of the ultimate *ekajātipratibaddha* (bound [to be enlightened] in the next life) can achieve it. Thus it is called 'hard to achieve.' " (於時菩薩作是思惟 六年之中 示大勤苦精進之行 以何等故名勤苦行 是事難及人所不逮 是故名曰勤苦行矣 衆生之中 若天世人不能修行 成辦此業 唯有究竟一生補處菩薩 乃能行之故曰難辦 – T186, 3:511a)<sup>32</sup>

Thus he conducts various difficult austerities, and anyone who sees his practice greatly admires it. By performing austerities for six years, he is said to have taught innumerable *devas* and humans to stand in the three vehicles. After completing austerities, he reaches a high level of miraculous power and wisdom. But he worries:

Even though I have attained supernatural faculty, sacred knowledge and the power of wisdom – if I now advance to the Buddha tree [Bodhi Tree] with his emaciated body, later people in remote areas will falsely accuse me

<sup>31</sup> Translations are mine unless otherwise specified. Cf. Lefmann (1902) 240; T187, 3:581a. Converting heretics by performing austerities is referred to a few more times in the account of austerities in the *Puyaojing* as well as the later versions of the *Lalitavistara*. Interestingly enough, such remarks are seldom found in any other texts including the *Mahāvastu* and Pāli canonical sources. A very rare incidence closest to those of the *Lalitavistara* is in a *gāthā* in the *Fobenxingjijing*: "Having reached the Nairājanā River, the Bodhisattva took a seat at a shore with a pure mind. Since those who seek the way do not follow the right path, I desire to practice austerities to teach them (菩薩既至尼連河 以清淨心岸邊坐 爲諸求道不眞故 欲行大苦化彼耶 – T190, 3:766b).

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Lefmann (1902) 240; T187, 3:580b.

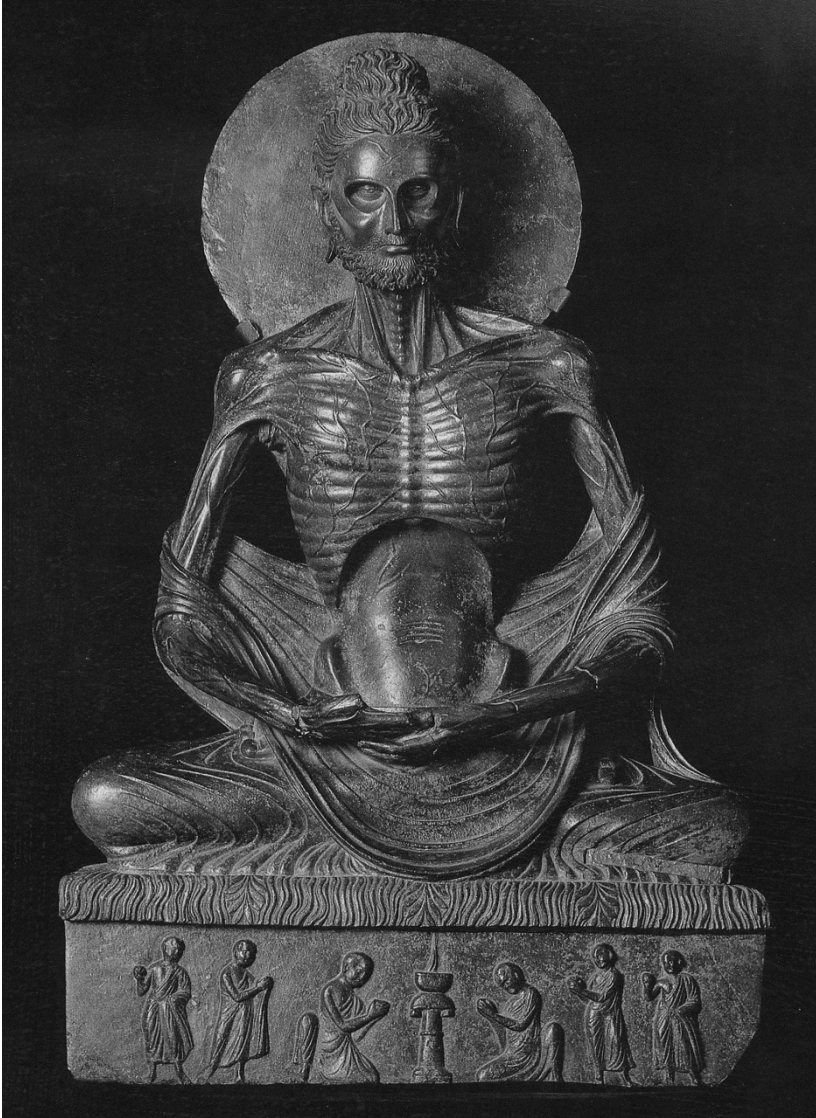


Figure 1. Fasting Buddha, Gandhāra, from Sikri, h. 84 cm, Lahore Museum. (*Gandhāran Art of Pakistan*, Tokyo, 1984, pl. I-1)

saying, “He achieved enlightenment by starving himself.” I would rather eat tender food and regain strength in the body. Afterwards I would proceed to



under the tree and attain the enlightenment of the Buddha. (雖有神通聖明慧力 今吾以是羸瘦之體 往詣佛樹 將無後世邊地諸國有譏者乎 謂餓得道 吾身寧可服柔軟食 平復其體使有勢力 然後乃往至其樹下成佛道 – T186, 3:511b)<sup>33</sup>

Then he simply chooses to take food offered by a daughter of a householder. Again one sees here absolutely no sign of negative perception to the austerities, while taking food is depicted as an act of expediency, as the austerities themselves are.

This is more intriguing when we compare it with the later Chinese translation of the *Lalitavistara* (*Fangguang dazhuangyanjing*), the Tibetan translation, and the extant Sanskrit edition, where the accounts of a more standard form as we saw in Group A appear. Like the *Puyaojing*, these three later versions also have a separate chapter titled “Duṣkaracaryā.” Although the accounts of the austerities in this chapter are much more elaborate here, its outline is not much different.<sup>34</sup> As in the *Puyaojing*, the prose part in each version ends with the remark that, with the successful accomplishment of austerities, the Bodhisattva had innumerable living beings mature in the three vehicles. But in the following chapter “Nairāñjanā,” the spirit suddenly changes: the Bodhisattva rather abruptly thinks of the futility of austerities.

*ye keci chramaṇā brāhmaṇā vā atītānāgatapratyutpanneṣv adhvasvātmopakramikāṃ śarīropatāpikāṃ duḥkhāṃ tīvrāṃ kharāṃ kaṭukāmamanāpāṃ vedanāṃ vedayanty etāvat paramaṃ te duḥkham anubhavanti | ... anayāpi khalu mayā caryayānāyāpi pratipadā na kaścīd uttari manuṣyadharmādalam āryajñānadarśanaviśeṣaḥ sāḥśātkṛto nāyaṃ mārgo bodher nāyaṃ mārga*

<sup>33</sup> A similar remark is found in the *Guoqu xianzai yinguojing* (T189, 3:639b): “Heretics will say that my starvation [or fasting] was the cause of *parinirvāṇa*. Although I have the power of Nārāyaṇa in every joint, I will not achieve the reward of enlightenment with this. After receiving and eating food, I will attain enlightenment.” But this is preceded by the following words (ibid, 639a): “Although having practiced austerities for six full years, I was not able to attain liberation, and thus knew that austerities were not the way.”

<sup>34</sup> The account of the visit to Udraka Rāmaputra (Rudraka Rāmaputra in the Sanskrit *Lalitavistara*) and the witnessing of diverse practices by heretics, which is told in a separate chapter preceding the chapter “Duṣkaracaryā” in the *Puyaojing*, appear at the beginning of “Duṣkaracaryā” in the three later versions. Otherwise the accounts are quite similar.

*āyatyām jātijarāmarāṇasaṃbhavānām astaṃ gamāya / syāt tadanyo mārgo bodher āyatyām jātijarāmarāṇaduḥkhasamudayānām astaṃ gamāyeti /* (Lefmann 1902, 253)<sup>35</sup>

Those *śramaṇas* and *brāhmaṇas* who undergo unpleasant, bitter, poignant, cruel, severe and unfavorable feelings which torment their souls and bodies in the past, present or future to gain perfection experience suffering ... By this practice, and by this path, by me, the *dharma* of “further men,” which enables one to realize the distinctive achievement of truly *āryan* knowledge and insight, can never be attained. This is not the way to enlightenment. Nor is it the way leading to the cessation of future birth, old age and death. Probably there is a way other than this to enlightenment leading to the cessation of the origin of future birth, old age and death.

Following this, the Bodhisattva considers taking a different path such as the first meditation he conducted as a prince under a Jambu tree, and receives food from a daughter of a householder. One may have noticed that the remark above is almost identical – except for the last two sentences – to the words cited above from the *Mahāvastu* and similar to those from the *Majjhima-nikāya* and the *Ekottara-āgama*.<sup>36</sup> Quite possibly, it was borrowed from earlier textual accounts and incorporated in the account of the *Lalitavistara* of this stage unless the earlier translator Dharmarakṣa unjustifiably abridged the original in the translation of the *Puyaojing*. Overall, it appears that the account of the austerities in the *Lalitavistara* was transformed in later versions, or, much less likely, that Dharmarakṣa’s translation reflects an unorthodox regional tradition.<sup>37</sup> In any case, what we have seen clearly suggests the presence of a separate tradition where the Bodhisattva’s austerities were never perceived in

<sup>35</sup> Cf. T187, 3:582c–583a.

<sup>36</sup> See n. 30 above.

<sup>37</sup> In a detailed survey of the *Lalitavistara*, Hokazono Kōichi expresses the opinion that the *Puyaojing* shows the earliest form among the extant versions and its original was later expanded and transformed into the extant Sanskrit version and the Chinese *Fangguang dazhuanyanjing* in two different offshoots. He also supports the view that the text probably originated in the northwestern region (or Punjab) of the subcontinent. Hokazono (1993) 91–110.

a negative spirit, which obviously parallels the glorified representations of the austerities from Gandhāra.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>38</sup> We may note here a fourth group of textual accounts treating the austerities of the Buddha. These accounts mainly concern the cause for the austerities, i.e., for what wrongdoing in previous lives the Buddha had to endure such horrible ordeals for six years prior to enlightenment. A number of texts deliver such stories, e.g., the Pāli *Apadāna*, the *Xingqixing jing* 興起行經 (trans. Kang Mengxiang, late 2<sup>nd</sup> century; T197, 4:172c–174a), the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya-bhaiṣajyavastu* (Yijing’s Chinese translation, *Genbenshuoyiqieyoubu pinaye yaoshi* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶藥事, T1448, 24:96b; Tibetan and Sanskrit versions in Honfinger, 1990, 35–45, cf. 102–115), the *Wubaidizi zishuobenqi jing* 五百弟子自說本起經 (trans. Dharmarakṣa, late 3<sup>rd</sup>–early 4<sup>th</sup> century; T199, 4:202a; the austerities are not referred to explicitly, but an incident told in other texts such as the *Xingqixing jing* as having led to the ordeals is briefly mentioned), and the *Liudujiing* 六度集經 (trans. Kang Senghui, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century; T152, 3:30ab). Many of these accounts are known as part of the *Anavataptaḡāthā*, of which manuscript fragments in Gandhārī also exist (Salomon 1999, 30–33; Salomon 2003, 79, 82). For these texts and the problem of asceticism, see: Hara (1997) 249–260 (including the translation of the account in the *Liudujiing*), cf. Bechert (1961) 204–247. Naturally these accounts tend to perceive the Buddha’s austerities in a negative sense. In the *Puyaojing* one can see that such conception was known to those who reworked the text, for it tells in the verse, “For deriding the tonsured for not having the truth, [the Bodhisattva] had to practice for innumerable *kalpas* and paying off for the sin for six years” (禿頭何有道 行無央數劫 六年畢其罪 – T186, 3:511c). This is clearly an allusion to the incident referred to in the *Anavataptaḡāthā* where Jotipāla (Skt. Jyotipāla, the Bodhisattva in a pervious life) disparaged Kāśyapa Buddha with the words, “How is enlightenment (possible) for a shaveling, for enlightenment is the most difficult thing to be obtained (*kuto nu bodhi muṇḍassa bodhi prarama-dullabhā*)” (from the Pāli *Apadāna* translated in Hara 1997: 251). But the *Puyaojing* does not fully comply with the conception; it says earlier in the prose, “In order to elucidate the reward of merit, [the Bodhisattva] showed the purification of the body, mouth and mind. Eating a seed of sesame or rice each day for six years, he practiced and achieved the industrious austerities hard to attain, which was not liable to destiny” (爲分別說功德之報 現身口心當行清淨 日服一麻一米 六年之中 修立難及勤苦之行 宿命不償 – T186, 3:511a). Although the last clause is syntactically awkward, it seems clear contextually that the *Puyaojing* tries to interpret austerities in a more positive sense. Intriguingly, such words are not instantly found in later versions of this text. But in the part of the verse in the Sanskrit *Lalitavistara* that approximately corresponds to the passage cited above from the *Puyaojing*, two *śloka*s read, “*nihatāḥ parapravādā dhyāmikṛta tīrthikā mativihīnāḥ / karmakriyā ca darśita yā proktā kāśyape vācā || krakuchandakasya bodhi bodhīrīha mudurlabhā bahubhi kalpaiḥ / janatāyā ityarthaṃ dhyāyatyāspḡhānakam dhyānam ||*” (Lefmann 1902, 260). The line “*karmakriyā ca darśita yā proktā kāśyape vācā*,” which seems puzzling at first sight, can be understood only in light of the Jotipāla incident. I wonder whether there was possibly a corruption in this part generated by the lack of proper understanding of the meaning. Similarly, the equivalent part in the *Fangguang dazhuangyan jing*, “亦以迦葉等 不信有菩提 如是大菩提 無量劫難得,” is not readily comprehensible.

## III

Now we come back to the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka*, the text of our primary concern, where the positive spirit for the austerities as we saw in the *Puyaojing* continues in an even more prominent form.<sup>39</sup> In a lengthy vow proclaimed by the *brāhmaṇa* Samudrareṇu, the life of his later and final reincarnation as Śākyamuni is briefly delineated starting with the descent from the Tuṣita heaven. It proceeds with standard episodes such as the birth, taking seven steps, going to school, austerities and enlightenment up to *parinirvāṇa*. Out of these passages, approximately one fourth is allotted to the account of austerities, obviously a disproportionately large space. It begins with the depiction of the Bodhisattva seated under the Bodhi tree with grass spread on the *vajrāsana*. Thus, his austerities are performed on the *vajrāsana*, not some other places near the Nairāñjanā River or Uruvilvā as in most other textual sources.

*svayaṃ cāhaṃ tṛṇasamstaraṇaṃ gṛhṇīyāṃ bodhivṛkṣamūlavajrāsane prajñāpayeyaṃ niṣīdeyaṃ paryaṅkam ābadhvā rjukena kāyena; tathārūpam aham āsphānakam dhyānāṃ dhyāyeyaṃ, āśvāsaprasāvāsā vyupaśameyaṃ; ekavāraṃ divasena dhyānād vyuttiṣṭheyaṃ, vyuthāya cāham ardhatalakaphalam āhāram āhayaṃ, arhaṃ pratigrāhakasyānuprayacceyaṃ | tāvac ciraṃ*

The phrase “Kāśyapa and others (迦葉等)” apparently indicates that the translator understood Kāśyapa as “Uruvilvā Kāśyapa and his followers” and probably did not grasp its meaning properly. But understood in light of the Jotipāla incident, the original meaning becomes clear: “For not having believed that Kāśyapa [Buddha] has *bodhi*, [the Bodhisattva] had difficulty in attaining such great *bodhi*.” A similar problem is also revealed in the Tibetan translation (cf. Foucaux 1884: 224, n. 38, 39). I suspect that the memory of the Jotipāla incident may have faded by the time the Sanskrit *Lalitavistara* and the originals of the *Fangguang dazhuangyan jing* and the Tibetan translation were reworked on, while the incident was fairly well known at the time of the original of the *Puyaojing*, which had to defend its position of eulogizing the austerities against perhaps a more common conception.

<sup>39</sup> Yamada (1968, II) 242–245; T158, 3:267b–268a; T157, 3:207c–208b; P. Cu 260a2–261a8. As far as this part is concerned, there is little difference between various versions in Sanskrit, Chinese and Tibetan. Considering the relative lateness of extant Sanskrit recensions, this is quite remarkable. Of the two Chinese translations, compared with Sanskrit and Tibetan versions, the account in the *Dasheng beifentuoliing* (T158) seems closer to the original, while that of the *Beihuaing* (T157) reflects slight embellishment. I am grateful to Dr. Kim Seongcheol for assisting me to check the Tibetan translation.

*cāham evamrūpāṃ duṣkaracārikāṃ careyaṃ, yāvad akaniṣṭhabhavanapary-  
antena sarve devā ye sahe buddhakṣetre paryāpannās ta upasaṃkrāmeyur  
mama ca pūjāṃ kurvānāḥ, sarve me sākṣiṇaḥ syur duṣkaracaryāyāṃ /*  
(Yamada 1968, I, 242)

I would grab a bundle of grass for myself, spread it on the *vajrāsana* under the Bodhi tree and sit crosslegged with the body upright. I would practice the *āsphānaka* meditation and stop the inhaling and exhaling of breath. I would awake from the meditation once a day; having awoke, I would eat a half grain of sesame<sup>40</sup> and give away another half. I would practice austerities in this form until all *devas* up to the Akaniṣṭha heaven and those in the Sahā buddhafiield would approach, paying homage to me and would be witnesses to my austerities.<sup>41</sup>

The Bodhisattva practices the *āsphānaka-dhyāna* (breath-holding meditation) and then restricts food to minimum, a half grain of sesame a day; this is part of the standard phrase in the description of austerities found in virtually any textual account of the Buddha's life. As he performs these austerities, all the living beings up to the Akaniṣṭha heaven who hear of his practice will come to his place and offer *pūjā*; they will witness the superiority of the austerities performed by the Bodhisattva. This is all that directly concerns the depiction of the austerities in this account of the Buddha's life, the rest being focused on the benefits to be gained by witnessing the austerities.

*yaiś ca tatra śrāvakayāne bījam avaruṣṭaṃ syāt teṣāṃ bhadante bhagavan  
kleśavyupaśamāya santāne bhaveyaṃ, caramabhavikāś ca mama vaineyā  
bhaveyuḥ; ye pratyekabuddhayānikā yāvad yathā pūrvoktaṃ / evaṃ nāga-  
yakṣāsuragaruḍakinnaramahoragapretapiśācakumbhāṇḍāḥ pañcābhijñāṣa-  
ya upasaṃkrāmeyur mama pūjākarmaṇe, sarve ca me sākṣiṇo bhaveyur duṣ-  
karacaryāyāṃ; ye ca śrāvakayānikā yāvad yathā pūrvoktaṃ / ...* (Yamada  
1968, II, 242–243)

Then, o the honorable one, for those who have planted a seed in the vehicle of *śrāvakas*, I would calm their afflictions in mind, and they would

<sup>40</sup> The Chinese *Beihuaqing* (T157, 3:207c) tells, “a half grain of sesame and a half grain of rice,” while the phrase in *Dasheng beifentuolijing* is the same as the Sanskrit version.

<sup>41</sup> Since the account of the Buddha's life appears in the vow of Samudrarenu, most verbs are in optative forms, which are here translated literally.



Figure 2. Fasting Buddha, Gandhāra, from Takht-i-Bahi, h. 83 cm, Peshawar Museum. (Ingholt and Lyons, *Gandhāran Art in Pakistan*, 1957, pl. 53)

be converted to me in the last existence. For those who follow the vehicle of *pratyeka-buddhas*, may it be the same as said above. Likewise, may *nāgas*, *yakṣas*, *āsuras*, *garuḍas*, *kinnaras*, *mahoragas*, *pretas*, *piśācas*, *kumbhāṇḍas*, *ṛṣis* with five-fold supernatural knowledge approach to pay homage to me; may all of them be witnesses to my austerities. May those who follow the vehicle of *śrāvakas* do the same as said above.<sup>42</sup> ...

Non-humans (*amānuṣa*) will teach heretics who practice austerities, telling that their austerities will never surpass the Bodhisattva's, which they ought to witness and venerate for themselves.<sup>43</sup> The account continues:

*te ca tām duṣkaracaryām utsrjya mama duṣkaracaryām dṛṣtvā yeṣāṃ śrāvaka-yānasantānabījānkuraṃ pratiṣṭhitaṃ syāt, yāvad yathā pūrvoktaṃ / ye manuṣyarājā vā bhaṭṭa vā naiḡamajānapadā gṛhasthapravrajita gṛhāgārasaṃpannās te 'pi mama duṣkaracaryām upasaṃkrāmeyur, yāvac chrāvaka-yānika yathā pūrvoktaṃ / (Yamada 1968, II, 243–244)*

May they [=heretics], having abandoned their austerities and seen mine, plant a seed for the vehicle of *śrāvakas* as said above. May human kings, officials, city dwellers, householders, mendicants or family businessmen approach to pay homage to my austerities as was said for those who follow the vehicle of *śrāvakas*.

A woman who witnesses the Bodhisattva's austerities will be reborn as a man; an animal which does the same will never be reborn as such. The account of the austerities ends with the following words:

*tāvac ciraṃ cāham evaṃrūpāṃ duṣkaracaryāṃ careyaṃ ekaparyāṅkena yāvad bahusattvakoṭīnayutaśatasahasrāṇi duṣkaracaryāyāṃ sākṣibhūtā (Yamada: sākṣi°) bhavyeyuḥ āścaryapṛāptāś ca, teṣāṃ ca santāne 'prameyāsaṃkhyeyānāṃ mokṣabījāṃ praropayeyaṃ / tathārūpāṃ ahaṃ duṣkaracaryāṃ careyaṃ yathā na pūrvāṃ kenacit sattvasaṃkhyātena anyatīrthikena vā śrāvakayānikena vā pratyekabuddhayānikena vā anuttaramahāyānikena vā evaṃ duṣkaracaryācīrṇapūrvāḥ syāt; na ca punaḥ paścāt kaścit sattvasaṃ-*

<sup>42</sup> While the Sanskrit version and the Chinese *Dasheng beifentuolijing* refer to *śrāvakayāna* and *pratyekabuddhayāna* only, the *Beihuajing* speaks of *mahāyāna* as well. I am tempted to suspect that this is an interpolation by the Chinese translators, although it needs further corroborations.

<sup>43</sup> The words here directed to heretics recall similar references to heretics in various versions of the *Lalitavistara*. See n. 31 above.

*kyātaś caret anyatīrthikā vā*<sup>44</sup> *evamrūpām duṣkaracārikām śaktāms carantu yathāhaṃ careyaṃ* / (Yamada 1968, II, 244–245)

For so long will I practice austerities in this form once seated crosslegged, until innumerable hundred-thousand living beings witness my extraordinary austerities and may they plant immeasurable seeds of liberation. Such austerities as I would conduct never have been practiced before by any living beings, be they heretics, those who follow the vehicle of *śrāvakas*, those who follow the vehicle of *pratyekabuddhas*, or those who follow the supreme Mahāyāna; again such austerities as I have conducted would never be practiced afterwards by any living beings or heretics.

This is followed by the accounts that the Bodhisattva will destroy Māra and his army before he attains enlightenment and how he will deliver living beings in the Sahā world afterwards by means of diverse expedients until *parinirvāṇa*.

In the passages from the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka* discussed above, we do not find the slightest indication of negative perception toward the austerities of the Buddha (=Bodhisattva). Instead, they are exalted as one of the major acts performed by the Buddha to deliver living beings and almost as the greatest of them.<sup>45</sup> We may recall here the words referred to above as being addressed to heretics to witness the Buddha's austerities, which end with the following advice:

*sā duṣkaracaryā maharddhikā sā mahāphalā mahāvistārā, na cireṇāsu anuttarām samyaksambodhiṃ abhisambhotsyate* / *sa cen na śraddhadhvaṃ gacchata svayaṃ paśyata* / (Yamada 1968, II, 243)

This austerity, conducive to great supernatural power and great reward, before long will achieve *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*. If you do not believe, go and see for yourself.

<sup>44</sup> After *anyatīrthikā vā*, the words “*śrāvakayānikena vā pratyekabuddhayānikena vā anuttaramahāyānikena vā*” may have been lost in the transmission of the Sanskrit version.

<sup>45</sup> At the end of the account of the Buddha's life in this text (Yamada 1968, II, 249), the austerities are enumerated as one of the major events the Buddha shows for living beings who suffer in the Sahā world: (1) the birth (*saṃtuṣṭitabhavanāvatarāṇam mātur garbhe jātuṃ upadarśayeyam*), (2) the child play and various skill contest (*kumārakṛidāśilpakarmasthāna*), (3) the austerities (*duṣkaracaryā*), (4) the defeat of Māra (*māradharṣaṇa*), (5) the enlightenment (*bodhyasambudhyana*), (6) the first sermon (*dharmacakrapravartana*), (7) the whole duty of the Buddha (*sakalabuddhakārya*), (8) the death (*parinirvāṇa*).



Surprisingly, the reward of practicing austerities is even related to attaining *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*, the supreme enlightenment. Austerities are not a wrong path to be abandoned in the quest of enlightenment but one of its direct causes. Obviously, this remark corresponds in spirit to the following words from the *Puyaojing*, which the Bodhisattva resolutely proclaims when he first takes a seat under the Bodhi tree:

Even if my body is parched to destruction with flesh being utterly decayed and bones dried up, I shall never rise without attaining the enlightenment of the Buddha. Having practiced austerities with perseverance for innumerable billions of *kalpas*, now I have achieved this; there will be no turning back. (使吾身壞肌骨枯腐其身碎盡 不成佛道終不起也 從無央數億垓載劫勤爲苦行今乃得之 終不迴還)<sup>46</sup>

Here again, the austerities are clearly referred to as an important premise to enlightenment.

If visual monuments can be of any relevance as a reference, the only tradition we could recall where the austerities were elevated with such magnitude is nothing but that of Gandhāra. And Gandhāran fasting images are best understood in light of such accounts as those from the *Puyaojing* or the *Karuṇāpūṇḍarīka*. They represent the unequalled austerities performed by the Buddha, which easily eclipsed any such practice by heretics, and thus were a most eloquent symbol of the Buddha's superiority over all those following heresy even in their privileged methods. At the same time, they were images of the austerities *par excellence* the Buddha endured through his

<sup>46</sup> Cf. T186, 3:515b, cf. 515a for a similar remark. Interestingly enough, the later versions of the *Lalitavistara* including the Sanskrit and Tibetan editions give a slightly different account in the corresponding passages. For instance, the passage in the *Fangguang dazhuangyanjing* reads, "If I do not achieve *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*, I shall never rise from this seat even though my body may be destroyed" (T187, 3:588a). There are no further words about superb austerities he practiced, which were the cause of his current state toward enlightenment. This is even more intriguing when we find no remark at all on austerities in the corresponding passages in most other texts of the Buddha's life belonging to my Group A (see pp. 132–133 above): e.g., "If I do not attain enlightenment, I shall never rise from this seat" (*Guoqu xianzai yinguojing*, T189, 3:639c); "I am seated on this seat. If I do not remove all the *āsravas* and if I do not achieve liberation, I shall never rise from this seat" (*Fobenxingjijing*, T190, 3:778b).

numerous incarnations, which were perceived even close to an indispensable part of practice toward enlightenment.<sup>47</sup>

In the account of austerities in the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka* we note another interesting aspect: living beings achieve diverse benefits from seeing the austerities of the Buddha.

- *yāvad akaniṣṭhabhavanaparyantena sarve devā ye sahe buddhakṣetre paryāpannās ta upasaṃkrāmeyur mama ca pūjāṃ kurvānāḥ, sarve me sāksīṇaḥ syur duṣkaracaryāyāṃ* (Yamada 1968, II, 242)
- *te ca tāṃ duṣkaracaryāṃ utsṛjya mama duṣkaracaryāṃ dṛṣṭvā yeṣāṃ śrāvākayānasantānabījāṅkuraṃ pratiṣṭhitaṃ syāt, yāvad yathā pūrvoktaṃ* (Yamada 1968, II, 243)
- *yaś ca mātṛgrāmo mama darśanāyopasaṃramet, sa tasya paścimako mātṛgrāmapratilābho bhaved iti, ye śrāvākayānika yathā pūrvoktaṃ* (Yamada 1968, II, 244)
- *ye mṛgapakṣiṇo duṣkaraṃ caramāṇaṃ niṣaṇṇaṃ paśyeyus sa teṣaṃ paścimakas tiryagyonipratilābho bhaved iti* (Yamada 1968, II, 244)
- *bahusattvakoṭīnayaṭasahasrāṇi duṣkaracaryāyāṃ sāksībhūtā* (Yamada: sāksī°) *bhaveyuh āścaryaprāptaś ca ...* (Yamada 1968, II, 244)

The viewing<sup>48</sup> of the Buddha practicing austerities is highlighted as an immensely beneficial act. In another place in the same account of the Buddha's life, seeing the first bath of the Buddha is referred to in the same manner:

<sup>47</sup> Minoru Hara (1997: 250) says, "The successive occurrence of asceticism and enlightenment in his biography naturally puts these two events into contrast. The contrast seems to become more and more striking, as the second, that is his final enlightenment, becomes invested with greater importance. As a result, the asceticism which precedes the enlightenment, the most auspicious event in his life, is destined to be treated negatively and regarded even as inauspicious." The *Puyaojing* and the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka* presumably represent the tradition that precedes this development.

<sup>48</sup> Strictly speaking, delicate semantic distinctions may exist between the words used here for "viewing" – *paś* (to see, observe, behold), *dṛś* (to see, observe, regard) and *sakṣin* (seeing with eyes, observing, witnessing) – particularly between *sakṣin* and the others. However, in the passage cited above, pragmatically they seem to have been used in an interchangeable way. The two Chinese translations use *jiàn* 見 or *guān* 觀 for *paś* and *dṛś*, and *zhèng* 證 or *zhèngmíng* 證明 for *sakṣin*. But here as well, in actual usage one finds little difference between these words.

*ye ca sattvā mām snāpayamānām paśyeyus te sarve tribhir yānair evaṃrūpān  
gunān adhigaccheyuḥ yathā proktaṃ* (Yamada 1968, II, 241)

Those who see me being bathed would gain such quality in the three vehicles  
in the same way as said above.

Although these are all we find among quite a limited number of episodes presented in this account of the Buddha's life in terms of the benefit of seeing the act of the Buddha, the importance with which such viewing is accorded is remarkable enough. Seeing the actual events or auspicious signs that appear on such occasions may have been meant on the surface; but it could well have alluded to the "seeing" or *darśana* of visual images or illustrations. This instantly reminds us of numerous narrative reliefs representing the Buddha's life carved on stupas in Gandhāran monasteries. Of two fasting Buddha images in Lahore (h. 83.8 cm, from Sikri) and Peshawar (h. 82.6 cm, from Takht-i-Bahi), the Lahore image is fortunately known to have been found in one of the chapels standing aligned in the eastern side of the main stupa in the same manner as ordinary cult statues.<sup>49</sup> Although we cannot be sure that the chapel was its very first place of installation – as numerous changes would have taken place in the monastery in the period following its dedication – the image must have been the object of *darśana* (ritual viewing) for ardent visitors in a similar architectural context. As regards the Peshawar image, which was discovered in the 1907–08 excavation season at the famous monastery at Takht-i-Bahi, little is known about its original context. But it was quite possibly installed in one of the chapels surrounding the court of many stupas in the middle (between the court of the main stupa and the monastic quarter) on which much of the excavation work was conducted in the season.<sup>50</sup> The image must have been venerated in a similar way as the Lahore Buddha.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Dar (1999/2000) 23–25.

<sup>50</sup> Spooner (1911) 131–148.

<sup>51</sup> A fasting Buddha image (h. 47 cm without the head) was discovered in situ at Shotorak against the southern face of the plinth of stupa F1, close to its stairway, but this does not seem likely its original placement. See Meunié (1942) 12 and pl. III: fig. 7, XVI: fig. 53.

As we have explored so far, reading the passages recounting the austerities in the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka* and their emphasis on the merit of seeing the image of austerities, one has the impression that the author actually saw visual images of the Buddha conducting austerities – such as the Lahore Buddha – venerated for such purpose, or at least had the knowledge of them. Since it is not clear that the date of the original *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka* or its relevant part in an equivalent text is at least contemporary with Gandhāran fasting Buddhas, I am reluctant to say that the images were made in pursuance of this textual account. But considering definite parallelism between the account in *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka* and Gandhāran images, I cautiously suspect at least that the textual account was inspired by such magnificent images as the Lahore Buddha, if the text was created later than the images during the third and fourth centuries; or if a smaller sutra that supposedly corresponds to the relevant part of the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka* indeed existed earlier by the second century, an account similarly extolling the austerities could already have been there as a contemporaneous textual parallel for visual images.<sup>52</sup>

In the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka*, one finds a number of other motifs that could be parallels for visual image of Gandhāra. Another prominent one is the theme of *Indrasāilaguhā*, which seems rather abruptly referred to in a lengthy note at the end of the text and strongly recalls

<sup>52</sup> Among smaller sutras listed as separate parts of the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka* in Chinese Buddhist catalogs, the *Dabeiqiqiu benyuanjing* 大悲比丘本願經, supposedly translated by Faju and Fali during the late third century, seems to correspond to the part of our interest from the larger sutra, i.e., the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka*. If the earlier presence of this sutra is acceptable, its original could have been contemporary with or even earlier than Gandhāran fasting Buddhas, whose dates are equally problematic as any images from this region but are attributable provisionally to the second century. But a question has been raised regarding the reliability of this tradition because the smaller sutras appear as such in Chinese Buddhist catalogs only at a relatively late date from the seventh century. Sanada (1957) 1–23. For the records in Chinese Buddhist catalogs, see *Zhongjing mulu* 衆經目錄 by Fajing 法經 (dated 594), T2146, 55:124a–b; *Zhongjing mulu* of the reign Renshou 仁壽 (602), T2147, 55:162c–163a; *Zhongjing mulu* by Jingtai 靜泰 (664), T2148, 55:197b–c; *Dazhou kanding zhongjing mulu* 大周刊定衆經目錄 (695), T2153, 55:391b–c. The *Dabeiqiqiu benyuanjing* is also listed as Faju's translation, but without the reference to the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka*, in *Lidai sanbaoji* (597), T2034, 49:54b. Although there are grounds for questioning, it may be too hasty to reach a definite conclusion.

several magnificent Gandhāran steles representing the theme.<sup>53</sup> I hope that these problems could be treated in a sequel to this paper.

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<sup>53</sup> Yamada (1968, II) 345–347; T158, 3:286a–b; T157, 3:230c–231a. For Gandhāran representations of *Indraśailagūha*, see Ingholt and Lyons, pls. 130, 131.

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