

ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE BUDDHIST PAÑCAVĀRŚIKA - PART I: INDIA AND CENTRAL ASIA

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One of the greatest Buddhist festivals we have descriptions of in historical or pseudo-historical legendary records is the *pañcavārśika*¹ which is mentioned in early Indian sources by the AvŚ. and the Divy.²; it is described as a historical event by the Chinese pilgrims Faxian and Xuanzang. Most authors on (Indian) Buddhism follow these relatively late accounts as historical facts³.

The initiation of this ceremony according to every Buddhist school or tradition is ascribed to the Maurya king Aśoka. It was, of course, noted from a very early stage in Buddhist studies that the name of this festival has its terminological correspondance in the phrase *pañcasu pañcasu vasesu* of Aśoka's 3rd rock-edict and the so-called first separate edict⁴.

Everybody who is dealing with Aśoka and subjects related to this famous Indian monarch sooner or later is confronted with the question of the relation between the edicts and other texts - that means to investigate the historical elements of the legends with the help of short worded but historically authentic imperial statements and, luckily, by other historical records⁵.

The present study - following this strictly historical-critical method - attempts to make an investigation into the origin of the festival or assembly, which means a comparison of the Aśokan edicts with the legend given in the Avadānas and Pāli-texts. The second part will present the accounts on the ceremony from Chinese sources, but the

¹ Hereafter abridged as pv. Bibliographical references in this paper only refer to the name of the author(s) followed by the page-number; only in case of two or more titles of the same author the year is given (e.g.: STRONG (1992)).

² E.g. Divy.405, 242, 398, 403, 419, 429 (see below; on pv. cp. also KERN, 101).

³ E.g. LAMOTTE, 66: "*Les rois acquis au bouddhisme comme Aśoka, Harṣa et les souverains d'Asie Centrale, convoquaient parfois la communauté à une assemblée dite quinquennale (...) et dépensaient en libéralités les revenus de l'état accumulés durant cinq années.*"; see also 266 (on Sāñcī).

⁴ Cp. STRONG (1983), 91f.

⁵ For the problem of "historicity" of the *avadāna*-literature cp. BONGARD-LEVIN; for a discussion of the relation between edicts and legends STRONG (1983), 5ff.

accounts of the Chinese pilgrims on performances of the pv. in Central-Asia (Faxian) or India (Xuanzang) will have already been used in the first part.

First, philologically the question arises what pv. really can mean. There are two possibilities: it could either mean "*lasting five years*" - which would be the first suggestion without any context - or "*performed every five years*"⁶.

The word is derived by the *taddhita*-suffix *-ika-* and by or without *vṛddhi* of the second member of the compound⁷. The *-ka*-suffixes in general express a wide range of relations to the basic word⁸, but as the base here is a compound consisting of number and "counter" there are generally only the two above possibilities left⁹. The context however leaves only the second possibility: the compound was the technical term for more colloquial syntagmas (Skt. *pañceṣu pañceṣu varṣeṣu*) as in the edict's *paṃcasu paṃcasu vasesu* indicating periodization and this is the explanation of the word now generally accepted¹⁰.

The Chinese terms for the ceremony are mainly phonetic transcriptions: 般遮于瑟 *banzheyuese*, 般者于瑟 *bansheyuese*, 般遮婆瑟 *banzhepose*, 般遮跋瑟迦 *banzhebasejia*, 般遮越師 *banzheyueshi*, 般遮跋利沙 *banzhebalisha*, and 般遮婆栗迦史 *banzhepolijashi*¹¹.

The transformation - or rather mixing of pv. and the donations made by Aśoka (see below) - is shown by the term 無遮會 *wuzhehui*¹² which is considered to correspond to a Sanskrit **mokṣa-pariṣad* having no longer a phonetic or semantic connection to pv.. According to the dictionaries, however, this expression is not found in Indian

⁶ The questionmark after COWELL and NEILs proposition in the index of the editio princeps of the Divy. (p.683a) "*entertainment for five rainy months (?)*" is justified; it is only taken from the context of the *avadāna* in which the periodizing interpretation does not make any sense, because the legend only refers to one individual assembly. So the editors had no other way to interpret the time-indicating *-varṣa* in *-vārṣika* as time-period (cp. also STRONG (1983), 91).

⁷ For the following cp. WACKERNAGEL/DEBRUNNER, 308ff, esp. 309.

⁸ op.cit., 518ff., 362.

⁹ In this case the language seems to prefer the *taṭpuruṣa*-relation (op.cit., 527: *vārṣaśatika*, or 529 *varṣasaḥasrika*) to the normal *dvigu*-relation which would be similar to words like *dvādaśavarṣika* "*twelve-years-old*" (op.cit., 309).

¹⁰ See STRONG (1983), 91f. This view of EDGERTON, LÜDERS and others is against the opinion of the editors of the Divy. COWELL and NEILL (see above, note 6).

¹¹ ONO, 1434a, s.v. 般遮于瑟 *hanshaushi*, MOCHIZUKI, 4249b u. 4547b, s.v. *hanshaushitsue* u. s.v. 法會 *hōe*; (for a discussion of these terms see part II).

¹² NAKAMURA, 1327c, s.v. *musha-daie*.

languages¹³. The most famous of these festivals in China are those performed by Liang Wudi 梁武帝¹⁴.

In Tibetan we have the translation-word *lo-lna'i dus-ston* "festival of five years". In the relatively late Tibetan sources on the history of Buddhism, in Tāranātha's "*History of Buddhism in India*" from the beginning of the 17th century the event is consequently interpreted as a five-year-long alm-giving of Aśoka (chapter 6)¹⁵. In Bu-ston's, Tāranātha's predecessor's "*History of Buddhism*" (*Chos-'byung*), the whole event is not mentioned at all¹⁶. So the Tibetan tradition gives no new facts on the origin and development of the pv. beside what is already known from the Chinese and Indian Aśoka-texts¹⁷.

The problem that evolves, when we accept the connection between the pv. in the Aśoka-tradition and the historically proved ones by the Chinese pilgrims and Chinese texts and the *pañcasu pañcasu vasesu* in the edicts is, first, that the short wording of the edict is not totally clear and second, that even with the rough understanding of these texts we have, it is difficult to make it compatible with the oldest version of the pv. in the text of the Aśoka-legend.

It seems that in the period between Aśoka and the oldest texts about him a transformation of the original act or ceremony has taken place. The question is how and why. To answer these questions it seems best to go back to the very starting point one can get hold of in the darkness of Indian history: the third rock-edict (Girnār, Kālsī, Shāhbāzgarhī,

¹³ The entry in the PW.5, 916b, s.v. *mokṣamahāpariṣad* is only borrowed from JULIEN's transcription of Xuanzang's Chinese expression. For a discussion of this term see Part II.

¹⁴ FRANKE, 165ff.; MORI, 141ff. For a detailed description of these assemblies see part II.

¹⁵ CHIMPA / CHATTOPADHYAYA, 64f.: "*The king eventually heard all these [the miraculous events accompanying the attainment of arhatship of a dump bhikṣu]. [He thought] The attainment of arhat-hood even by an utterly foolish monk is due to the merit of the Doctrine [Fol 21A] and to my gift of the robes. Impressed by the blessings derived by others from his gifts, he lavishly entertained again three lakhs of monks for five years: ...*" See also SCHIEFNER, 38. Cp. EGGERMONT, 207f. and on the different arrangement of Aśokāvadāna and Tāranātha and the Pāli-sources 215; EGGERMONT fails to mark the missing of the term and in the Pāli-sources and to give a reason for this difference but automatically identifies the big assemblies there with the pv.

¹⁶ It is only in the context of the initiating of the second rehearsal or concile that Aśoka is called "*alms-giver of the monks*" (OBERMILLER, p.96).

¹⁷ It is, nevertheless, interesting and somehow supporting the presented interpretation that the Aśoka-tradition in Tibet has never reached the same importance as in China. The scope and the capability of this paper does not allow to further investigate this problem but it seems that the reason is that the Tibetan kingdom was an aggressive one when it accepted Buddhism as state religion, declined to give way to the theocratic system prevailing from then on in Tibetan history (cp. HOFMANN) - all developments which could hardly use a pacifistic and laic ruler like the Aśoka of the tradition in a propagandistic way.

Mānsehrā, Dhaulī, Jaugāḍa) and the first separate rock-edict (of Dhaulī and Jaugāḍa). The texts run:

Rock-edict 3¹⁸:

"King Devānāmpriya Priyadarśin said thus: twelve years after the consecration this has been ordered by me: all over my kingdom yutas, lājūkas and pādesikas shall go out on an inspection-tour every to that purpose [mentioned above] and for this instruction in the Dharma and for other actions: good is obeiance against father and mother, against friends, acquaintances and relatives and against brāhmins and śramanas generosity is good; against animals non-killing is good; moderation in expenditure and in keeping [only] for oneself is good. And the palisās themselves should urge the yutas to cash up in giving reasons [for their expenditures] and [should] do that in writing."

First separate rock-edict¹⁹:

"For that purpose [to controll the just given orders] I have a mahāmata go on tour every five years, a man without rudeness, soft, acting delicately, depraved of violence, knowing the object ... he acts according to my orders."

From both texts it is undisputedly clear - despite the problems in interpreting single words and forms - that Aśoka initiates control-tours by some officials²⁰. These controls are an administrative act and are supposed to guarantee the well-being of all the people in Aśoka's kingdom but also the control over both the local administration and the subjects, laic or religious; a direct contact with the Buddhist *saṅgha* is

¹⁸ devānāmpriye piyadasi lājā hevaṃ āhā: duvāḍasavasābhisitena (duvāda-) me iyaṃ ānapayite: savata vijitasi mama yutā lājūke (p¹ add: ca) pādesike ca paṃcasu paṃcasu vasesu anusaṃyānaṃ nikhamaṃtu (-khamāvū) etāye va aṭhāye imāye dhammānusathīye athā aṃnāye pi kaṃmane: sādhu mātipitusu susūsā, mitasamthutanātikānaṃ (-nātimaṃ?) ca baṃbhanaśamanānaṃ ca (p¹ om: ca) sādhu dāne, pānānaṃ anālambhe sādhu, apaviyatā apabhaṃḍatā sādhu. palisā pi ca gananaṃ yutāni anapayisaṃti (ānapayisati) hetute ca viyaṃjanate ca The text is - only for practical reasons - the reconstructed one of SCHNEIDER (1978). The translation is also following SCHNEIDER, op.cit.; for other translations see HULTZSCH, 5; BLOCH, 95ff.; SMITH, 201; MOOKERJI, 133ff., e.a..

¹⁹ ... (Z) etāye cha aṭhāye hakaṃ mate paṃchasu paṃchasu vasesu anu[sa]-yānaṃ nikhāmayisāmi e mahāmātaṃ akhahasam aḥaṃḍaṃ aphaḷusaṃ sakhināḷambhaṃ hosati etaṃ aṭhaṃ jānitu ... tathā kalaṃti aṭha mama anusathī ti ... In fact this it is the second separate rock edict (cp. ALSDORF, 5). For the text see ed. HULTZSCH, Dhaulī: 92-97, Jaugāḍa: 111-115, and synoptical text on 213-216. The text here does not claim at all the value of reconstruction of the original underlying both versions but only takes as much informations as possible from both adopting the dialectical forms of Jaugāḍa - a procedure inferring philological problems but which seems to be legitimate for the purpose here. The translation follows HULTZSCH, loc.cit., BLOCH, 139f., ALSDORF, 37f. and MOOKERJI, 123, who in note 6 uses the term "Quinquennial Tour" without giving any reverence to the legend.

²⁰ The names are already found in the Jātaka-literature: cp. FICK, 106. We leave aside the discussion if the mahāmātas of the edicts do really correspond to the mahāmātras of the Arthaśāstra (for a discussion see KANGLE, 211f.).

not seen at all. The connexion with religion only lies in the fact that Aśoka considers these measures to be realizing the *dharma*. Without entering into a discussion over what was the meaning and content of Aśoka's *dharma*, it is clear from the other inscriptions that it is not totally identical with the Buddhist *dharma* or *dhamma*; however the word itself was an important means to make Aśoka the zealous buddhist (*dharmāśoka*) of the legend.

The next step in our investigation then should be the descriptions of the pv. in the Indian versions of the Aśoka legend or in their Chinese translations. It should be kept in mind that the time-gap between the edicts and the texts of the legends is several hundred years²¹ which cannot be filled out by any other information on the subject, neither epigraphical, nor archaeological or literal.

The legend is found in Divy., the Chinese sources AWZ (T.2042, 99a-131a)²² and AWJ (T.2043, 131b-170a)²³, in the Chinese Saṃyuktāgama (T.99.165b-170c)²⁴ and in the Pāli-sources Dīp.²⁵, Mah.²⁶ and Sam.²⁷.

Let us now have a look on the various legends or accounts of the pv.. The main text is found in Divy. 27 (COWELL / NEILL, 403ff.; MUKHOPADHYAYA, 100ff.; STRONG, 265ff.²⁸), and the passage where Aśoka "initiates" the pv. runs as follows²⁹:

²¹ Cp. WINTERNITZ, 285f., gives the 4th century A.D. for the Divy.

²² Translated 306 by An Faqin 安法欽, a Parthe who lived in Changan 281-306 and is attributed only 5 works (two preserved: our AWZ and T.816, 道神足無極變化經 Dao-shenzu-wuji-bianhua-jing "Sūtra on the unlimited changes of the supernatural footsteps", NANJIO's No.148). For the few details on him see BAGCHI, 116f.

²³ Translated 512 by Saṅghabhara 僧伽婆羅 Sengjiapoluo, born 460, working in Nanjing from 506 to 520 and 524 (BAGCHI, 415ff.).

²⁴ Translated by Guṇabhadra (see below). Very large, containing 1362 sūtras. The two other translations of the Saṃyuktāgama (T.100 and T.101) do not include the Aśoka-legend. Both are anonymous, older than T.99, T.101 being translated in the Wei- and Wu-dynasty (between 220 and 280) in only 1 fascicle, 27 sūtras (NANJIO: 25), and T.100 being translated between 350 and 431 in 20 fascicles, 364 sūtras (NANJIO, 138, nos.546 and 547).

²⁵ On the Dīp. see NORMAN, 114ff.

²⁶ Op.cit., 117f.

²⁷ Op.cit., 121f.

²⁸ Japanese translation SADAKATA, 100ff.; SADAKATA's note on 224 to page 100 only explains the pv. as an "... assembly performed every five years ..." He does not point out the relation between the edicts, which he translates on 183, and the legend.

²⁹ 403,5: *atha rājā Sarvāmitram udghoṣakam āmantrayati: aham āryasaṃghasya śatasahasraṃ dāsyāmi kumbhasahasreṇa ca bodhiṃ snāpayiṣyāmi mama nāmnā ghuṣyatāṃ pañcavārṣikam iti; tat kālaṃ ca Kunālasya nayanadvayam avipannam āsīt; sa rājño dakṣiṇe pārśve sthitaḥ; tenāṅgulidvayam utkṣiptaṃ na tu vāg bhāṣitā: dviguṇaṃ tv ahaṃ pradāsyāmi ākārāyati; pāpinā vardhitamātre ca Kunālena sarvajanakāyena hāsyam muktam; tato rājā hāsyam muktva kathayati: aho Rādhagupta kenaitad vardhitam iti; Rādhaguptaḥ kathayati: deva bahavaḥ puṇyārthināḥ prāṇino yaḥ puṇyārthi tena vardhitam iti; rājāha: śatasahasratrayaṃ dāsyāmi āryasaṃghe*

"... Aśoka then summoned Sarvamitra, the crier, and told him: "I want to make an offering of a hundred thousand pieces of gold to the community of āryas, and bathe the Bodhi tree with a thousand pots of scented water. Proclaim in my name a great quinquennial festival!"

[...] Now at that time Kunāla's eyes had not yet been put out. He was standing a bit to the right of the king, [his father. When Aśoka announced his offering] he said nothing but threw up two fingers, declaring by this gesture that he would give twice that amount. Seeing Kunāla thus increasing the size of the offering by a hand signal, the whole crowd roared with laughter.

The king too burst out laughing and said "Aho! Rādhagupta, who brought about this increase?"

Rādhagupta answered: "Your majesty, there are many living beings who want to make merit; you were outbid by one of them."

"Well then," said the king, "I will give three times a hundred thousand pieces of gold to the community of āryas, and will bathe the Bodhi tree with three thousand pots of scented water. Proclaim in my name a great quinquennial festival!"

But then, Kunāla put up four fingers. Thereupon, King Aśoka became irritated.

"Aho, Rādhagupta," he said to his minister, "who is it who is so ignorant of the ways of the world as to contend with me?"

Realizing that Aśoka was angry, Rādhagupta fell at his feet, and said: "Your majesty, who possibly would have enough power to vie with the chief of men? It is the virtuous Kunāla who is playfully rivalling his father."

Aśoka then turned around to the right and saw Kunāla standing there. "Elder," he then declared to Piṇḍola, "except for the state treasury, I now present to the noble community my kingship, my harem, my state officials, my self, and Kunāla. And I will bathe the great Bodhi tree ... And in front of the Bodhi tree, I will offer a hundred thousand flowers to the noble community. Proclaim in my name a great quinquennial festival!" ... [p.268] ... Aśoka then brought the great quinquennial festival to a close. After presenting the triple

kumbhasahasreṇa ca bodhiṃ snapayīṣyāmi mama nāmnā ghuṣyatāṃ pañcava[=ā]rṣīkam iti; yāvat Kunālena catasro 'ṅgulya utkṣiptaḥ; tato rājā ruṣitaḥ Rādhaguptam uvāca: aho Rādhagupta ko 'yam asmābhiḥ sārḍhaṃ pratidvandvayaty alokaññāḥ; ruṣitaṃ ca rājānam avekṣya Rādhagupto rājñāḥ pādayor nipatyovāca: deva kasya śaktir narendreṇa sārḍhaṃ vispardhituṃ bhavet; Kunālo gunavān pitrā sārḍhaṃ vikurvate; atha rājā dakṣiṇena parivṛtya Kunālam avalokyovāca: sthaviro 'haṃ koṣaṃ sthāpayitvā rājyam antaḥpuram amātyagaṇam ātmānaṃ ca Kunālam ... mahābodhiṃ snapayīṣyāmi puṣpaśatasahasrāṇi ca bodhipramukhe cāryasaṃghe dadāmi mama nāmnā ghuṣyatāṃ pañcava[=ā]rṣīkam iti; ... [405,11; MUKHOPADHYAYA 103f.] ... tato rājāśokaḥ pañcavārṣīke paryavasite sarvabhikṣūn tricivareṇācchādya catvārī śatasahasrāṇi saṃghasyācchādānaṃ dattvā pṛthivīm antaḥpuram amātyaganam ātmānaṃ ca Kunālaṃ ca niṣkrītavān; ...

robe to all of the monks, he made an offering of four hundred thousand pieces of gold to the community and redeemed from it the earth, his harem, himself, and Kunāla. ..."

The text is very repetitive in order to express - again and again - the noble and immense donations to the *saṅgha*. The Chinese version³⁰ is very similar.

In spite of the efforts the text makes to evidence the greatness of Aśoka's quinquennial festivals no explanation is given on the term *pv.* itself. Nobody of the modern scholars until now - as far as I know - has realized the meaninglessness of the term *pv.* in the Aśoka-legend³¹. In the *Avadāna* it is only described as a great, not even singular event³² - no hints that it should be interpreted as an aitiological story explaining somehow the expression. In contrast, as well as the *Aśokāvadāna*, the AWZ gives references to *pv.* before the time of Aśoka³³. So it seems, that the legend only somehow kept the memory of "five-years" and brought it together with the two exorbitant feasts and donations ascribed to the king - one to the Bodhi-tree to rescue it, and another to

³⁰ T.2042, 105c.9.ff. ; PRZYLUŠKI, 266ff. In the AWJ (T.2043, 140c.3ff.) the plot runs almost the same, but the term *pv.* is not used at all (only the somewhat stereotypical 供養 *gong-yang* "to donate, to offer"). It seems however that the translator had misunderstood an original 五年 *wunian* / *pañcavaṛṣa*, because 140c.8, 140c.16 and 140c.26 - exactly the places where AWZ and Divy. have *pañcavaṛṣa* resp. *pv.* - the text has 於大眾中當說我名供養五部僧 / 當以我名在大眾說供養五眾 ("... have declare in my name to the big assembly a donation to the five parts of the *saṅgha* / to the five masses.")

³¹ A meaninglessness which obviously has brought the first editors of the text, COWELL and NEILL, to the more guessed than philologically derived meaning they give in their index (see note 6).

³² Aśoka even performs another *pv.* after he has heard that the biggest donation to the *saṅgha* was made by Anāthapiṇḍada (Divy.429,6ff.; STRONG, 286f.). The style and wording of this *pv.* is almost a repetition of the first one and the fact that the term *pv.* does not occur in the corresponding episod of the Chinese version (PRZYLUŠKI, 296) may raise questions about the originality of it in the Sanskrit-text. But it is consequently in the line of the first *pv.*: having surpassed Bimbisāra and the other royal followers of the Buddha in performing the first *pv.* (see note 32), Aśoka of course also has to surpass the merchant Anāthapiṇḍada.

³³ Divy.242,1.ff, about the *pv.* a merchant, living in the same period as the former Buddha Kṣemaṅkara, wants to perform after returning from a trip overseas; the plot is very similar to that of the Chinese story (PRZYLUŠKI, 334ff.) about the *pv.* of Śānavāsa (= Śānakavāsin of the Divy.349ff., STRONG (1994), 174ff.) a contemporary and disciple of Ānanda. He is the teacher of Upagupta, who is also connected to a *pv.*-story (op.cit., 371ff.), that of Devarakṣita, a contemporary and later disciple of Upagupta before he met Aśoka (for a discussion of these lineages cp. STRONG, op.cit., part I). The AWZ made these stories an appendix, because it starts directly from Divy.364,19, the story of Aśoka's meeting with the Buddha in his former existence as a boy, skipping the introductory story in which the accounts on Ānanda, Śānakavāsin and Upagupta are given in the Divy.. So the stories of conversions of the laymen Śānavāsa and Devarakṣita to monks could be told in an *avadāna*-like style.

the *saṅgha* which then was called pv.³⁴. Pv. in the time when the *Aśokāvadāna* was integrated into the Divy. - and already before as the AvŚ. shows - was already semantically reduced to the meaning "donation festival to the *saṅgha*" without any reminiscences to the original period of five years.

Also, the earlier collection of Avadānas, the AvŚ.³⁵, supports the assumption that in the centuries after Aśoka, the period of formation of the Aśoka-legend and its incorporation into the other collections, the term pv. has lost its connection to the historical facts and was only understood as an event of donations to the *saṅgha* by a donor - not even necessarily a king³⁶:

The 16. *avadāna* in the 2nd *varga* of the AvŚ. even bears the name "*pañcavārṣika*"³⁷, referring to the episode in the chapter, where Indra, resp. Śakra, performs the pv. for the Buddha³⁸; the story shows quite well the efforts in motivating and explaining the term pv. as rendering

34 Cp. Divy.398,21ff. where Aśoka proclaims after the Bodhi-tree seems saved: *Bimbisāraprabhṛtibhiḥ pārthivendrain dyutiṃdharair, na kṛtaṃ tat kariṣyāmi satkāradvayam uttamam; bodhiṃ ca snāpayiṣyāmi kumbhair gandhodakākulaib,* [MUKHOPADHYAYA, 94, omits metra causa: *ārya-]saṃghasya ca kariṣyāmi satkāraṃ pañcavārṣikam* (STRONG, 258: "I will do something that Bimbisāra and all the other resplendent royal lords never did. I will twice perform the highest honors; I will bathe the Bodhi tree with jars full of fragrant waters, and I will undertake to honor the *saṅgha* with a great quinquennial festival."); T.2042,105a.16ff.; PRZYLUKSI, 262. The singularity of Aśoka's performance lies in the combination of both, the bathing of the Bodhi-tree and the donations to the *saṅgha* (*satkāradvaya*).

35 On the AvŚ. cp. WINTERNITZ, 279ff. The Chinese version, T.200, with the title 撰集百緣經 *zhuānji-baiyuan-jīng*, is not a translation - as WINTERNITZ takes it following SPEYER's Introduction (XVI) - of the actual Sanskrit text. SPEYER, loc.cit., has already pointed out the differences he was pointed out by the Dutch sinologist de GROOT. The translator or redactor of the Chinese version is 支謙 Zhi Qian of the Wu-Dynastie, an Indo-Scyth of the early Buddhist period in China with an eager activity as a translator (DEMIÉVILLE (1978), 275b.f., s.v. Shi Ken; ZÜRCHER, 48ff.; SHIH, 21f.; BAGCHI, 283ff.).

36 As also in Divy. II,242,1.

37 In the Chinese version the chapter (T.200, 210a.-c.) is called 天帝釋供養佛緣 *tiāndi-shi gongyang fo-yuan*, "The *avadāna* [in which] the king of the gods, Śakra, offers to the Buddha", the term pv. not occurring once, but Śakra offers first himself, then for five years, five months and finally for five days which the Buddha accepts.

38 p.I, 89f. ... *śakraḥ prāha: adhvāsayatū me bhagavān pañca varṣāṇi tathāgatasyārthe pañcavārṣikam kariṣyāmīti; bhagavān āha: alaṃ kauśika kṛtam etad yāvaca cittam abhiprasannaṃ bahavo hi loke puṇyakāmā itī; śakraḥ prāha: adhvāsayatū me bhagavān pañca divasāmīti; tato bhagavān svapuṇyabalaprayakṣikarapārtham śakrasya ca devendrasyaṇugrahārtham anāgatapañcavārṣikaprabandhahetoś cādhivāsītavāṃs tūṣṇbhāvena* ("... Śakra said: 'Might the Venerable accept my [invitation] of five years; I will perform the *pañcavārṣika* for the favor of the Tathāgata.' The said: 'Well done, o Kauśika, is this as long as the mind is well disposed; for many are the meritorious deeds in the world.' 'Might the Venerable accept my [invitation] of five days.' Then in order to show the power of his own merits and in order to show his favour to Śakra, the Indra of the gods, and for the continuity of the future *pañcavārṣika* the Venerable accepted [it] by his silence.').

a period of time but through its inconsistencies also shows that it was made up (*pañca varṣāni : pañca divasāni*)³⁹.

At the end of this chapter follows the description of another pv. - a king exorting a plague by feeding the *saṅgha* for three months, and then - somewhat illogically - together with his citizens, performs a pv.⁴⁰.

The other place is found in *avadāna* 77, where a householder wishes to perform a pv. on behalf of Ānanda, the future Buddha⁴¹.

The short report on Aśoka in the AvŚ. has even lost every reflex of these donations but only concentrates on the birth of Aśoka's son Kunāla and the instruction of Aśoka by Upagupta⁴² - an indication that the pv. has not become such a strong element in the whole Aśoka-legend, but has already been reduced to the meaning "any meritorious on behalf of the *saṅgha*" in the Avadāna-tradition of the AvŚ. which is also clearly shown by the examples brought forth above; the term could well be skipped as a narrative element to other persons and periods - even to contemporary ones with the Buddha himself.

The oldest Pāli-text on Aśoka supports this interpretation: it does not mention the "five-years" at all, only the gifts to the *saṅgha* are mentioned several times⁴³.

³⁹ This does not mean that this is a description of the "origin of this festival", as SPEYER, II,229a, s.v., takes it.

⁴⁰ p.I, 91f. ... *tatas tena rājñā itiprasāmanahetor bhagavān saśrāvakaśaṅghas traimāsye bhaktenopanimantritaḥ; trayāpñam māsānām atyayena sā itiḥ praśāntā; tato rājñā nāgaraiś cāvarjītamānasais tathāgatasya saśrāvakaśaṅghasya pañcavārṣikaṃ kṛtam; āha ca: rājabhūtena ānanda ratnaśailo mahādyutiḥ; adhiṣṭaḥ śāntikāmena akārṣit pañcavārṣikaṃ iti; ("... then the Venerable, together with the crowd of his disciples was invited for food by the king in order to exort the plague. After three months the plague was exorted. Then a pv. was performed for the Tathāgata and the crowd of disciples by the king and the relieved citizens; [as it] is said: 'in the state of king, o Ānanda, [I was] Ratnaśaila, endowed with great splendour - solicited by his wish of peace, he performed the pv..").* Beside the fact that the whole story does not fit either to the śloka (KERN, 92, note 7) nor to the following explanation of the Buddha the story shows again how vague the understanding of pv. was. In the Chinese version (T.200, 210b.f.) the Buddha incarnated as Ratnaśaila wishes to convert the king and receives 4 kind of offerings for three months - the term pv. is missing completely.

⁴¹ p.II,39: *vārānasyām anyatamo gṛhpatiḥ śrāddho ...; tasya buddhir utpannā; yan nv ahaṃ chandakabhikṣaṇaṃ kṛtvā bhagavataḥ kāśyapasya śāsane pañcavārṣikaṃ kuryām iti; ... ("In Benares [lived] a certain householder, pious, ...; it came to his mind: 'When I have given the alms of a protector I would like to perform the pv. according to the instructions of the venerable Kāśyapa; ...').*

⁴² p.II,200ff.; for the story see WINTERNITZ, 283. The Chinese version, T.200., 4,256b.ff., does - under a different title (孫陀利端政 (= 正) 緣 *suntuoli-duanzheng-yuan : Sundarī-avadāna*) and despite the same frame-story about the birth of Kunāla - not correspond to the Sanskrit Original. The whole plot is taking place in the time of the Buddha and instead of Aśoka it has king Prasenajit (波斯匿王 *bosini-wang*), king of Kośala.

⁴³ Some of the elements which make up the pv.-episode in the Divy. are found in different arrangement and scattered in Dip. 6.58ff. (see PRZYLUŠKI, 117; cp. also Mah.5.62ff.).

It seems that the Southern tradition has totally lost knowledge of Aśoka as a politico-pragmatically acting emperor even to the extent of omitting any no more understandable words - e.g. pv.⁴⁴ - only culminating his actions as a maecenas of the *saṅgha*. Quite different in the Northern (North-India and Central-Asia) tradition where more or less strong Buddhist rulers - beginning with Kaniska - used the Aśoka-legend to legitimate their rule towards their people by copying or at least pretending to copy the great Buddhist emperor. Here the tradition and memory was stronger in the details - like the name of the ceremony - which being not fully understood any more were however kept and interwoven into the legend.

It is striking that the Chinese translation of the legend in the *Samyuktāgama* which runs almost parallel (T.99, 170a.-c.) with the "quinquennial"-episod of the Aśokāvadāna does not mention the ceremony by name⁴⁵ but takes it only as a culminating end of an

Especially 6.85, where beside the somehow stereotypic almsgiving a reflex of the Northern tradition of giving away everything in the pv. is found: 85. *yāvata bhikkhū icchanti tāva demi yadicchakam.* ("I give as much as the Bhikkhus desire, whatever they choose." (OLDENBERG)). This offer is claimed by the Elder Moggaliputta as an answer on Aśoka's showing off himself as the ultimate follower of Buddhism (7.8.-13.) when he asks Aśoka to have his children ordained - a precondition for the mission of Mahinda to Ceylan so important for the Theravādin -: 7.16. ... *paccayadāyako nāma sāsane patibāhiro, 17. yassa puttaṃ vā dhītaṃ vā urasmiṃ jātam anvayam pabbājesi cajetvāna so ve dāyādo sāsane.* ("... The donor of the requisites (for the Bhikkhus) remains a stranger to the Faith, - 17. but that man who gives up his son or daughter, the issue of his body, and causes them to receive the Pabbajjā ordination, becomes really a relation of the Faith."); cp. also Mah.5.194ff. and Sam.51. Another parallel to the pv. is the giving of the robes to the *saṅgha*: 6.82.: ... *ekamekassa bhikkhuno adāsi yugasātakam.* ("... he offered to each Bhikkhu a suit of robes.") The sequence of the actions is somehow inverted as Aśoka does not begin to build 84 000 monasteries (= *stūpas* in the *avadāna*) after having given presents to the *saṅgha* and having been preached the law (6.96).

⁴⁴ There seem to be no remains of the ceremony in the state-Buddhism in Theravāda-monarchies like Thailand, Kamboja (cp. BECHERT). If there had been any tradition of such a ceremony like the pv. it likely still would be performed in such countries, especially in countries where Buddhist monarchism prevails.

⁴⁵ Although PRZYLUŠKI, 404, thinks that the passage in T.99, 178b., where the king of Kauśambī says that he wants to offer to the "5 groups", *pañcavarga* (see NAKAMURA, 363df., s.v. *goshu* 2.; SOOTHOLL/HODOUS, 126b) is a mistranslation of *pañcavaṛṣa*, which actually is found in the Aśokāvadāna. However it does not make very much sense to make ceremonies in a period of 12 years in order to prevent the decline of the *dharma* and these 12 years would not fit at all to the reconstructed 5 years. That here the Chinese Aśokāvadāna may be the wrong text is supported by the fact that it repeats the term *pañcavaṛṣa*, while the Āgamatext only states that the king performs donations. Then, philologically speaking, it is difficult to see how the expression 供養 *gongyang* which - in the sense of "to offer, to donate" - usually is followed by a direct or indirect object (here: 五眾 *wuzhong* / *pañcavarga*) should be used in the meaning of "perform (the pv.)". Another argument against PRZYLUŠKI's emendation, following the AWZ, is the fact that the term 五眾 is also found in the context with the great donation corresponding to the pv. in fascicle 23 (T.99.170a, last line); it can be no doubt that it has to mean here the five groups: 集諸

exorbitant donation-tour of Aśoka⁴⁶. It has to be born in mind that this translation was made by Guṇabhadra, a monk of brahmanic origin from central-India⁴⁷ who sojourned some time in Ceylan before leaving for China⁴⁸ where he could well have got the Southern version of the legend⁴⁹.

The question that arises next is: why we find the number five in the edict and - in spite of making no sense at all in the plot - in the legends. Has it come from a religious or a secular background?

In general the number five as a numeric symbol for the fingers of one hand stands for a simple complete group⁵⁰. It would be an interesting but too extant task to check all the meanings of the number five in general⁵¹ in Indian or other Asian contexts; it would however not contribute to the solution of the questions where the pv. comes from and how it is related to the statements of the edicts.

Only some words should be said: In the Indian context especially the number five occurs from the very beginning of the tradition. In the older Indian texts five is identified with several microcosmic and macrocosmic groups which themselves are again identified with each

五眾 "the five groups gathered". The AWZ, when it talks about pv., always uses the phonetic transcription, so it is clear that in the added text of fascicle 9 it is wrong for 五眾.

⁴⁶ The reason PRZYLUŚKI, 55-58, gives for the interpolation - the Aśoka-legend being used as an illustration for the *smṛtyupasthāna*, the "objects of meditation" - does not solve the question why the name of the pv. has been omitted in spite of the fact that the story relates the bathing of the bodhi-tree and the episod of the two young monks (*śrāmaṇera* 沙彌 *shami*), corresponding so exactly to the pv.-chapter of the Divy.

⁴⁷ NANJIO, 416; DEMIÉVILLE, 252b., s.v. Gunabatsudara; BAGCHI, 378-388; a French translation of his biography in the GSZ is found in SHIH, 148-156.

⁴⁸ SHIH, 149; BAGCHI, 378.

⁴⁹ It is interesting that Guṇabhadra also translated a work Wuyou-wang-jing 無憂王經, an *Aśokarājasūtra (see BAGCHI, 385, no.36) which unfortunately is lost, but which was noteworthy enough under the relatively high number of translations done by Guṇabhadra, to be mentioned in GSZ (SHIH, 150). The Aśoka-legend is obviously interpolated in the Āgama as a prediction of the great Buddhist emperor Śākyamuni adresses to Ānanda: it is the only "sūtra" in the whole collection which is covering a whole fascicle (23) while the other fascicles contain several small sūtras each. It could be concluded that it is identical with the lost 無憂王經 if there not the difference in the form of the name 無憂王 vs. 阿育王. Two other interpolations relating to the decline of the *dharma* and the kings involved are found in fascicle 25 corresponding to fascicle 9 in the Chinese AWZ. It seems clear that this chapter also was interpolated in the Chinese text as an appendix, so that it can not be taken as a proof for a pv. in the Āgama.

⁵⁰ Cp. RHYS-DAVIDS / STEDE, 387bff., s.v. *Pañca*; esp. 387b.: "'Five" is the number of "comprehensive and yet simple" unity or a set; it is applied in all cases of comprehension of several items into a group, after the 5 fingers of the hand, ..." and 388a. on 500, 5000. Cp. also the examples in the language of "primitives" in KAINZ, 231, and HALLPIKE, 285 and 288.

⁵¹ Some examples are the five pillars (or duties: *arkān*) and the five daily prayers in Islam, the pentagram with its magical functions, the five planets, the five archonts and aeons in Manichaeism. In some cultures it has negative value: in pre-Columbian Mexico the god of death was ruling in the fifth hour of the night and Hesiod warns of every fifth day in a month.

other because of their numeric equality⁵². It is known that in Indian philosophy important aspects or items are bundled in groups of five: the five-fire-theory of the Upaniṣads, the five elements (*bhūta*). Realiter we find the five main tribes or countries already from the Vedic age and in the later period administrative units were called *pañcayāt*.

Also in Buddhism, five and its decimal variants occur more often probably than any other number. To give only a few examples: the fives "fetters" (*saṃyojana*), the five *skandha*, the five forms of existence (*gatī*), etc.⁵³.

Time-measuring and astronomy was highly developed in India. From the earliest time on the year was divided into 5 seasons⁵⁴. In the time-measures of the Maurya-period the five-year-period was well-known and has its own word as is proved by KAŚ.2.20.64: "... Five years make one cycle."⁵⁵ The reason for this is given in the difference between lunar and solar calendar: KAŚ.2.20.65. "*The sun takes one-sixtieth part of a day; thus in one season he brings about the loss of one day, and so does the moon (cause loss of) one (day).* 66. *Thus in every period of two years and a half the two beget an additional month, the first in summer and the second at the end of (the cycle of) five years.*"⁵⁶ This astronomical periodization in the KAŚ. - a work compiled just two generations before Aśoka - could well have had an influence on the administrative timetable of the Mauryan empire⁵⁷. This is the more plausible because this period of time is as old as the Indian tradition we can trace: already in the oldest texts allusions are made to it⁵⁸.

The same cycle of 5 years based on astronomical calculations is found in the old Chinese tradition⁵⁹. It seems quite reasonable that the number five and its various connotations in Chinese pre-Buddhist state-

⁵² OLDENBERG (1919), 65, 82ff.

⁵³ KLIMKEIT, 233ff.

⁵⁴ ZIMMER, 373.

⁵⁵ *pañcasamvatsaro yugam*.

⁵⁶ 65. *divasasya haraty arkaḥ ṣaṣṭibhāgam ṛtau tataḥ; karoty ekam ahaś chedaṃ tathaivaikaṃ ca candramāh.* 66. *evam ardhatṛtīyānām abdānām adhimāsakam; grīṣme janayataḥ pūrvaṃ pañcābdānte ca paścimam.* Translation KANGLE, II,141.; on references to Jyotiṣa-vedāṅga see KANGLE, *ibid.*, note 66. See also SHAMASASTRY, 135.

⁵⁷ On a sceptical view of the correspondances between the Mauryan administration-system and -personal and the system depicted in the inscriptions see KANGLE, III,210ff. It is interesting that the Aśokan control-tour has a parallel in the earliest historical record of Si Majian 司馬間 where is related that the kings went out on tour through their kingdom every five years (GRANET, 70, 76); this periodization could well be influenced by astronomical calculations (see below).

⁵⁸ ZIMMER, 367ff.; the term *yuga* in this meaning seems to be very old: *cp.loc.cit.*

⁵⁹ GRANET, 80; 145.

ritual⁶⁰, -mantic⁶¹ and symbolism⁶² made the whole ceremony compatible with the regular duties of a Chinese emperor and was one of the reasons that the pv. was so easily accepted by emperors inclined or devoted to Buddhism.

A striking fact is that, in spite of the transparent meaning of the word pv. - which is proved for a rather late period by the Chinese (semantic) translations - there is no tribute and consideration of that meaning in the prototype of a pv.: that is, the one in the Aśokāvadāna (see above). The Chinese translation 五年 (大) 會 *wunian-(da)hui*, "five-year-assembly" adding the character 會 *hui*, however also makes it clear that, like in the Indian Aśoka-tradition, the main stress is on the assembly not on the period or point of time it takes place. This is also the case in the description of a pv. found in the CSJ⁶³ where the main stress is even on the *saṅgha* and no ruler is mentioned.

It seems that the local traditions (Indian, Central-Asian and Chinese) stuck to the term on one hand because the number five had some traditional weight and on the other side because the *saṅgha* had an interest in regular continuing the opulent donation-ceremonies performed by the local rulers.

Turning to these non-legendary, historically described pv., the only description of the ceremony in India which can be considered as authentic is that of Xuanzang on the pv. of Harṣa.

Descriptions are found in the XIJ⁶⁴ and in the CEZ⁶⁵. The common features of these texts are, that king Śīlāditya (Harṣa) gives away all

⁶⁰ The role of the "Five Agents" 五行 *wuxing* or "Powers" 五德 *wude* and the symbols related to them; cp. the historical survey in CHANS's "Introduction" (esp. 26), TWITCHETT/LOEWE, 737 and 743.

⁶¹ The old oracle-masters speculated about numbers and calendar-division, also trying to bring the lunar and the solar year in accord with the numbers they got from the hexagrams. The central number was 5 (GRANET, 145, 152f.).

⁶² The 5 has been the number representing the centre; cp. GRANET, 113, 121, diagrams on 130ff.

⁶³ T.2145.67c.12ff. 河西沙門釋曇學威德等凡有八僧結志遊方遠尋經典於于闐大寺遇般遮于瑟之會般遮于瑟者漢言五年一切大眾集也三藏諸學各弘法寶說經講律依業而教 "The monks Shi Yunxue, Weide and others - in total 8 person - of Hexi had decided to go to far regions to search Sūtra-literature. In Khotan, at the Great Monastery they happened [to see] the assembly of pv. [which] in Chinese means 'gathering of the big crowd (saṅgha [every] five years'. They learn the Tripiṭaka and everybody spreads the dharma-jewel; they expound the Sūtras and recite the Vinaya and teach according to their karma[ic preconditions]." Cp. LINK, 23, note 23.

⁶⁴ T.2087.894c.4ff., 五歲一設無遮大會 "once in five years [he] establishes the *mahā-mokṣapariṣad"). For translations see BEAL I,214; WATTERS I,344; Japanese: MIZUTANI, 165a. See also shorter T.2087.897c.3ff. 五年積財一旦傾捨 "[he] wastes the treasure collected in 5 years in one moment"); BEAL I,233; WATTERS I,364; MIZUTANI 177a.. Beside these quinquennials there also seem to have been annual assemblies and donations, called *mahāmokṣapariṣad, too (T.2087.934c.19ff.; BEAL II.161f.; WATTERS II.242; MIZUTANI 352b.)

the state treasure collected in a period of five years and even his personal belongings which are redeemed then by the vassal-kings; the description of the extent of the givings differs not only from XIJ to CEZ - XIJ is more moderate - but also in the different descriptions of the same event in the same text.

It is obvious from the texts that Xuanzang does not use the Chinese words corresponding directly to phonetic transcriptions or semantic translations of pv. - for the ceremonies described by him, but uses the term usually rendered as **mokṣa-pariṣad* because the stress was laid on the "buying" of future resolution and the redeeming of the treasures⁶⁶, and because of the Chinese parallels in the past, e.g. Liang Wudi (see the discussion in Part II).

It is striking that Bāna in his Harṣacarita does not even mention these assemblies⁶⁷ which according to Xuanzang were performed regularly and in total 6 times in Harṣa's reign⁶⁸. This is especially strange because Bāna in spite of being a *brāhmaṇa* shows a tolerant, even positive attitude towards Buddhism⁶⁹ and Xuanzang describes donations not only to the Buddhists but also to other religious groups.

The XUJ gives also accounts on three other ceremonies⁷⁰. For the kingdom of Kucha Xuanzang gives the description of a place for the quinquennial assembly⁷¹. Xuanzang also mentions an assembly the king of Bāmiyān holds⁷² and of the king of Kapiśa⁷³.

⁶⁵ T.2053.233b.19.ff. (無遮大會), 234b.18.ff. (五年積財七十五日散施 "he distributes the treasure collected in five years in 75 days"), 248b.15.ff. (五年一, 無遮大施 "once in five years, the great mokṣa-almsgiving"). Translations in JULIEN, 113, 121, 252; BEAL 83f., 90, 184ff.; LI 83, 89, 144; NAGASAWA 75, 81 (only this in KATAYAMA, 103f.), 165f. (T.-references - also from XGSZ and XZ not used here - are conveniently listed in MAYER, 275, note 545).

⁶⁶ Even if the texts, especially CEZ, tend to embellish the whole event they are moderate enough not to ascribe Harṣa the ultimate donation of his own person like Liang Wudi.

⁶⁷ DEVAHUTI, 181, more generally on the silence of historical sources.

⁶⁸ DEVAHUTI, 218. The 30 peaceful years of Harṣa's reign given in the XYJ (894b.) fit too perfectly to these 6 pv. to be more than idealized, especially considering the difficult chronological situation of the different texts (cp. MAYER, 112ff.).

⁶⁹ WINTERNITZ, 439f., MYLIUS, 221. Also cp. the dialogue with the Buddhist saint in Harṣacarita, ch.8 (FÜHRER's edition p.315; COWELL / THOMAS's translation 8, 265f.). It has, however, to be still taken in account that the end of the Harṣacarita has been lost, so that the event Xuanzang described and which took place towards the end of Harṣa's reign was not yet included in the plot.

⁷⁰ None of these cases however is mentioned in the CEZ.

⁷¹ T.2087.870b.13ff. 大城西門外路左右有立佛像高九十餘尺於此像前建五年一大會每秋分數十日間舉國僧徒皆來會集("outside of the west-gate of the big city, on the left and right of the road are standing Buddha-statues, more than 90 Chi high. In front of the these statues there is a place where they prepare a big assembly every five years. Every autumnal equinox the monks of the country come together to hold a meeting for some ten days ...") BEAL's translation (I,21f.) implies that the pv. and the annual meeting are identical but of course Xuanzang here describes two different events (cp. WATTERS I,63; MIZUTANI 15b.f.). WANG, 231, note 140, thinks

Xuanzang with his excellent knowledge of the language of course knew that he could only call a ceremony a pv. when it really was performed every five years, i.e., in the case of Harṣa and describing the place in Kucha. In the other cases he avoids pv. and uses **mokṣa(pariṣad)* almost fitting his descriptions even of annual events as in the case of Kapiśa⁷⁴.

Up to this point the link between the text of the edicts on one hand, and the *avadāna* and the historically described ceremonies on the other hand, would only be supported by the equation *pañcasu pañcasu vasesu* and pv. and could be criticized as weak and speculative.

We have, nevertheless, features in the earliest historical description of a pv. which does actually differ from the descriptions in the *avadāna* and other Chinese sources (Xuanzang, glossaries, etc.). It is Faxian's account of a pv. in a Central-Asian kingdom⁷⁵ he passed on his way to India which still seems to reflect reminiscences to the original control-expeditions initiated by the great Mauryan emperor.

The passage runs as follows⁷⁶:

"After the summer-retreat they [Faxian and his fellow-travellers] crossed the mountains for 25 days and reached the country of Jiecha. There they met [again] Huijing and the others [who left Khotan earlier for Jiecha]. The king of this country was just performing the pv., having the meaning "the Great five-year-assembly" in the language of

that the assembly described in the account of Songyun's travel (T.2092.1020b.3f.) refer to the pv. described by Xuanzang and NAGASAWA 199, note 33, to the one referred to by Faxian (see below), IRIYA, note 51 (p.109b.) even to both. The text, however, 王年常大會皆在此寺 ("all great meetings the king [performs] often in a year are [held] in this monastery"), does not fit to a pv. at all; CHAVANNES, 410f., also sees no connection. JENNER' s translation (p.263) does not give any help.

⁷² T.2087.873b.19ff. 其王每此設無遮大會上自妻子下至國珍府庫既傾復以身施群官僚佐就僧酬贖若此者以為所務矣 "the king (of this country) always establishes here a *mokṣa*-assembly and [gives away everything] from his own wife and children to the state-treasury; after having exhausted the public treasury he also donates his own body; the officials and officers [then] go to the *saṅgha* and redeem [everything]. By this [they] are well performing according their duties." BEAL I,51f.; WATTERS I,119 (no word-by-word-translation); MIZUTANI 45b.

⁷³ T.2087.873c.17ff.; 歲造丈八尺銀佛像兼設無遮大會周給貧窶惠施寡寡 "every year [the king] makes a 1 zhang 8 chi high silver-stature of the Buddha and also establishes a great *mokṣa*-assembly [where] he supports the poor and miserables and donates to the widowers and widows." BEAL I,55; WATTERS I,123; MIZUTANI 47b.

⁷⁴ This makes BEAL's discussion (55, note 195) superfluous, if 歲 of the text is to be translated as "periodically", because yearly does not fit to the equation *pañcavarṣika = mokṣapariṣad*. Cp. also MIZUTANI's translation (47b.: ... 歲ごとに ...).

⁷⁵ 竭叉 *jiecha* **giat-tshai/ts^he*: (PULLEYPLANK); according to NAGASAWA, 20, note 8 - rejecting all the other identifications (ADACHI, RÉMUSAT, GILES), this is Tashkurgan.

⁷⁶ T.2085, 857c.6.ff.

the Han⁷⁷. On the occasion of this assembly he invited śramanas from all directions, [who] all came [in a big number as] clouds and gathered. Above the places where the gathered monk-community sat down baldachin [made] of silk with straps hanged down and the backside of the seats for the monks were covered with [cloth showing] golden and silver lotos-flowers. [After] the seats had been arranged, everybody sat down. The king and the ministers distribute gifts according to the rules. [This] usually [takes place] in spring in the first, second or third month. After the king has performed the assembly he also advises his ministers to arrange donations. [These donations] last one, two, three, five or even seven days. After all donations have been finished the king has the most eminent ministers of the country ride his horses saddled and bridled according his royal status⁷⁸. ..."

Even ADACHI who has written the most extent commentary on the FXZ and who does indicate a relation between the pv. and the third rock-edict⁷⁹ does not explain the episode of the ministers riding the royal horses which makes no sense at all in the framework of the usual descriptions of the ceremony⁸⁰. It makes sense, however, if one keeps in mind the original edict of Aśoka, in which he orders officials to tour the kingdom every five years, which probably was made on horseback, in chariots or, in India, on the back of elephants. We can imagine - even if we do not get any evidence from the short texts of the edicts - a scene where the control-officers leave for their inspection-tours on the back of official, maybe royal, horses (or elephants). This is the more

⁷⁷ T.2085, 857c.7.f. 般遮越師漢言五年大會也 Faxian - in contrast to the later accounts - still seems to feel the need to translate the phonetic transcription of the Sanskrit word semantically.

⁷⁸ This crucial part in the original Chinese runs: (T.2085, 857c.13f.) ... 供養都畢王以所乘馬鞍勒自副使國中貴重騎之 . WATTERS (1979-80), 139, gives a quite similar translation but fails to explain the meaning. Follows an abridged account of the donations made to the *saṅgha*.

⁷⁹ 25ff., esp. note 2, where he however fails to give a right translation (interpretation) of the rock-edict. NAGASAWA only follows ADACHI (26, note 1). The first translation of BEAL (1869), 15f., still points out the connection (15, note 1) to the edict(s), which is omitted in the second version (p.XXVIII).

⁸⁰ RÉMUSAT (p.24) could not do better to translate as he did without being able to explain even the meaning of the ceremony because at his time neither the Aśoka-legend was known nor were the edicts. LEGGE only helplessly remarks on his almost ununderstandable translation (p.23, note 1): "The text of this sentence is perplexing; and all translators, including myself, have been puzzled by it." SADAKATA states that this section "is difficult to explain and that his translation is only an attempt." (p.53, note 4). GILES only translates without any comment (p.7): "When all the offerings have been made, the king takes his own horse, saddles and bridles it himself and causes a distinguished official to ride it." His translation is very close to our's. NAGASAWA (p.24) follows almost GILES but gives no explanation. ONO's "translation" (p.10) - as is well known for the Kokuyaku-issaikyō-series - is a traditional Kanbun-reading of the Chinese text without any explanation to this part of the text. ABBEG, 109, too, does not try to explain the account as a whole but only the features of donation and weather-making (by the *saṅgha*).

probable as the Mauryas seem to have had a well-functioning and administered system of state-run horse- and elephant-stables not only for military usage⁸¹ and Aśoka even in his edicts shows his interest in a good traffic-infrastructure⁸².

We would get from this Central-Asian ceremony described by Faxian a form of the pv. which has preserved more original elements than its Indian and Chinese counterparts which of course were stimulated and kept alive by legends like the Aśokāvadāna. Chronologically and geographically speaking such an interpretation seems reasonable because in fact all descriptions of the pv. or **mokṣapariṣad* we have in Chinese accounts - except the ones performed by Harṣa or by Chinese emperors - are located in Central Asian or North Indian regions where they seem to have been particularly popular. In this context one has also to remember the fact that early relationships to North-India already in the Aśokan time are reflected in the legends and proved by the discovered edicts in the uttermost Northwest of the empire. Then the Kuṣans consolidated a North Indian kingdom and brought Buddho-Indian culture to Central Asia, and especially the greatest of these kings, Kanīṣka, who considered himself and was considered as an "Aśoka of his time"⁸³, obviously tried to copy his famous predecessor successfully by initiating the fourth Concile⁸⁴, building a Kanīṣka-vihāra⁸⁵ and a Kanīṣka-stūpa⁸⁶; though the term pv. does not occur in connection with Kanīṣka, the king is said to have been such a great donator to the *saṅgha*⁸⁷ that after the Concile he even gave Kaśmir to

81 KAS.2.30 ("The Superintendent of Horses"), 2.31 ("The Superintendent of Elephants") and also 2.33 ("The Superintendent of Chariots").

82 Cp. Second rock-edict, which refers to the planting of trees and digging of wells along the streets.

83 LAMOTTE, 468; NARAIN, 166. See also notes 2-4 in MIZUTANI 85b.f.

84 T.2087,882a.18ff., 886b.22.ff.; BEAL I,117; I,151ff; WATTERS I,271ff.; T.2053,231b.23ff.; BEAL, 71f.. For the Tibetan tradition see Tāranātha 12 (called 3rd Concile) (CHIMPA / CHATTOPADHYAYA 91ff.) and Bu-ston (OBERMILLER, 97).

85 T.2087,880b.15ff.; BEAL I,103; WATTERS I,208; NAIRAIN, loc.cit.; on Albiruni's account: SACHAU II.11.

86 Discovered 1908: LAMOTTE 753. Already mentioned by Faxian (T.2085, 858b,13ff.). See also Xuanzang: T.2087.879c.11.ff.; BEAL I,99; T.2087,887a.13f.; BEAL I,156; T.2053, 230a.28ff.; BEAL, 63. Kanīṣka is said to have founded a town in Kaśmir named after him Kanīṣkapura (Rāj.167; STEIN I,30, note ibid. and II,482) and legends about him were still alive in the period of the Arabian conquerors as Albiruni shows (STEIN I,148, note 277 and SACHAU, loc.cit.).

87 T.2087,886.b.21.ff.; BEAL I,156; WATTERS I,271. Also Bu-ston's statement (OBERMILLER, 97: "... the alms-giver was Kanīṣka ...") implies that Kanīṣka made donations to the *saṅgha* on occasion of the Concile.

the *saṅgha* - exactly as Aśoka had done with his kingdom in the pv. after the legend (sic!)⁸⁸.

Another striking difference is the fact, that the king in Faxian's account does not give himself to the *saṅgha* forcing the nobles and ministers to release him as Aśoka in the legend and the Chinese emperor Liang Wudi do. The Central-Asian assembly - as described - is a rather moderate donation-party compared to the excessive spendings in the Aśokāvadāna and as well of Harṣa and of the various Chinese emperors.

Riding the royal horses with all their insignies of royal power may well be ritual remainders of the original control-trips of Aśoka. After the decline of the Mauryas such tours anyway were not possible any more and - as a tool of control - not popular from a Buddhist point of view: in the legend they were replaced by or rather mixed with something more positive: donations. When the Aśoka-legend arose the texts of the edicts were not understood any more and so made it easy to do away with the memories of the control-tours, but the terminus pv. was still known and applied to an action of Aśoka which was in Buddhist eyes, especially in the eyes of the *saṅgha*., his highest deed of merit: donations to the *saṅgha*.

Faxian, of course, who knew the Aśoka-tradition already from texts translated into Chinese, observed the ceremony in the light of his knowledge, and it is the more striking that he still felt obliged to record the riding of the horses which he tries not and is not able to explain.

Now the question arises how the pv. developed until the state of a **mokṣapariṣad* where the king or ruler gave all his properties and even himself to the *saṅgha*, being released by his nobles and ministers? The start of this development is certainly to be seen in the coming forth of the new Buddhist ideal in Mahāyāna: compassion up to a degree of self-sacrifice so often described in the Jātakas⁸⁹ belonging to the career of a

⁸⁸ T.2087,887a.15ff.於是功既成畢還軍本都出此國西門之外東面而跪復以此國總施僧徒 ("... then, after having accomplished that [enshrinement of the scriptures in the stūpa, he had his troupes return to his own capital; he went out of this country [Kāśmir] through the western exit, fell on his knee towards the East and gave this whole country back again to the followers of the *saṅgha*.") Xuanzang's description is interesting in so far as it has ritual elements (sending the troupes back, kneeling) and reminds of Aśoka, who is the subject of Xuanzang's account before he switches to Kaṇiṣka and the fourth Concile. This is also supported by the language, and it seems that only MIZUTANI (129b) has recognized this connection with Aśoka expressed by the adverb 復 "again" when he translates: ... 無憂王と同じく復びこの國を擧げて僧徒に布施したのである。 because Xuanzang does not refer to any donation of Kaṇiṣka before. This part is omitted in the CEZ.

⁸⁹ One of the most popular examples, over and over again repeated in text and picture in Asia is the Bodhisattva in his former existence presenting his own flesh to a hungry tigress and her hungry children (e.g. Jātakamāla 1).

bodhisattva. A ruler could follow this example by being tremendously generous towards religious groups, especially towards the Buddhist *saṅgha*, but state-pragmatic added - supported by legendary tradition - to this generous gesture the redeeming; so in the legend the donations could go even so far that the king presented himself to the *saṅgha* (Divy.).

There can be no doubt, that beside the Aśoka-legend, Buddhist stories like that of the prince Viśvantara (P. Vessantara) had an influence on the the development of the pv. to that form found in the texts⁹⁰. Even if the records never mention Viśvantara as a direct model for the ceremony, the enormous popularity of this Jātaka⁹¹ throughout Buddhist Asia could not have failed to influence Buddhist rulers⁹², maybe even contributed to the formation of the pv. as it is presented in the Aśoka-legend. Especially Harṣa had definitely been influenced by the Jātaka-stories as well as a poet and as a practitioner of religion⁹³.

Even the element of rebuying in pv. like Harṣa's could well have come from this Jātaka, where Viśvantara's father, king Viśvamitra, buys back his grandchildren⁹⁴ and his daughter-in-law⁹⁵.

⁹⁰ This was already hinted out by WALEY, 67: "The rite, whatever its origins, is obviously connected with the legend of prince Vessantara, ..."; likewise GROUSSET, 209 and STRONG (1983), 93.

⁹¹ Cp. WINTERNITZ, 151f.; MYLIUS, 362. Tibetan version in the Vinaya cp. PANGLUNG, 40f., 109, who also lists the parallel-version in various Jātaka- and Avadāna-collections in his "Tabellen" (207ff.: Pāli no.547; Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā no.23, Jātakamāla no.9; Rāṣṭrapālapariṣcchā no.10; Khotanese Jātakastava no.45; various Chinese versions 215ff.). The Jātaka was also a very popular motive in Buddhist art; cp. MARSHALL, pl.6 (Sāñchī) and 130 (Gāndhāra; see also LAMOTTE 365f., 445f.). Faxian mentions recitation and depiction of the Jātaka for the utmost South, Ceylan (T.2085.865a.23 and b.2f.; LEGGE 106, NAGASAWA 143, note 5), and Xuanzang two *stūpas* in the utmost North for the commemoration of the prince Sudāna = Viśvantara (T.2087.881.b.8f. and 18ff.; BEAL 112f. and the extendant note 3 of MIZUTANI, 93b.f.); see also Songyun's earlier account on the place of the Jātaka (T.2092.1019c.20f.; WANG 228, [mistranscribing 裨羅 *biluo* as Viśvanatara]; NAGASAWA 197, note 18).

⁹² On the Sogdian version cp. UTZ, 1ff.; on the Khotanese version cp. EMMERICK. Yijing (transl. TAKAKUSU, 164) refers to a poem on Viśvantara composed by Candradāsa (cp. JOSHI, 156f.) sung and danced by peoples of all the "Five countries". All the other Chinese pilgrims mention the story (TAKAKUSU, loc.cit., note 1). On the popularity of the Viśvantara-Jātaka also cp. LAMOTTE, 758; on the motif in art see 446 (bas-relief of Amarāvati), and on the localisation of the legend in North-West-India, 366.

⁹³ TAKAKUSU, 163f.; an opera on Jātaka-topics, the Nāgānanda, by Harṣa is even believed to be performed as a *bugaku*-piece in Japan under the title Ryō-ō: DEVAHUTI, 155 and 180. It is interesting that in the CEZ (T.2053.233b.21) the almsgiving of Harṣa at the **mokṣapariṣad* are compared to the deeds of Sudāna = Viśvantara.

⁹⁴ Pāli-version.

⁹⁵ PANGLUNG, XXV, 40f., 109.

It seems that after Aśoka's death the five-year-tours were not performed any more and fell into oblivion; there are no traces in the Buddhist and other texts until the Divy.. Later kings and rulers, being Buddhists or being inclined to Buddhism, seemed to have taken up the custom as described in the Aśoka-legend. The account of Faxian makes it probable that at least in Northern India and in Central-Asia there could have been a more direct continuation of Aśoka's original control-tour, more and more weakening however through the influence of the Aśoka-legend which as it were centuries later had a high impact on the Buddhist ritual of Chinese rulers.

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------|---|
| AWJ | Ayu-wang-jing (T.2043) 阿育王經 |
| AWZ | Ayu-wang-zhuan (T.2043) 阿育王傳 |
| AvS. | Avadānaśataka (ed. Speyer) |
| CEZ | Datang-daencisi-sanzang-fashi-zhuan (T.2053) 大唐大恩慈寺三藏法師傳 |
| CSJ | Chu-sanzang-jiji (T.2145) 出三藏集記 |
| Divy. | Divyāvadāna (ed. Cowell / Neill) |
| Dīp. | Dīpavaṃsa (ed. Oldenberg) |
| DXJ | Datangxiyuji (T.2087) 大唐西域記 |
| GFZ | Gaoseng-faxian-zhuan (T.2085) 高僧法顯傳 |
| GSZ | Gaoseng-zhuan (T.) 高僧傳 |
| KAŚ | Kauṭīliyārthaśāstra (ed. Kangle) |
| LJJ | Luoyang-jialan-ji (T.2092) 洛陽伽藍記 |
| Mah. | Mahāvamsa (ed. and transl. Geiger) |
| PW | "Großes Petersburger Wörterbuch" = Sanskrit-Wörterbuch (ed. Böhtlingk / Roth) |
| Rāj. | Rājatarāṅginī of Kalhaṇa (ed. Stein) |
| Sām. | Samantapāsādikā (ed. and transl. Jayawickrama) |
| T | Taishō-shinshū-daizōkyō 大正新修大藏經 |
| XZ | Datang-gu-sanzang-xuanzang-fashi-xingzhuang (T.2052) 大唐故三藏玄奘法師行狀 |

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