
In his survey of the Ancient Buddhist Scrolls from Gândhâra which are held in the British Library,¹ Richard Salomon drew attention to a fragment of AG² and gave a quotation from Heinz Bechert’s edition of the Sanskrit equivalent from Gilgit. In his introduction to the Senior Manuscripts,³ Mark Allon stated that scroll RS 14 of the Senior Collection also contained a part of AG, and he announced that the two fragments were currently being prepared for publication by Salomon.

They have now been published as No. 5 of the Gandhâran Buddhist Texts series. According to the Introduction they were originally intended for publication as two separate books, but Salomon then decided to amalgamate the two parts into one very large book. So there are separate sections of everything for both sources, except the introductory material on AG in the first section. As with the previous volumes in this series, acknowledgement is made to Andrew Glass. He is the undoubted supreme master of the Gândhâri script and there are unlikely to be any misreadings in these editions. He has also contributed a paragraph on writing technique (p. 93).

Salomon begins the first section (pp. 5–80) by explaining the place of the AG in Buddhist literature. The AG is a series of recitations by a number of the Buddha’s disciples, revealed to an assembly of 500 followers on the shores of lake Anavatapta in the Himalayas, hence the title. The first speaker was Mahâkâsyapa. The AG in its canonical form was incorporated into the Bhaiṣajya-vastu of the Mûlasarvâstivâdin Vinaya and is preserved in Sanskrit in manuscripts from Gilgit and Turfan, and also in Tibetan and Chinese. There is also an independent translation into Chinese by Dharmarakṣa. Small fragments are included in Pâli in the Apadâna,

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Theragāthā and Nettipakaraṇa, from which it can be deduced that there was at one time a Pāli version of AG, now lost.

The portion of the AG on the British Library scroll consists of 126 lines containing 88 verses from 7 chapters. There is no information given in the manuscript about the chapters—that information is deduced from the other versions. To his reading of the scroll, Salomon prefixes (pp. 83–172) a description of the manuscript, and also detailed surveys of the palaeography and orthography, phonology, morphology and syntax, and metre, examining problems in scansion.

These sections reveal meticulous detail and accuracy. Salomon lists, for example, on p. 104 nineteen instances involving twelve different words where etymological ϓ is written as υ, and forty-seven instances of twenty-five words where υ or υ is written as ϥ. Very occasionally his accuracy slips. For example, in the statement on p. 102 “as in Gāndhāri and OIA generally, the sequence ᾱya in word-medial position is contracted to -e-”, OIA would seem to be an error for MIA (compare “Gāndhāri and MIA generally” on p. 111) and the statement must be a mistake which escaped notice in proof-reading.

Salomon notes that omission of characters, dittographic error, correction of characters, and omission or error in the vowel mark all occur. The recurrence of a particular form may perhaps suggest that it is not an error but a genuine feature of the dialect. Some of the variations seem to be a more or less arbitrary graphic alternation but sometimes the variation is consistent, e.g. the OIA prefix amu- is always written as ano-.

In his discussion of the morphology he notes (p. 132, n. 1) Brough’s remark (p. 113), “A detailed account of the morphology of the Gāndhāri version [of the Dharmapada] would therefore be of little interest”, and maintains that, on the contrary, a complete analysis of the morphology of the Gāndhāri Dharmapada is now very much a desideratum.

The text, reconstruction and translation of vv. 1–89 of the AG-BL text (pp. 173–186) are followed by an annotated text edition of those verses (pp. 187–325), which adds other versions (Sanskrit from Gilgit and Turfan, Tibetan, and two Chinese), together with very detailed notes, discussing the relationship between the various versions, and referring to all the sections on morphology, etc., and where there are alternative solutions to problems, trying to decide which is the more likely explanation.

The third section (pp. 329–403) deals with the AG-S text. This manuscript has 19 verses only, from one chapter. This section has the same layout as the second section, with a description of the manuscript and