The inscription of King Senavarma (se.navarma, in the orthography of the inscription itself) of Oḍi is written in Gāndhārī Prakrit and Kharoṣṭhī script on a small gold leaf or plaque. Since it refers (in line 8g) to Senavarma’s overlord Kuyulakaṭaphsa = Kujula Kadphises, the inscription can be securely dated to the early Kuṣāṇa era, i.e. about the first half of the 1st century A.D. It contains 14 lines of 100 (line 14) to 132 (line 1) aksaras per line recording the deposit by the king of bodily relics of the Buddha in a stūpa called Ekaudā or Ekakudā, i.e. Ekakūṭa or “The One-chambered.” (Thus according to my interpretation; see the translation note below on line 2a. The other editors take the name to mean “One-peaked.”) The inscription is of great interest for the historical, linguistic, literary, and religious information it contains, as well as for being the longest Kharoṣṭhī inscription yet discovered.

The Senavarma inscription was first published by H. W. Bailey (B)² in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society in 1980 with a brief introduction, “preliminary translation,” and photograph. Bailey’s introduction does not mention the provenance of the inscription, describing it only as “in private possession” (p. 21). Presumably it comes from either Afghanistan or Pakistan; B (p. 25) identifies the territory of Oḍi with Uḍḍiyāna or Swat in Pakistan, though Fussman (F) cautions that since we do not know the provenance of the inscription we cannot definitely attribute it to this region (pp. 4, 12, 44). However, certain historical and geographical data, discussed below in the General Comments 4, strongly support the hypothesis that the inscription did in fact come from the Swat Valley.

The inscription is said (B p. 21) to be seven centimeters long. If this is correct, the engraving would be extremely fine, with each aksara measuring 0.2 to 0.4 millimeters (F, p. 9), which seems improbable. The actual size of the inscription thus remains to be confirmed.³ B describes the record only as “on gold”; from the photograph, it seems to be inscribed on a thin leaf of gold which had been folded lengthwise into approximately equal thirds. This is the second specimen of a Kharoṣṭhī relic deposit record on gold, the first being the Taxila gold plate (K no. XXXI). (Similar inscriptions are also engraved on silver and copper sheets; see K nos. II, XIII, and XXVII.)

The Senavarma inscription was published for a second time by Gérard Fussman in the Bulletin de l’école française d’extrême-orient in 1982 on the basis of B’s photograph. It was also the subject of an address by B. N. Mukherjee published...
in the *Monthly Bulletin of the Asiatic Society* (Calcutta) in 1981. (It is my understanding that M also plans to publish an edition of the inscription in the *Epigraphia Indica*, but this has not yet become available to me.)

The exhibition of Kuśāṇa sculpture which at the time of this writing is touring museums in the United States includes the reliquary in which the inscription was found. This piece is described in the exhibition catalogue (*Kushan Sculpture: Images from Early India*, by Stanislaw J. Czuma; The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1985, p. 165) as follows:

82. Reliquary Stūpa. Gilt schist, h. 78 cm, diam. 32 cm. Early Kuśāṇa period, Gandhāra, Vima Kadphises reign [sic], mid-1st century to AD 78. Private collection, London . . . . Although the present object is a reliquary, it was conceived to have all the elements of a regular architectural stūpa. Its round base . . . supports a plain, round drum, the top of which is decorated with dentils. Next is a dome with several types of moldings that include lotus decorations and the same dentil-motif as on the drum. The dome itself is decorated with an incised pattern of large lotus petals. Above this, a square podium, with a lotus on each of its four sides supports several square, everwidening moldings; the two topmost moldings are decorated with dentils and a stepped-merlon pattern, respectively. Resting atop this intermediary structure is the mast, with its five umbrellas that gradually decrease in size.

The exhibit also includes numerous relics found inside the reliquary, including relic boxes, crystal objects, gold and other jewelry, small plaques and figures, and “a profusion of miniature flowers made of thin sheets of gold” (Czuma, p. 167). A photograph of the inscription (printed upside down!) is included in the catalogue (p. 168), along with B’s translation (pp. 168–9) and a discussion of M’s remarks on the inscription (cf. General Comments 5). The inscription itself, however, is not included in the exhibition, and its present whereabouts are unknown.

Since the original inscription is not available for examination, the new edition and translation presented below have been prepared from the photograph published by B. In general, I have used F’s edition as my point of reference; significant deviations from his readings (including word divisions) and interpretations are noted and explained in the notes to the text and translation.

I wish to emphasize here that I would like my contribution to the study of this document to be taken, not as a criticism of, but rather as a tribute to the admirable work of the previous editors; it is simply in the nature of the document itself that there is need for further comment. (In F’s own words, p. 4, “Beaucoup reste à faire pour que le sens soit partout limpide.”) The Senavarma inscription is a complex and difficult document; there are several problems in the reading of the text, and a great many more in its interpretation. The language and style of the inscription present numerous difficulties, including an often bewildering mixture of dialects and a highly inconsistent orthography. (See F pp. 36–43, and General Comments.) The syntax and word and sentence divisions are also problematic,