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Prof. Dr. Ji Xianlin
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of His 80th Birthday (II)

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目 錄

上 卷

季羡林教授年譜與譯著目錄 ............................................................. 李 錚 (1)
季羡林教授學述 ................................................................................ 錢文忠 (37)

于闐文的繭字、繭字、絲字 .............................................................. 段 晴 (45)
A Note on the Ancient Indian Oath (II) ........................................... Hara, Minoru (51)
The Verb B sain-, A se-n-, in Tocharian ......................................... Hilmarsson, J. (67)
梵語文學修辭例釋 ........................................................................... 黃寶生 (91)
梵文《思揔焰經》鈔本影印版 .......................................................... 蔣忠新 (111)
A Kharoṣṭhī Inscription From Chang’an ......................................... 林梅村 (119)
Gândhâri ............................................................................................. Norman, K. R. (133)
Note sur le sens du substantif ke du tokharien A ........................... Pinault, G-J (145)
Nochmals zu Dhâranis aus Zentralasien ......................................... von Hinüber, O. (163)

《五燈會元》點校校勘疑補一百例 ..................................................... 項 楚 (175)
從詞彙史看《列子》的撰寫時代 ....................................................... 張永言 (189)
“V-neg-Vo”與“Vo-neg-V” ............................................................ 朱德熙 (209)
“將無”考 ....................................................................................... 朱慶之 (225)

Samuel van de Putte and His Travels to Tibet and China ................ de Jong, J. W. (247)
對有關《太平治通緯》諸問題的新考索 .......................................... 鄧廣銘 (253)
唐“王言之制”初探 ........................................................................... 李錦秀 (273)
唐代前期和電子政策與政局之關係 ............................................... 盧向前 (291)
西藏山南地區佛寺調查記 ............................................................. 宿 白 (311)
中印文化交流與中印學 ................................................................. 譚 中 (341)
“弓月”名義考 ................................................................................ 王小甫 (351)

— 1 —
Remarks on the Legal Structure of the Early Buddhist Saṅgha ................................................... Bechert,H. (511)
Sanskrit Texts from Eastern Turkestan ........................................... Bongard-Levin,G. (525)
厳譯與直譯................................................................. 葛維鈞(533)
談維吾爾佛典........................................................................... 耿世民(549)
《梵網經》中的“六十二見”..................................................... 郭良鋆(555)
Endangered by Man-eating Witches ........................................... Hartman,J-U. (563)
新羅義相法譯考
——與海東華嚴的歷運相聯................................................... 金知見(577)
《法華經》中的乘(yāna)與智慧(jñāna)
——大乘佛教中 yāna 概念的起源與發展.............................. 辛島靜志(607)
Karashima
Prāvrṭkālaślokatrayam ........................................... Lienhard,S. (645)
Textcritical Notes on Sanskrit Texts ........................................... Lindtner,CHR. (651)
論《維摩詰經》與東晉南朝文化之關係................................ 陸揚(661)
Challenge to Authority
——Gahapati Citta ....................................................... Nakamura, H. (673)
F. Staal 著《Agni》書後 ................................................. 應宗顥(679)
中國的孝敬與印度的禮施

——非對稱性禮物贈贈文化的人類學分析

阎雲祥 (789)

‘Divorzi all’ indiana’

Wezler, A. (801)

世間生住滅 此中得思量

——讀《金七十論》

張保勝 (825)

敦煌吐魯番與香藥之路

姜伯勤 (837)

敦煌文書出處略考

林聰明 (849)

倫敦藏敦煌寫本《下部讎》原件考察

林悟殊 (871)

Reflections on the Origins of the Modern Standard

Mandarin Place-Name “Dunhuang”

Mair, V. H. (901)

敦煌文獻所見晚唐五代宋初的中印文化交往

榮新江 (955)

唐末五代宋初西北地區的梵本和漢本

張廣達 (969)

Māṃkuya-

H. W. Bailey (975)

Tocharisch • Zur Weiteren Erschließung
der Buddhismischen Sanskritliteratur

Klaus T. Schmidt (977)

編 後 記

(987)
Endangered by Man-eating Witches:
a Fragment of the Simhalāvadāna from the Turfan Finds*

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The adventurous life of the merchant Simhala, as depicted in the various versions of the Simhalāvadāna, has time and again attracted the attention of scholars. The first encounters with the story date back to a time when Buddhist Studies in Europe were still in their infancy, and it appears that once again the famous Eugène Burnouf was the first to study a version preserved in an Indian language¹. Many others were to follow, among them Professor Ji who, in connexion with his study of the aorist as a means of ascertaining the age of Buddhist texts, touched upon one of the two versions preserved in the Mahāvastu². In recent years, two excellent studies have appeared, which focus on representations of the story in art, but also contain surveys of the many different versions³. As can be gathered from this great number of versions, the story was popular not only with scholars, but, as will be shown in the following, this tale of a calamitous sea voyage was also enjoyed by people living in the sandy deserts of Central Asia.

As catalogue number 1424 in Volume V of the Sanskrithandschriften aus den Turfanfunden (SHT), a fragment is published, the contents of which are described as the adventures of travelling merchants, and it is tentatively attributed to the Supriya- or the Maitrakanyaka-avadāna⁴. A closer study of this fragment, however, revealed it to belong to a version of the Simhalāvadāna⁵. Several parts of the plot — sea voyage, encounter with beautiful maidens — are shared by all three Avadānas, and others — shipwreck, horse as saviour — by at least
two of them, but only in the Simhalavadana do the seductive maidens turn out to be man-eating witches. They strictly forbid the newly stranded merchants to take a certain road leading south to a magic city of iron, where they keep earlier victims stored. These features help to identify the Turfan fragment: line 2 of the verso side evidently contains the beginning of the prohibition, and line 4 a reference to the road leading to the south.

The story to which the fragment belongs is not available in Sanskrit. The translations of the Mulasarvastivada-Vinaya, however, preserve two versions closely related to the text of the fragment. The first is found in the Bhaisajyavastu; in the end, the Buddha is identified with the flying horse acting as saviour, and the leader of the merchants is clever (tshoṅ pa mkhas pa'i rahn bzin can 'zig), but still nameless. In the second version, contained in the Vinayavi bhanga, the focus of the story has shifted from the horse to the leader of the merchants, now named Simhala, who is none other than the Bodhisatva. Having been incorporated into the Divyavadana, the beginning and the latter half of this second version is also preserved in Sanskrit, but the part of the story corresponding to the present fragment is abbreviated with a reference to the Rākṣasisutra, a text not available in Sanskrit. Therefore, as an aid in understanding the context of the Turfan fragment and as the basis of its identification, the transcription will be followed by the Tibetan version of both the corresponding passages.

Cat. — No. 14259

recto

1 /// + + + + + [van]t[i] sma|tēśāṃ karmavipāke
2 /// + (dar)[ś](a)[n](i)[y](a)[h] pr(a)sādikās tā evam āhu e[tu]
3 /// + |alayanānāṃ layanam advipanāṃ dvipa
4 /// pāṇagṛh(ā)ṇ(i va)stragṛhāṇi ārāmaramanīyā

verso

1 /// + + śan[k]hāsilā pravāḍaṃ rajataṃ jātāpam āsmagarbhō mu
2 /// + + (kṛḍa)ta ramata paricārayata mā vacaḥ kaṣ cit supra
3 /// (paricāra)yanti|tēśāṃ tatra kṛḍatāṃ ramatāṃ paricā[ra]
Endangered by Man-eating Witches

Tibetan text 10 (words also preserved in the Sanskrit fragment are set in italics)

Vinayavibhaṅga\textsuperscript{11}

de dag rgya mtsho'i gru bcag pa na so so so so dag nas phoṅs\textsuperscript{12} pa'i don du chur rkyal pa khyer te 'ons pa dag la\textsuperscript{13}zon te 'di lta ste | kha cig gis ni ṣal ma la'i\textsuperscript{14} spāṅ leb dag la žon | kha cig gis ni\textsuperscript{15}(L 250b) sñas śiṅ bal can dag la žon | kha cig gis ni ku\textsuperscript{16}ba'i gziṅs dag la žon | kha cig gis\textsuperscript{17}ni ra rkyal dag la žon te (D 177a) chu'i steṅ na 'phyo'o || de dag gi las kyi rnam par smin par las byaṅ phyogs nas rluṅ laṅs nas des de dag lho phyogs kyi 'gram\textsuperscript{18} du bdas\textsuperscript{19} pa daṅ |

dzaṅs gliṅ na srin mo khrun khrun gžon nu ma žes bya ba dag 'khod pa de dag tshoṅ pa gru chag pa rnam la gtam sṅan pa daṅ dga' ba'i tshul gyis slu bar byed do || de dag la rgyal mtshan dga' ba'i gnas daṅ 'thun\textsuperscript{22} pa daṅ | phoṅs\textsuperscript{22} pa'i gnas daṅ 'thun\textsuperscript{22} pa gnis yod\textsuperscript{24} de | (R 417b) ji tsam na dga' ba'i gnas daṅ 'thun\textsuperscript{22} pa'i rgyal mtshan g'yo bar brtsums pa daṅ | de dag gis smras pa | phu nu

de na bud med gzugs bzaṅ mo\textsuperscript{37} | mdzes ma | blta na (N 432b) sdug pa dag yod de | de dag gis 'di skad ces smras so ||

Bhaiṣajyavastu\textsuperscript{20}

gru bo che bṣig pa daṅ | de rnam rkyal pa re re la žon te chu ji lta ba bzin du khyer te don\textsuperscript{21}ba las | de (D 235a) rnam gyi las kyi rnam par smin par las byaṅ ba'i rluṅ byaṅ phyogs nas laṅs te | des lho phyogs kyi 'gram du khyer ba daṅ |

gzuṅ ni lha ma la'i la ṣal ma la'i spāṅ leb dag la žon | kha cig gis ni ku ba'i gziṅs dag la žon | kha cig gis ni ra rkyal dag la žon te (D 177a) chu'i steṅ na 'phyo'o || de dag gi las kyi rnam par smin par las byaṅ phyogs nas rluṅ laṅs nas des de dag lho phyogs kyi 'gram du bdas pa daṅ |
mo dag dga¹ ba¹'i gnas dañ 'thun²² pa¹'i rgyal (TP 165a) mtshan g'yos pas 'dzam bul²⁵ gliṅ pa¹'i tshoṅ pa dag gi²⁶ rgya (N 275a) mtsho¹'i gru²⁷ chu srin 'na¹'i rigs kyis²⁸ bcag²⁹ ste 'on gor ma chag³⁰ gis³¹ btsal lo žes de dag gis³² rgya mtsho¹'i 'gram du btsal bar brtsams pa dañ | ji tsam na skye bo phal po che¹'i tshogs chur rkyal ba sna tshogs dag gis rkyal žiṅ 'on ba mthon¹ no || mthon nas kyañ bdag ŋid gzugs bzañ mor mnøn par sprul nas rgyan sna tshogs kyis brygan te | lha¹'i gos dañ | phreñ³³ ba rgyus klubs³⁴ nas rgya mtsho¹'i 'gram nas bod³⁵ par brtsams³⁶ pa |

jo bo dag³⁸ tshur spyon | bžin bzañš³⁹ dag tshur spyon | bdag cag khyim thab ma mchis pa rnams kyi khyim thab mdzod cig | bdag po ma mchis pa rnams kyi bdag po mdzod cig | gns ma mchis pa rnams (L 25la) kyi gns mdzod cig | gliṅ ma mchis pa rnams kyi gliṅ mdzod cig | skyob pa ma mchis pa rnams kyi skyob pa mdzod cig | skyabs ma mchis pa rnams kyi skyabs mdzod cig | dpuṅ gñen ma mchis pa rnams kyi dpuṅ gñen mdzod cig |
'gyur ba dañ | sdug par 'gyur ba (TP 165b) dañ | byams par 'gyur pa dañ | rñod\(^{\text{63}}\) par 'gyur ba dañ | brgyal\(^{\text{64}}\) bar 'gyur ba dañ | 'chi\(^{\text{65}}\) bar 'gyur ba dañ | sgrub par 'gyur ba dañ | kun (L 251b) tu sbyor\(^{\text{66}}\) bar 'gyur ba de lta bu'i gzugs gzan gcig\(^{\text{57}}\) kyan yañ dag par rjes su ma mthoñ no žes gsuñs pas |

de dag srin mo de dag gis brjod\(^{\text{68}}\) pa na rgya mtsho chen po las brgal\(^{\text{69}}\) te de dag dañ lhan cig rtse bar byed | dga\(^{\text{1}}\) bar byed | dga\(^{\text{1}}\) mgur spyod par byed do \| de dag de dag dañ lhan cig (R 418b) rtse bar byed | dga\(^{\text{1}}\) bar byed | dga\(^{\text{1}}\) mgur spyod par byed pa dag la bsten\(^{\text{70}}\) pā'i rgyu las bu dañ bu mo bag kyuñbyuñ no \|

de nas ded dpon siñ ga\(^{\text{74}}\) la 'di sñam du sens te | ci'i phyir bud med 'di dag lho lam śīn tu\(^{\text{75}}\) srūñ bar\(^{\text{76}}\) sens | bdag bud med 'di dañ (N 276a) lhan cig ŋal ŋiñ de gñid log pa dañ mal\(^{\text{77}}\) du zgus par rig nas khad kyis dal bu\(^{\text{78}}\) dal bus mal chen po las babs te | ral gri rnon po mchan du bcug nas lho lam du 'gro' o sñam mo \|

de nas tshoñ pa mkhas pā'i rañ bžin can žig 'di sñam du sens te | ci'i phyir bud med de dag gis lho phyogs kyi lam lhag par bsruñ\(^{\text{79}}\) bar sens | ma la bdag gis bud med gañ dañ lhan cig ŋal ba de mal du gñid log par rig nas bags kyis dal bu\(^{\text{80}}\) dal bus mal nas babs\(^{\text{81}}\) la lho phyogs kyi lam du 'gro'o sñam nas | de de ltar ņes par byas nas (D 235b) bud med gañ
dañ lhan cig nal ba de gñid kyis log
par rig nas bags kyis dal bu dal (R 312a) bus₈² mal nas babs te ral gri
rnon po mchan du thogs nas lho phyogs gyi iam du soñ ba dañ|

After the shipwreck, the merchants float on the sea, and, due to the ripening of their former deeds (line 1 of the fragment; restore to karmavipākena) are driven southward by a gale from the north. They are washed ashore on the island inhabited by the witches, who appear as beautiful women (line 2)⁸³ and invite the castaways to come (line 2)⁸⁴ and stay with them, since they are without husbands or protectors, helpless and so forth (line 3; correct to advīpānām and cf. note 84 for the probable restoration). Besides that, they have other enticements to offer, among them rooms for food, drinks and robes, lovely gardens (line 4; in Tibetan also sayanagrāhāni or sayanāsanagrāhāni is included after vastragrāhāni) and a variety of precious stones (line 1 verso; restore to the Divyāvadāna cliché cited in note 84). Finally, the merchants are invited to amuse themselves with the women (line 2), and only then are they warned that nobody, even in a state of total drunkeness, is allowed to wander towards the south (line 2)⁸⁵. The merchants do not decline the invitation and duly amuse themselves (line 3). After a certain time of amusement (line 3; restore to paricārayatām), the leader of the merchants becomes curious and wonders why these women have forbidden them to take the road to the south (line 4)⁸⁶.

A comparison of the Sanskrit and the Tibetan texts immediately shows that two sections of the Vinayavibhaṅga version are absent from the text of the fragment and from the Bhaisajyavastu. First, the missing part of line 2 recto does not leave room enough to include the description of a certain useful device owned by the Rākṣasīs. According to the Vinayavibhaṅga, there are two flags, one of them foreboding luck, the other misfortune. Thus, the fluttering of the former notifies the witches of the nearing arrival of the shipwrecked merchants, and only then are they necessitated to transform their appearance. Equally absent is the long quotation from the word of the Buddha, which in the Tibetan and the Chi-
nese versions follows after the warning against going south. On the other hand, the Turfan fragment in length and wording agrees very well with the version preserved in the *Bhaiṣajyavastu*, where the leader of the merchants is still unnamed. Therefore, with due caution, one should probably label the fragment as belonging to a cycle of stories, of which the Simhalavadana is the best known version. Of course it is tempting to identify the *Rākṣasīsūtra*, referred to in the *Divyāvadāna*, with the text preserved in the *Madhyamāgama* (cf. note 3), obviously referred to in the Chinese translation of the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* (cf. note 6), and to wonder if the fragment could perhaps be related to this work. However, the title of the *Madhyamāgama* version is “Sūtra about the merchants in search of wealth”, and its wording is close to, but not identical with, the Sanskrit fragment (cf. T 26, vol. 1, p. 642b10—18). Although the story agrees with the fragment in many details, there is no mentioning of *karmavipāka* (line 1 of the fragment), nothing which corresponds to the passage partly preserved in line 3 of the fragment, and no reference to any children being born as a result of the diversions (the continuation of line 3 verso). As long as these differences cannot be ascribed to a (partly purified?) Chinese translation, it remains difficult to accept the *Madhyamāgama* as a possible source of the fragment.

As regards the quotation, although fitting the context, it unnecessarily interrupts the course of the story, the more so, since quotations of this kind do not conform to the literary style of the genre. Most likely it is a later interpolation, as already suspected by Dieter Schlingloff, peculiar to the version on which both the Tibetan and the Chinese translations of the *Vinayavibhaṅga* are based. It should be noted, however, that the passage contained in the Chinese translation is longer. In both cases, the quotation does not reflect on the badness of women, as is suggested. There can hardly be a moral judgement involved — and if so, it would be difficult to restrict it to females — when the Buddha states that he does not perceive any other bodily form as attractive and bewitching for a man as the body of a woman. This observation serves to explain why the merchants climb ashore and start to divert themselves with the women. If the reading *brjod*, “deceived, bewitched”, of the Derge edition is more than a misprint for the graphically very similar *brjod* of the other editions, it might even hint at a possible explanation of the origin of the interpolation, namely a gloss which be-
came incorporated in the text.

The statement itself probably goes back to the Sūtrapitaka, as is shown by a close parallel found in the Aṅguttaranikāya. There it is reported that a mother and her son, both members of the order, were spending the rainy retreat in Sāvatthī (AN II 67ff.). On regularly meeting each other desire arose, which finally resulted in incestuous intercourse. The monks related the events to the Buddha, and he declared:

*Nāham bhikkhave aṇṇam ekarūpaṃ pi samanupassāmi evam rajaniyaṃ evam kamaniyaṃ evaṃ madaniyaṃ evaṃ bandhaniyaṃ evaṃ munchariyaṃ evaṃ antarāyakaraṃ anuttarassā yogakkhemassā adhigamāya, yathayidaṃ bhikkhave itthirūpaṃ* (AN II 68,8—13).

"Monks, I see no other form so enticing, so desirable, so intoxicating, so binding, so distracting, such a hindrance to winning the unsurpassed peace from effort — that is to say, monks, as a woman’s form" (AN (transl.) II 56).

The teaching of the Buddha would not justly be called the Middle Way if this observation remained unbalanced by its pendant, and indeed there is another short sutta in the Aṅguttaranikāya which contains a similar statement immediately followed by its counterpart: *Nāham bhikkhave aṇṇam ekarūpaṃ pi samanupassāmi yam evaṃ purisassa cittāṃ pariyaśāya titṭhati yathayidaṃ bhikkhave itthirūpaṃ* (AN I 1,9—11) against *Nāham bhikkhave aṇṇam ekarūpaṃ pi samanupassāmi yamaṃ evaṃ itthiyā cittāṃ pariyaśāya titṭhati yathayidaṃ bhikkhave purisarūpaṃ* (AN I 2,10—12).

If a cutting remark on the nature of women is sought in the story, one has to turn to a later part of the Simhalāvadāna version preserved in the Vinayavibhaṅga and the Divyāvadāna. After his successful escape back to Jambudvīpa, Simhala is followed by the Rākṣasi with whom he had been amusing himself. She appears in the form of a young woman claiming to be his deserted wife and is accompanied by a magically conjured child closely resembling Simhala. When she fails to win back Simhala, she first turns, in a clever attempt at instigating social pressure, to his parents and then to the king of the country, all
of whom attempt to persuade him to take her back. *Sarvā eva striyo rākṣasyaḥ*,
"Every woman is a witch", thus his parents and the king rather unperturbedly
observe, when Simhala tells them that the striking beauty is in reality nothing
but a Rākṣasi in disguise. Upon his refusal, they react quite differently, and this
is nicely described in the story: while the old parents immediately lose their in-
terest and turn her out, the king remains less indifferent to the beautiful girl’s
fate. Not heeding Simhala’s warning, he seizes the opportunity to enrich his
harem and soon meets his doom, as is to be expected.

Notes:

1. Thanks are due to Professor Dieter Schlingloff, München, who stimulated this paper and
kindly put his materials at my disposal. — Abbreviations follow the
*Abkürzungsverzeichnis zur buddhistischen Literatur in Indien und Südostasien*, ed. Heinz
Bechert, Göttingen 1990.

(Veröffentlichungen des Museums für Indische Kunst Berlin 7), p. 9, note 2, where he
mentions a handwritten translation of the version contained in the *Kāraṇḍavyūha* made
by Burnouf and dated 1837. It is now kept in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

2. Hiän-lin Dschi, "Die Verwendung des Aorists als Kriterium für Alter und Ursprung
buddhistischer Texte", *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen* 1949,
p. 257f. (= Ji Xianlin, *Selected Papers on the Languages of Ancient India*, Beijing

3. S. Lienhard (as note 1); Dieter Schlingloff, *Studies in the Ajanta Paintings*, Delhi 1988,
pp. 256ff. (an earlier version of this chapter was published in German: "Erzählung und
Bild. Die Darstellung von Handlungsabläufen in der europäischen und indischen Kunst",
in: *Beiträge zur Allgemeinen und Vergleichenden Archäologie* 3 [1981], pp. 87–213,
especially pp. 161ff.). To the versions discussed there, two more can be added: T 212,
vol. 4, pp. 718c. (prose commentary of the Chinese translation of the *Udānavarga*),
"The Magic Wall of the Fortress of the Ogresses: Apropos of āsiyati (Mahāvastu II, 86.
3)", *Pratidānam. Indian, Iranian and Indo-European Studies Presented to F. B. J.
Kuiper*, The Hague 1968, p. 486. Finally, there is a Central Asian fragment to be pub-
lished as Cat. — No. 1663 in Volume VII of the *Sanskrithandschriften aus den Turfan-
funden, which might belong to the same cycle of stories. It is written in a mixture of Sanskrit and Middle Indian and is rather difficult to understand, but evidently preserves the part where a flying being offers to take someone to Jambudvipa. Contrary to all the other Buddhist versions, the saviour is not a horse, but a yakṣa called Bharuka, which reminds one of the Jaina tradition (cf. Lienhard, op. cit., p. 31).

4. See SHT V, p. 253; "Abenteuer reisender Kaufleute; aus einer Version des Supriya—oder Maitrkanyaka—Avadana?".


8. Divy p. 524, 19–20. A full translation including also this abbreviation is found in Schlingloff, Studies, pp. 257–263.

9. For details concerning size, script, etc., of the fragment see SHT V, p. 253. A few misreadings and misprints in the transcription presented there are tacitly corrected here. — The following symbols are used; / for breakage, [] for damaged letters, () for restored letters, and + for missing Aksaras.

10. To keep footnotes to a minimum, graphical variants like byedo for byed do and variants concerning the use of the Danḍa are not mentioned.


12. 'phons R.
13. la deest N.
14. šal ma'i LN.
15. ni deest R.
16. sku NPR.
17. gis deest P.
18. lam LN.
19. 'das N.
According to the version found in the Bhaisajyavastu to be restored to the common phrase abhirūpā darsanīyāḥ prāsādikās. The version of the Vinayavibhaṅga differs.
84. See Kāraṇḍavyūha ed. Vaidya, pp. 285, and Mahāvastu (Mvu) II 68. Closest to the text as preserved in lines 2 recto — 2 verso of the fragment, however, comes a stereotyped passage occurring several times in the story of Supriya, the main difference being that Supriya travels alone (cf. SHT V, p. 254, note 1), cf. Divy 116, 1—9 (also 114, 26 — 115, 5 and 117, 29 — 118, 9 with minor variants) ta evam āhuḥ | etu mahāsārthravāhaḥ svāgataḥ mahāsārthravāhaḥāṃśakam avāmināṃ svāmi bhavāpatīnāṃ patir alayanāṃ layano 'dvīpānāṃ 'dvīpo 'saraṇānāṃ saraṇo 'trāṇānāṃ trāṇo 'parāyanānāṃ parāyaṇa imaṇi ca te 'māgrhāṇi pānagṛhāṇi vastra-grhāṇi sayanagṛhāṇyāramaramāṇīyaṇi vanaramāṇīyaṇi puṣkara-nāramāṇīyaṇi ca Jambū-dvīpikāni ratnāṇi tadyathā maṇayo mukta vaidūryaśaṅkhilā pravāḍarajataśāpatnāṃ āsmāgarbhā musāragalo lohitikā dakṣīṇāvartā etāni ca, ēvaṁ cāsāmabhīḥ sārdhanā kriḍasvā rāmasvā paricārayaśva. The singular etu in the Turfan fragment is probably influenced by versions like the one cited above. If the text of the manuscript originally agreed with this passage, the lines can be calculated as containing 45 to 60 aksaras depending on the punch hole.

85. Correct to mā vah kaś cit and probably restore to supramattah according to śīn tu myos par gyur in the Vinayavibhaṅga version, cf. Mvu II 71, 1—2 api tu pramatteti pi āryaputrehi nagarasya dakṣiṇena mārgena na gantavyam


87. There are exceptions; cf. the stanza in the second version of the Śīmhala story in the Mahāvastu (Mvu II 296, 13—14), which is spoken by the Buddha. Close parallels to this verse focussing on kōdha, lobha, dosa and moha respectively are found in the Aṅguttaraniṅkāya (AN IV 96, 22—23) and the Itivuttaka (It 84).


89. While the Tibetan text corresponds to T 1442. vol. 23. p. 888b4—5, the quotation continues until b10, including the recommendation of aśubhābhāvanā as a remedy.