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Monastic Complexes for Monks and Nuns: The Social Fabric of Buddhist Monasteries under the Maitrakas in Gujarat*

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Abstract: The early medieval Maitraka dynasty of Valabhī ruled in parts of Gujarat, mainly on the Kathiawar peninsula (map on p. 60), from the 5th to the 8th centuries. One quarter of the epigraphic corpus of the Maitraka kings, i.e., 26 of their extant copper-plate charters, record endowments in favor of Buddhist institutions. Although the majority of *vihāras* in the Maitraka kingdom were monasteries for monks, it is remarkable that there are several references to economically independent nunneries in the Maitraka capital Valabhī as well. Out of the 16 Buddhist institutions referred to in the Maitraka corpus, only one definitely had a royal founder. All other Buddhist institutions were built by noble ladies, high-ranking officials, learned monks, and merchants, as well as other private individuals. In contrast to the broad range of different kinds of founders of *vihāras*, the extant endowment records issued for the upkeep of these monasteries were exclusively made by the kings.

Keywords: Gujarat, Maitraka dynasty, copper-plate charters, foundations and endowments, *vihāras*, monks and nuns.

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Map of the find-spots of the Buddhist copper-plate charters issued by the kings of the Maitraka dynasty.

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1. Introduction

The Maitraka dynasty of Valabhī ruled in parts of Gujarat, mainly on the Kathiawar peninsula (= Surāṣṭra), from the 5th to the 8th centuries.¹ More than 120 (complete and incomplete)² epigraphs of this royal line—all of them in Sanskrit—are known, and thus the early medieval Maitraka inscriptions constitute one of the densest Indian corpora extant today. All the inscriptions that are clearly identifiable as belonging to the Maitraka period are copper-plate charters recording royal grants of villages or land to religious donees.³ The Maitraka endowment records—as most copper-plate charters from other Indian regions and periods—served as legal documents, i.e., as title-deeds for the recipients.⁴ They are dated in an unnamed era that probably was a modified version of the Gupta era, later called “Valabhī era.”⁵

With the exception of the earliest epigraph, all the other complete Maitraka charters consist of two plates each, the written portion being placed on sides 1v and 2r, respectively (fig. 1). The plates are perforated by two holes each, being positioned in the upper portions of (1r and) 2r, and, as these charters were to be read like Indian manuscripts (*pustaka*), in the lower portions of 1v (and 2v), respectively. Two rings were applied to hold these sets of plates together, one of them bearing the typical Maitraka seal for legal authentication, depicting a bull and

¹ For an overview, see Annette Schmiedchen, “Maitrakas,” in *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History: Asia and Africa*, ed. Daniel T. Potts et al. (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2021), 1–5, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119399919.eahaa00579>.

² 110 is the number of Maitraka charters where at least the description of the endowment is preserved; see Annette Schmiedchen, “Buddhist Endowments by Śaiva Kings under the Maitrakas of Valabhī in Western India (6th–8th Centuries) and the Yodhāvaka Grant of Dharasena IV, [Valabhī] Year 326,” *Endowment Studies* 5, nos. 1–2 (2021): 113. <https://doi.org/10.1163/24685968-05010002>.

³ For a few inscriptions on other materials, see Eugen Hultzsch, “An Earthenware Fragment of Guhasena of Valabhī,” *Indian Antiquary* 14 (1885): 75; D. B. Diskalkar, “Ten Fragments of Stone Inscriptions and a Clay Seal from Valā,” *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* 20, no. 1 (1938): 1–9.

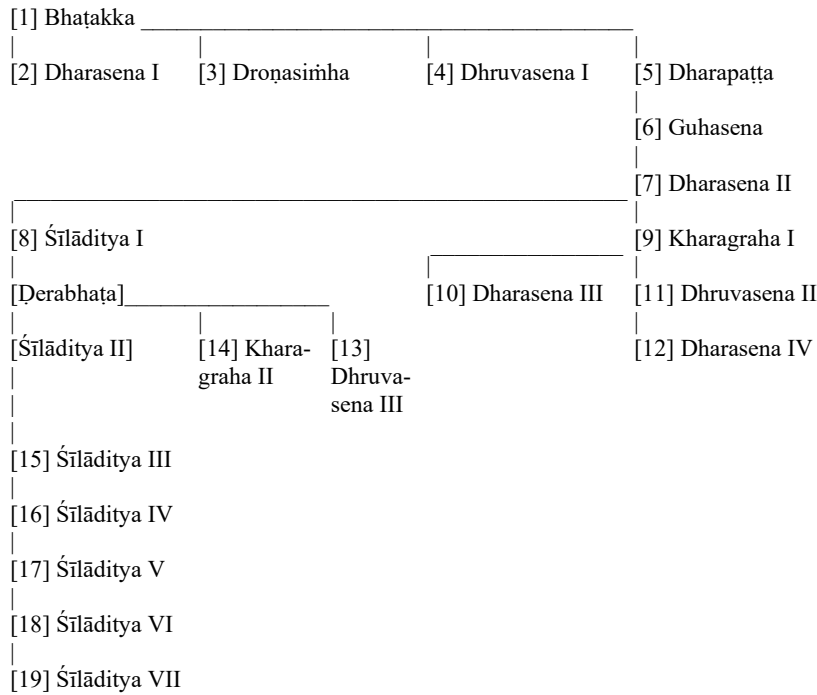
⁴ See Zachary Chitwood, et al., “Endowment Studies – Interdisciplinary Perspectives,” *Endowment Studies* 1, no. 1 (2017): 30–33; Emmanuel Francis, “Indian Copper-Plate Grants: Inscriptions or Documents?,” in *Manuscripts and Archives: Comparative Views on Record-Keeping*, ed. Alessandro Bausi et al. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 387–417.

⁵ Annette Schmiedchen and Fred Virkus, “Die Ären der Guptas und ihrer Nachfolger: Politische Kultur, Regionalgeschichte und Zeitrechnung im alten und frühmittelalterlichen Indien,” in *Vom Herrscher zur Dynastie. Zum Wesen kontinuierlicher Zeitrechnung in Antike und Gegenwart*, ed. Harry Falk (Bremen: Hempen Verlag, 2002), 121.

showing the legend *śrībhatakkah*, after the founder of the dynasty (fig. 2). Frequently, these rings have become separated from the plates or even entirely lost. In some cases, the charters themselves are incomplete, and only the first or second plates are extant.⁶

The religious epithets of the Maitraka rulers show a clear preference for the epithet *paramamāheśvara*. Out of 19 kings, 16 were exclusively labelled as “highly devoted to Śiva.” Only with regard to some of the early members of the dynasty have other religious affiliations been recorded: Dhruvasena I was “highly devoted to Viṣṇu” (*paramabhāgavata*), Dharapaṭṭa, his younger brother, was a “devout worshipper of the sun god” (*paramādityabhakta*), and Guhasena, the latter’s son, is said to have been an “excellent [Buddhist] lay follower” (*paramopāsaka*) in the last of his altogether three known records.

Pedigree of the Maitrakas of Valabhī



⁶ All the charters which are either complete or of which at least the second plate is extant, containing the description of the endowment, have been included in this study; see Schmiedchen, “Buddhist Endowments by Śaiva Kings,” 113.

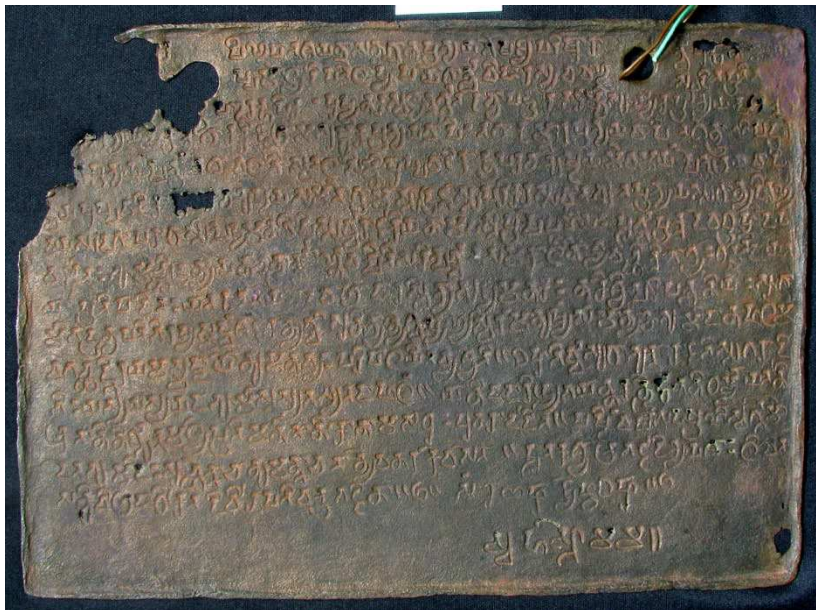


Fig. 1: Valabhipur plates of Śīlāditya I, [Valabhī] year 286, day 6 of the dark half of month Jyeṣṭha (no. 12, table p. 66).

Courtesy Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai, museum accession no. 9.



Fig. 2: Two Maitraka seals. Courtesy British Library, Ind. Ch. 66.

The endowments of the Maitraka rulers reveal a patronage pattern that primarily favored Brāhmaṇas, and secondarily Buddhist monasteries⁷ for monks and nuns. The kings only made very few grants to “Hindu” temples. Despite the important role that Gujarat played in the medieval history of Jainism, no endowments by rulers of the Maitraka dynasty in favor of Jaina institutions have been found so far.

The majority of the Maitraka charters, i.e., 70% of the known corpus, record grants in favor of Brāhmaṇas.⁸ Out of the 78 Brahmanical grants extant, 51 were in favor of individual donees and 21 in favor of two recipients. Two donations were in favor of small groups of Brāhmaṇas, one with three and one with five recipients. Another two endowment records were meant to support larger Brahmanical groups: 44 beneficiaries are enumerated in one charter, and the other one refers to two groups of unspecified size. Several times, we find that grants in favor of Brahmanical kin-groups were recorded, namely for two brothers, for father and son, or for cousins. Of the Maitraka charters, 25% (including one grant issued by a subordinate ruler belonging to the Gārulaka dynasty) record endowments in favor of Buddhist institutions.

More than half of the 26 Buddhist endowment records extant were found in Vala/Valabhipur (Bhavnagar District), ancient Valabhī, the Maitraka capital: first in the 1870s, then during excavations undertaken at the ruins to the north-west of the town in 1900, and also during diggings near a tank in 1930. The find-spots of several other Buddhist charters of the Maitrakas are not known, but foundations in or near Valabhī are very frequently mentioned. One charter which refers to a monastery connected with Valabhī comes from Botad, a district center some 40 km north-west of Valabhipur.⁹

⁷ This phenomenon is not confined to the Maitraka dynasty; cf. Annette Schmiedchen, “Religious Patronage and Political Power: The Ambivalent Character of Royal Donations in Sanskrit Epigraphy,” *Journal of Ancient Indian History* 17 (2010/11): 154–166.

⁸ For the Vedic affiliations of the Brahmanical recipients in Maitraka grants, see Annette Schmiedchen, “Epigraphical Evidence for the History of Atharvavedic Brahmins,” in *The Atharvaveda and its Paippalādaśākhā. Historical and Philological Papers on a Vedic Tradition*, ed. Arlo Griffiths and Annette Schmiedchen (Aachen: Shaker, 2007), 360.

⁹ Regarding the succeeding table, the following remarks are in order: Gārulaka Varāhadāsa was a subordinate of Dhruvasena I. In editions, Sanskrit copper-plate charters are usually named after their find-spot (“[place name] plates”) or, if their provenance is not known, after their repository (“[collection name] plates”). If neither the one nor the other naming mode is practicable or advisable, the records

List of the 26 Buddhist Endowment Records of the Maitrakas

| <i>King</i> | <i>No.</i> | <i>Name of the charter</i> | <i>[Valabhī] year, month</i> | <i>CE</i> | <i>Short title of the edition</i> |
|----------------|------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| Dhruvasena I | 1 | Ambalasa plates | 208, Pauṣa | 526 | Shastri/Dholakia 1969/70: 235–239 |
| | 2 | Pippalaruñkharī grant | 21[6], Māgha | 534 | Bühler 1875: 104–107 |
| | 3 | Vaṭaprajyaka grant | 217, Āśvayuja | 536 | Bloch 1895: 379–384 |
| [Varāha-dāsa] | 4 | Valabhipur plates | 230, Māgha | 549 | Gadre 1934: 74–79 |
| Guhasena | 5 | Valabhipur plates | 240, Śrāvāna | 559 | Bühler 1878: 66–68 |
| | 6 | Valabhipur plate | 248, Māgha | 566 | Bühler 1875: 174–176 |
| | 7 | Bhavnagar plates | 248, Āśvayuja | 567 | Bühler 1876: 206–207 |
| Dharasena II | 8 | Valabhipur plates | 269, Caitra | 588 | Bühler 1877: 9–12 |
| | 9 | Uṭṭapālaka grant | 270, Māgha | 589 | Acharya 1925: 66–69 |
| | 10 | Valabhipur plates | not preserved | ??? | Diskalkar 1925: 21–24 |
| Śīlāditya I | 11 | Valabhipur plate | 286, Vaiśākha | 605 | Bhandarkar 1872: 46 |
| | 12 | Valabhipur plates | 286, Jyeṣṭha | 605 | Kielhorn 1885: 327–330 |
| | 13 | Valabhipur plate | 286, Śrāvāna | 605 | Diskalkar 1925: 26–28 |
| | 14 | Nirgudaka grant | 287, Kārttika | 606 | Gadre 1934: 80–82 |
| | 15 | Ambalasa plates | 290, Śrāvāna | 609 | Shastri/Dholakia 1970/71: 178–184 |
| | 16 | [Ā]madāsaputra grant | 290, Bhādrapada | 609 | Gadre 1934: 82–85 |
| | 17 | Valabhipur plates | not preserved | ??? | Diskalkar 1925: 31–35 |
| Dhruvasena II | 18 | Botad plates | 310, Āśvayuja | 629 | Bühler 1877: 12–16 |
| | 19 | Nāgadinnānaka grant | 319, Jyeṣṭha | 638 | Gadre 1934: 88–91 |
| Dharasena IV | 20 | Yodhāvaka grant | 326, Māgha | 644 | Schmiedchen 2021 |
| | 21 | Piṣpalaṣedhikā grant | not preserved | ??? | Srinivasan 1969/70: 219–223 |
| | 22 | CSMVS plate | not preserved | ??? | Srinivasan 1969/70: 223–224 |
| Dhruvasena III | 23 | Rākṣasaka grant | not preserved | ??? | Diskalkar 1925: 35–37 |
| Śīlāditya III | 24 | Sīhānaka grant | 343, dvi-Āśādha | 662 | Diskalkar 1925: 37–40 |
| | 25 | Kasaka grant | 356, Jyeṣṭha | 675 | Diskalkar 1925: 57–63 |
| | 26 | Valabhipur plate | not preserved | ??? | Diskalkar 1925: 40–42 |

are called after the (main) donative object (“[object name] grant”); this is particularly suitable in the case of bestowals of whole villages. For the Maitraka corpus, the naming of individual title-deeds sometimes turns out to be difficult. Many charters were found in or near Valabhipur (previously called “Vala”), and several “Vala[bhipur] plates” were issued by one and the same Maitraka king, sometimes in the same year. For purposes of clear identification, the months of these dates have been specified here. However, in some charters, the dates are not preserved due to the fragmentary state of the relevant portion. The short titles for the editions are given here in the form: “[author surname] [year]: [page range]” for the sake of brevity.

The concentration of donations in favor of Buddhist monasteries based in and around Valabhī was even more pronounced than that of endowments in favor of Brāhmaṇas residing in Valabhī. Only two Buddhist charters have been found in an entirely different region, namely in Ambalasa/Amblash (Talala Taluk, Gir Somnath District). There is no evidence for the existence of *vihāras* funded by the Maitrakas outside Kathiawar.

The Chinese pilgrim Yijing, who travelled to and stayed in Eastern India in the second half of the 7th century, reports that Nālandā and Valabhī (he most probably never visited the latter) were the two major centers of Buddhist learning at his time.¹⁰ But despite the abundance of epigraphic attestations and literary references, practically no archaeological remains of monastic structures have been excavated at Valabhipur so far, probably because this is still an inhabited site.

2. The Ḍuḍḍāvihāramaṇḍala, the Yakṣasūra-vihāramaṇḍala, and other monasteries

The most famous monastic establishment in Valabhī seems to have been the Ḍuḍḍāvihāra, a monastery founded by (*kārita*) and named after the niece (*svabhāgineyī*) of the king Dhruvasena I.¹¹ In one of his charters, Ḍuḍḍā was portrayed as *paramopāsikā*, an “excellent [Buddhist] laywoman.”¹² In some later charters, she was called *rājñī*, “queen.” This Buddhist institution, referred to in twelve Maitraka charters, was called *mahāvihāra*, “great monastery,” once and *vihāramaṇḍala*, “monastic complex,” two times. The Ḍuḍḍāvihāra is described as being situated on “the [city] territory of Valabhī” (*valabhī-*

¹⁰ Cf. Junjiro Takakusu, *A Record of the Buddhist Religion as Practised in India and the Malay Archipelago (671–695)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896), 177; Li Rongxi, *Buddhist Monastic Traditions of Southern Asia. A Record of the Inner Law Sent Home from the South Seas by Śramaṇa Yijing* (Berkeley, CA: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation & Research, 2000), 149.

¹¹ Ḍuḍḍā must have been the daughter of Dharasena I’s sister, not the sister of Dharasena I’s wife as claimed by M. G. Dikshit, “A New Vihāra at Valabhī,” *Indian Historical Quarterly* 16 (1940): 816.

¹² Georg Bühler, “A Grant of King Dhruvasena I. of Valabhī,” *Indian Antiquary* 4 (1875): 105, line [21] (no. 2; all numbers here and below are with reference to the table on p. 66). She was not a nun as stated by Krishnakumari J. Virji, *Ancient History of Saurashtra (Being a Study of the Maitrakas of Valabhi. V to VIII Centuries A.D.)* (Bombay 1952), 172: “Any how, we know that she was residing at her maternal uncle’s place at Valabhī and leading the life of a nun in her Vihāra.” I must emphasize that the Ḍuḍḍāvihāra was a monastery for monks, not a convent.

[*sva-]tala*).¹³ It is localized “within Valabhī” (*valabhy-abhyantara*), in “the inner part of Śrī-Valabhī” (*śrī-valabhy-abhyantarikā*), or to “the east of the inner part of Śrī-Valabhī” (*śrī-valabhy-ābhyantarikā-pūrva*).

At least six economically independent Buddhist structures seem to have been attached to the monastic complex of the Duḍḍāvihāra: monasteries founded by the monks Buddhadāsa,¹⁴ Vimalagupta, and Sthiramati, by the trader (*vāṇija*) Kakkamākila,¹⁵ and by one Gohaka, as well as a Tārā temple (Tārāpura, also called *devakula*) erected by the chief secretary (*divirapati*) Śrī-Skandabhaṭa [II].¹⁶ The relation between these structures and the Duḍḍāvihāra is often described in general terms; they are labelled as *abhyantara*, “within,” *antargata*, “included in,” *prāveśya*, “belonging to,” and *parikalpita*, “attached to” [the Duḍḍāvihāra complex].

At times, the institutional connection is expressed in a more specific way, as in the mid-7th-century Piṣṭalaśedhikā endowment of Dharasena IV (no. 21, table p. 66): *valabhy-abhyantara-ḍuḍḍā-vihārāryya-bhikṣu-saṅgha-nirūpita-tatpradita-pratijāgari-śrī-tārāpurā-nivāsi-vārikānām*, “of the superintendents (*vārika*)¹⁷ in charge (*prati-*

¹³ For *tala/svatala*, see also Marlene Njammasch, *Bauern, Buddhisten und Brahmanen. Das frühe Mittelalter in Gujarat* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 2001), 203.

¹⁴ Theodor Bloch, “An Unpublished Valabhī Copper-plate Inscription of King Dhruvasena I,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, N.S., 27 (1895): 379–384 (no. 3, table p. 66). The relevant passage in this fragmentary charter reads (lines 17–19): *[ā]cāryyabhadanta-buddhadā[sa]-kārita-vihāra-kuṭ[y]ām prati-ṣ[th]ā-pita-bhagavat[ām samyak-sambuddhānām buddhānā]m gandha-dhūpa-puṣpa-dīpa-tailopayogī*. The phrase *buddhadāsa-kārita-vihāra-kuṭyām* might perhaps stand for *buddhadāsa-kārita-vihārasya gandhakuṭyām*, “in the perfume chamber of the monastery erected by Buddhadāsa,” and the whole passage may refer to the image worship performed in the monastery’s sanctum. For the interpretation of *kuṭī* as *gandhakuṭī* in this inscription, see Gregory Schopen, “The Buddha as an Owner of Property and Permanent Resident in Medieval Indian Monasteries,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 18 (1990): 185–186. But *kuṭī* might also be interpreted in a different way; see the introduction to this volume (p. xvi).

¹⁵ Dikshit, “A New Vihāra,” 818, was the first to read the name of this *vāṇija*, the founder of a monastery in the Maitraka kingdom, correctly.

¹⁶ For this chief secretary, who seems to have been a great supporter of Buddhism, see Annette Schmiedchen, “Buddhist Endowments by Śaiva Kings,” 115–116.

¹⁷ For discussions of the term *vārika*, see Schopen, “The Buddha as an Owner of Property,” 193–194; Jonathan A. Silk, *Managing Monks: Administrators and Administrative Roles in Indian Buddhist Monasticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 101 ff.; Petra Kieffer-Pülz, review of *Managing Monks: Administrators and Administrative Roles in Indian Buddhist Monasticism*, by Jonathan

jāgarin), residing in the Śrī-Tārā temple, appointed by and bound to the noble order of monks of the Duḍḍā monastery within Valabhī.”¹⁸ This charter was found together with another fragmentary plate of Dharasena IV (no. 22), which also refers to a sanctum of Tārā, called *gandhakuṭī* in that inscription.¹⁹ It is likely that both establishments, the Tārāpura or *devakula* in no. 21 and the *gandhakuṭī* of Tārā in no. 22, were one and the same institution, as the founder as well as the location of both were identical. It is explicitly stated that the Tārāpura and the *gandhakuṭī* had been erected in the village of Kāṇasīhānaka in Surāṣṭra,²⁰ i.e., not in the city of Valabhī, but probably in its vicinity.

The monastery founded by the monk Vimalagupta, mentioned in two copper-plate charters of the king Śīlāditya III (nos. 24 and 25, table p. 66), was also located in a village, in Kukkurāṇaka.²¹ In one of these endowment records, a *vihāra* established by the monk Sthiramati is referred to as well,²² but due to the fragmentary state of the Sīhānaka grant dated 662 CE (no. 24), the relation between the *vihāras* founded by the two monastics is not at all clear. The monastery erected by the monk Vimalagupta might have been a sub-structure of the one estab-

A. Silk, *Indo-Iranian Journal* 53, no. 1 (2010): 79–84; Oskar von Hinüber, “Buddhistische Mönche als Verwalter ihrer Klöster. Die Entstehung des Begriffs ‘vārika’ in der Tradition der Theravādins,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 162, no. 2 (2012): 373–389.

¹⁸ The phrase occurs two times in this fragmentary charter of Dharasena IV: [1] in the description of the purpose of the endowment (lines 42–43) and [2] in the stipulation regarding the beneficiary’s rights over the village granted (lines 47–48). Cf. R. Srinivasan, “Two Fragmentary Charters of Maitraka Dharasena IV,” *Epigraphia Indica* 38 (1969/70): 222, lines 42–43 & 47–48. I have read the phrase *pratijāgariśrītārāpura* on photographs received from the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai, in 2011, as this passage has not been given by Srinivasan.

¹⁹ Srinivasan, “Two Fragmentary Charters,” 224, lines *7 and 9. The reading of line 7 has been left out by Srinivasan. I have read it on digital photographs received from the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya in 2011.

²⁰ Srinivasan, “Two Fragmentary Charters,” 222, line 40; 224, line *7 (read by me, left out by Srinivasan).

²¹ The phrase used here is *kukkurāṇaka-grāma-niviṣṭācāryyabhikṣu-vimalagupta-kārita-vihāre*; see D. B. Diskalkar, “Some Unpublished Copper-Plates of the Rulers of Valabhī,” *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, N.S., 1 (1925): 39, line 22; 63, line 52.

²² Diskalkar, “Some Unpublished Copper-Plates,” 39, line 21. Unfortunately, the reading could not be checked, as no facsimile is available.

lished by Sthiramati; or the two *vihāras* may have been on par as beneficiaries.²³ It is also doubtful whether the monastery described in 662 CE as having been built by Sthiramati and as being attached to the Duḍḍāvihāraṃḍala was identical with the so-called Bappapādīya-vihāra, which—according to an earlier charter of Dharasena II from 588 CE (no. 8, table p. 66)—had been established by a monk named Sthiramati in Valabhī (without any reference to the Duḍḍāvihāra).²⁴ But it is even uncertain whether the *ācāryabhadanta* Sthiramati mentioned in 588 CE and the *ācāryabhikṣu* of the same name referred to in the inscription of the year 662 CE were actually one and the same person. A problem in the interpretation of many endowment records engraved on copper plates is the fact that nothing is explicitly said about the date of the foundation of the *vihāra* which received a royal grant. In the 6th-century charters, the monastic founders of *vihāras* in the Maitraka kingdom were labelled as *ācāryabhadanta*, and in the 7th century, as *ācāryabhikṣu*. The following dates are known for royal grants in favor of already existing monasteries founded by monks:

- 536 CE, no. 3, for a *vihāra* founded by *ācāryabhadanta* Buddhādāsa
- 588 CE, no. 8, for the Bappapādīyavihāra founded by *ācāryabhadanta* Sthiramati
- 662 CE, no. 24, for *vihāras* founded by *ācāryabhikṣu* Sthiramati and by *ācāryabhikṣu* Vimalagupta
- 675 CE, no. 25, for a *vihāra* founded by *ācāryabhikṣu* Vimalagupta in the village of Kukkurāṇaka.

Georg Bühler, in his 1877 edition of the Vala/Valabhipur plates dated 588 CE (no. 8, table p. 66), was the first to identify this *ācāryabhadanta* Sthiramati with the “famous pupil of Vasubandhu.”²⁵ In 1884, Samuel Beal translated Xuanzang’s report on Valabhī: “Not far from the city is a great *saṅghārāma* which was built by the Arhat Āchāra (‘O-chello); here the Bodhisattvas Guṇamati and Sthiramati (Kien-hwui) fixed their residences during their travels and composed treatises which have

²³ For the latter interpretation, see H. G. Shastri, *Gujarat under the Maitrakas of Valabhī, History and Culture of Gujarat during the Maitraka Period, ca. 470–788 A.D.* (Vadodara: Oriental Institute, 2000), 221.

²⁴ Georg Bühler, “Further Valabhī Grants: A.—The Grant of Dharasena I [sic!],” *Indian Antiquary* 6 (1877): 12, lines [19–20] (*valabhyām ācāryabhadanta-sthiramati-kārīta-śrī-bappapādīya-vihāre*).

²⁵ Bühler, “Further Valabhī Grants: A,” 10.

gained a high renown.”²⁶ Probably inspired by Xuanzang’s account, Sylvain Lévi,²⁷ Erich Frauwallner,²⁸ Alexis Sanderson,²⁹ and several others have followed Bühler’s interpretation; H. G. Shastri has drawn a very far-reaching conclusion with regard to the Bappapāḍiyavihāra: “According to the identification of *Ācārya* Sthiramati, the Bappapāḍa (Revered Bappa) may be identified with *Ācārya* Asaṅga, the preceptor of Sthiramati.”³⁰ However, Jonathan Silk has rightly remarked that “there might have been more than one Sthiramati,”³¹ a fact that holds true for other identifications as well, for instance, that of Buddha-dāsa.³²

Although most *vihāras* in Valabhī (and in the Maitraka kingdom as a whole) were monasteries for monks, it is quite remarkable, also

²⁶ Samuel Beal, *Si-Yu-Ki. Buddhist Records of the Western World. Translated from the Chinese of Hiuen Tsiang (A.D. 629)* (London: Trübner, 1884), vol. 2, 268. See also the translation by Li Rongxi, *The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions* (Berkeley, CA: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation & Research, 1996), 302: “Not far from the city is a great monastery built by the arhat Ācāra, where the bodhisattvas Guṇamati and Sthiramati stayed and composed treatises that are widely circulated.” On *Ācāra, a mistaken rendering of Skt. Acala, see Vincent Tournier, “Stairway to Heaven and the Path to Buddhahood: Donors and Their Aspirations in 5th/6th-century Ajanta,” in *Mārga: Paths to Liberation in South Asian Buddhist Traditions*, ed. C. Pecchia and V. Eltschinger (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2020), vol. 1, 205–206, 215–218.

²⁷ Sylvain Lévi, “Les donations religieuses des rois de Valabhī,” in *Mémorial Sylvain Lévi* (Paris: Paul Hartmann, [1896] 1937), 231–232.

²⁸ Erich Frauwallner, “Landmarks in the History of Buddhist Logic,” *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens* 5 (1961): 136–137.

²⁹ Alexis Sanderson, “The Śaiva Age—the Rise and Dominance of Śaivism during the Early Medieval Period,” in *Genesis and Development of Tantrism*, ed. Shingo Einoo (Tokyo: Institute of Oriental Culture, 2009), 72.

³⁰ Shastri, *Gujarat under the Maitrakas*, 220.

³¹ Jonathan A. Silk, “Remarks on the *Kāśyapaparivarta* Commentary,” in *Pāsādika-dānaṃ: Festschrift für Bhikkhu Pāsādika*, ed. M. Straube et al. (Marburg: Indica-et-Tibetica-Verlag, 2009), 384–385. See now also Jowita Kramer, “Sthiramati,” in *Brill’s Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, vol. 2: *Lives*, ed. Jonathan Silk et al. (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2019), 456–457.

³² Vincent Tournier, “Buddhist Lineages along the Southern Routes: On Two nikāyas Active at Kanaganahalli under the Sātavāhanas,” in *Archaeologies of the Written: Indian, Tibetan, and Buddhist Studies in Honour of Cristina Scherrer-Schaub*, ed. V. Tournier, V. Eltschinger, and M. Sernesi (Naples: Università degli Studi di Napoli, 2020), 888. For a proposed revision of the dating of the “famous” Buddhist scholar Sthiramati to 480–550 CE (instead of Frauwallner’s 510–570), see Florin Deleanu, “Dating with Procrustes: Early Pramāṇavāda Chronology Revisited,” *Bulletin of the International Institute for Buddhist Studies* 2 (2019): 22.

from a legal or *vinaya* point of view, that there are several references to apparently economically independent nunneries in the Maitraka capital as well. Xuanzang did not mention the existence of nunneries for any place he visited in India, including Valabhī and Surāṣṭra. However, four copper-plate charters found together during excavations near the Ghora-Dana tank at Valabhipur in 1930 and edited by A. S. Gadre in 1934 record grants of villages and agricultural land in favor of such convents.³³ The first of these endowment records, issued by the Gārulaka vassal Varāhadāsa already in 549 CE (no. 4, table p. 66), proves the existence of a nunnery, probably lying in or near Valabhī. It is described as “belonging to the merchant Ajita” (*vāṇījakājītasatka*).³⁴ The three other charters refer to one and the same monastic complex for nuns on the city territory of Valabhī: the Yakṣasūravihāra[maṇḍala]. Besides a core monastery established by Yakṣasūra, a second *vihāra* for *bhikṣuṇīs*, founded by Pūrṇabhaṭṭā, a “daughter of [good] family” (*kulaputrikā*) and the mother of the subordinate ruler (*sāmanta*) Kakkuka, was apparently attached to this *vihāramaṇḍala* (no. 19, table p. 66).³⁵ The dates of the charters recording endowments to nunneries are:

- 549 CE, no. 4, for the Vāṇījakājītasatkavihāra
- 606 CE, no. 14, for the Yakṣasūravihāra
- 609 CE, no. 16, for a *bhikṣuṇīvihāra* founded by Yakṣasūra
- 638 CE, no. 19, for a *vihāra* founded by Pūrṇabhaṭṭā in the Yakṣasūravihāramaṇḍala.

The charter of 606 CE (no. 14, table p. 66) records the renewal of an older grant: “the Nirguḍaka village ..., which has been earlier and [still] is being enjoyed, its charter being lost, having so considered [and] inquired, has been confirmed by me ... as a religious grant like before” (*mayā ... ni[r]gguḍaka-grāmaḥ pūrvva-bhukta-bhujyamā-[na]ka[h] pranaṣṭa-ś[āsanaka] iti-ky[tvān]vi[s]ya ... dharmma-[dā]yatayā pūrvvat samanuññāta[h]*).³⁶ The charter also mentions that a certain convent no longer existed, and that the nuns stayed then at the

³³ A. S. Gadre, “Five Vala Copper-Plate Grants,” *Journal of the University of Bombay* 3 (1934): 74–85, 88–91.

³⁴ Gadre, “Five Vala Copper-Plate Grants,” 74–79, line 18. The locality of the *vihāra* is not mentioned, but it is said that the granted land was situated “near Valabhī” (*valabhī-samnikṣṭa*). Gadre omitted *valabhī* in his edition, but it is visible on the published facsimiles and on photographs provided by James Melikian.

³⁵ Gadre, “Five Vala Copper-Plate Grants,” 90, lines 33–34.

³⁶ Gadre, “Five Vala Copper-Plate Grants,” 82, lines 21–27. Gadre has only *pranaṣṭaśa*..., but there are unmistakable traces of *sāsanaka* on the facsimile.

Yakṣasūravihāra, whereas the name of the original convent is not preserved.³⁷ This case is significant from a legal point of view, because it testifies that the endowment was regarded as belonging to a *bhikṣuṇī-saṅgha* regardless of its current residence.

All the other monasteries were *vihāras* for monks. Guhasena's charter of 567 CE (no. 7, table p. 66) records a grant to the *bhikṣu-saṅgha* "in the Ābhyantarikā monastery founded by the honorable Mimmā close to the Bhaṭārka-vihāra, which had been graciously awarded to the royal official Śūra" (*raja-sthānīya-śūrāya prasādīkṛta-bhaṭārka-vihāra-pratyāsanna-mimmāpāda-kāritābhyantarikā-vihāre*).³⁸ The endowment record mentions neither the exact location of the Bhaṭārka-vihāra nor that of the Ābhyantarikā-vihāra.³⁹ Oskar von Hinüber has rightly observed that it cannot be decided for sure which of the two monasteries had been transferred to Śūra.⁴⁰ Going by the order of words, it is perhaps more likely that it was the Bhaṭārka-vihāra that had been given to the royal official named Śūra, not the Ābhyantarikā-vihāra.⁴¹

Another monastery for an order of monks, which is described as *asmat-kārita*, "founded by us," in an early-7th-century charter of Śīlāditya I (no. 17, table p. 66), had been erected on the city territory (*sva-*

³⁷ Gadre, "Five Vala Copper-Plate Grants," 82, line 22: *saṅghasyedānī[m] tad-vihāra-sthānābhāvād yakṣasūra-vihāre prativasa[ta]ś*, "of the order which, as its monastery does not exist anymore, is now living in the Yakṣasūravihāra."

³⁸ Georg Bühler, "Grants from Valabhī: B. – The Grant of Guhasena," *Indian Antiquary* 5 (1876): 207, lines 6–7.

³⁹ Shastri, *Gujarat under the Maitrakas*, 219, opines that "we get a hint for the situation of the Ābhyantarikā Vihāra, from a later grant dated year 356 (675 A.C.), wherein the *vihāra* built by *Ācārya* Vimalagupta and situated in the Duddā-vihāra-*maṇḍala* is located to the east of the Ābhyantarikā Vihāra. The reference makes it clear that the Ābhyantarikā Vihāra was situated in the Duddā-vihāra-*maṇḍala* at Valabhī." This remark is obviously based on a misinterpretation of the phrase *śrī-valabhy-ābhyantarikā-pūrva*, which rather means "to the east of the inner part of Śrī-Valabhī." But the name "Ābhyantarikā-vihāra" might refer to its inclusion into a larger monastic complex.

⁴⁰ Oskar von Hinüber, "Verwischte Spuren: Der Gebrauch buddhistischer Texte nach dem Zeugnis von Literatur, Inschriften und Dokumenten," in *Sakrale Texte: Hermeneutik und Lebenspraxis in den Schriftkulturen*, ed. Wolfgang Reinhard (München: Beck, 2009), 329, fn. 36.

⁴¹ Oskar von Hinüber's translation of the relevant passage (same fn.) as "in dem dem Beamten Śūra verliehenen Bhaṭārka-Kloster nahe dem von Mimmāpāda errichteten Kloster" ("in the Bhaṭārka monastery, which had been awarded to the official Śūra, near the monastery erected by Mimmāpāda") cannot be correct, as it seems to contradict the structure of the main compound.

tala) of Vaṅśakaṭa.⁴² Attempts to identify this settlement have not been persuasive so far. H. G. Shastri has suggested an identification with present-day Vansavad⁴³ (now Sutrapada Taluk, Gir Somnath District). But this charter as well as another endowment record, dated 605 CE and probably also issued by Śīlāditya I (no. 13, table p. 66), which seems to refer to the same *vihāra* or to a monastery at the same place,⁴⁴ have been found during excavations in the north-west of Valabhipur. Therefore, one may expect ancient Vaṅśakaṭa to have lied somewhere close to Valabhī rather than 200 km away from it.⁴⁵

The find-spot of the Yodhāvaka grant of Maitraka Dharasena IV dated 644 CE (no. 20, table p. 66) is not known, but the beneficiary, a Mahāyāna monastery founded by Divirapati Skandabhaṭa [II] and explicitly labelled as Mahāyānikavihāra, lay in the village of Yodhāvaka in the ancient district of Hastavapra, present-day Hathab, 60 km south-east of Valabhī.⁴⁶

As already mentioned, two other grants were found (together with a Saindhava charter)⁴⁷ in Ambalasa/Amblash (Talala Taluk, Gir Somnath District). The charter of Dhruvasena I dated 526 CE (no. 1, table p. 66) records the confirmation of an earlier grant in favor of a monastery for monks in Āmalakavasatī,⁴⁸ which is almost certainly identical with present-day Ambalasa, the plates' find-spot. The beneficiary of the charter of Śīlāditya I found at the same place, dated 609 CE (no. 15, table p. 66), was the [Vaḍḍa]vihāra ("old monastery"?) for monks, erected by Yaśonandin on the city territory (*svatala*) of Kuberanagara,

⁴² Diskalkar, "Some Unpublished Copper-Plates," 34, line 22.

⁴³ Shastri, *Gujarat under the Maitrakas*, 222.

⁴⁴ Diskalkar, "Some Unpublished Copper-Plates," 27, line 2.

⁴⁵ Vansavad lies more than 200 km to the south-west of Valabhipur. The Brahmanical donee of a charter which has been found at Devali, 70 km south of Valabhipur, is also associated with this place; the Brāhmaṇa is described as its resident (*vaṅśakaṭa-vāstavya*); cf. Vajeshankar G. Ozha, "A new Valabhī grant of Śīlāditya III [sic!] from Devali," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 1 (1887): 258, line 52.

⁴⁶ For the edition of the Yodhāvaka grant in favor of a Mahāyāna monastery, see Schmiedchen, "Buddhist Endowments by Śaiva Kings," 127–134. For Mahāyānika communities in 6th-century Bengal, see Furui's contribution (pp. 104–105).

⁴⁷ H. G. Shastri and P. V. Dholakia, "Ambalas Plates of the Saindhava King Ahi-varman," *Journal of the Oriental Institute of Baroda* 19 (1969–1970), 279–285.

⁴⁸ H. G. Shastri [Śāstrī] and P. V. Dholakia [Dhoḷakiyā], "Valabhīnā Maitraka rājā Dhruvasena 1-lānuṃ dānapatra," *Svādhyāya* 7, no. 2 (1969–1970): 235–239.

which has been tentatively identified by H. G. Shastri with Kubda (Dhari Taluk, Amreli District),⁴⁹ 70 km to the north-east of Ambalasa.

3. The protagonists: kings, founders, and monastics

Most of the monasteries mentioned in the Maitraka copper-plate charters were characterized as *kārita*, “erected by [N. N.]” Sometimes, *kārita* has been translated as “erected for [N. N.]” especially when the respective person was a monk.⁵⁰ But the rendering “founded by” is more likely.⁵¹ Out of at least 16 Buddhist institutions referred to in the Maitraka corpus, only one—the monastery established by Śīlāditya I (labelled as *asmat-kārita*) in the early 7th century—definitely had a royal founder.⁵² Perhaps the Bhaṭārkavihāra, mentioned in 567 CE, fell in the same category and had been erected by the founder of the dynasty, Bhaṭakka, the Sanskritized form of whose name was Bhaṭārka.⁵³ All the other Buddhist institutions were built by noble ladies (Ḍuddā, Pūrṇabhaṭṭā, Mimmā), high-ranking officials (Divirapati Skandabhaṭa [II]), learned monks (Buddhadāsa, Vimalagupta, and Sthiramati), merchants, and other private individuals. Whereas all the attested foundations by monks were monasteries for *bhikṣus*, and while noble ladies also seem to have mainly founded *vihāras* for monks, two out of the three known nunneries were erected by non-ordained male patrons. In contrast to the broad range of different founders of *vihāras*, the endowments for their upkeep were exclusively made by kings.

For many of the relevant title-deeds, it cannot be verified when the monasteries, which were favored by particular royal endowments of villages or plots of land, had been originally founded and erected. This uncertainty is particularly vexing in the case of monastic founders with “famous” names, such as Sthiramati or Buddhadāsa, for whom attempts of identification with Buddhist scholars known from textual sources have been made (see p. 70). Only if the founders of the institutions were somehow directly connected with the donor kings—as in the case of the princess Ḍuddā or the Divirapati Skandabhaṭa [II]—,

⁴⁹ H. G. Shastri and P. V. Dholakia, “Śīlāditya 1-lānum Āmbalāsa dānapatra,” *Svādhyāya* 8 (1970/71), no. 1: 183, line 26. The editors read *bhaṭṭa(?)vihāre*, but *vadda* is distinct on the pictures that I received from the Junagadh Museum in 2013. For the tentative identification, see Shastri, *Gujarat under the Maitrakas*, 223.

⁵⁰ Lévi, “Les donations religieuses,” 231–232; Sanderson, “The Śaiva Age,” 72.

⁵¹ Cf. also Silk, “Remarks on the *Kāśyapaparivarta* Commentary,” 384–385.

⁵² Diskalkar, “Some Unpublished Copper-Plates,” 34, line 22 (no. 17, table p. 66).

⁵³ Bühler, “Grants from Valabhī: B,” 207, line 7 (no. 7, table p. 66).

can we deduce that not too much time had elapsed between the original foundation and a later grant. In contrast to other regions of India,⁵⁴ the Maitraka charters do not explicitly mention petitions by the founders of monasteries to the kings for donations to guarantee the maintenance of their foundations, but it could be assumed that the system was similar. Although we have more indirect than direct evidence, we can suppose the interplay of different types of protagonists. Communities of monks and nuns, individual male and female founders of monasteries (some of them involved in more than one act of patronage), and those Maitraka kings and their vassals who endowed the *vihāras* were part of these donative networks.

There are also references to other kinds of personal association with *vihāras*. Monasteries could be dedicated to someone: this seems to have been the case in the charter dated 588 CE (no. 8, table p. 66), where the beneficiary is described as *ācāryyabhadanta-sthiramati-kārita-śrī-bappapādīya-vihāra*.⁵⁵ This monastery had been founded by a monk named Sthiramati (see p. 70) and bore the appellation “Śrī-Bappapādīya,” which most probably indicates that it had been named after the “honorable Śrī-Bappa.” But it is not clear who this Bappa was. The term *bappa* most likely means “father.” From the late 7th century onwards, i.e., from Śīlāditya IV to VII, this term is used for the description of the relationship to the immediate predecessors, the respective fathers of the kings. Hence, M. G. Dikshit was of the opinion that the Bappapādīyavihāra had been “named after Bappapāda, some ancestor of the Maitrakas, at whose feet the members of the family made their obeisance.”⁵⁶ H. G. Shastri, on the other hand, suggested the identification of “the Bappapāda (Revered Bappa) ... with ... the preceptor of Sthiramati,”⁵⁷ who had founded the monastery (see p. 71).

Monasteries could be “graciously awarded” to someone: a *vihāra* mentioned in the charter dated 567 CE (no. 7, table p. 66; also p. 73) is labelled as *rājasthānīya-śūrāya prasādīkṛta-*, “graciously awarded to the royal official Śūra.”⁵⁸ Monasteries could also “belong” to someone: In the inscription of the Gārulaka vassal Varāhadāsa, the donee, a nunnery, is called *vāñjikājīta-satka-vihāra* (no. 4, table p. 66; also

⁵⁴ For the patronage pattern followed in Bengal under the Pālas, see, e.g., Ryosuke Furui, “Indian Museum Copper Plate Inscription of Dharmapala, Year 26: Tentative Reading and Study,” *South Asian Studies* 27, no. 2 (2011): 150. See also Furui’s contribution (p. 107).

⁵⁵ Bühler, “Further Valabhī Grants: A,” 12, lines [19–20].

⁵⁶ Dikshit, “A New Vihāra at Valabhī,” 817.

⁵⁷ Shastri, *Gujarat under the Maitrakas*, 220.

⁵⁸ Bühler, “Grants from Valabhī: B,” 207, line 6.

p. 66).⁵⁹ It is unclear which implications these descriptions had for the social and religious practice. Perhaps they meant that the lay people Śūra and Ajita were responsible for these monasteries.⁶⁰

It is obvious from the Maitraka charters that the kings acted as donors of the grants; the names of the original founders of the respective monasteries and nunneries are in most cases also clear. But it is not always evident who exactly was regarded as “legal” recipient of these grants. The beneficiaries of Buddhist endowments are “hidden” in the descriptions of the purposes of such donations. The standard formula to describe the purpose of a Buddhist grant in early medieval India was a threefold one. Such an endowment was to be used for [1] the maintenance of the local order of monks or nuns, [2] the worship of the Buddha (or the Buddhas),⁶¹ [3] and the upkeep and repairs of the monastic building.

The relevant passage of the Ambalasa plates of the king Śīlāditya I dated 609 CE (no. 15, table p. 66), for instance, reads: “for the use of robes, alms-food, beds and seats, medicine to cure the sick of the noble order of monks coming from the four directions and residing there; for the uninterruptedness regarding fragrance, flowers, garlands, lamps, oil, etc. for the cult and ceremonial bathing of the eminent Buddhas; and for the purpose of repairing [those parts] of the monastery which are split and cracked (*tan-nivāsi-catur-ddig-abhyāgatāryya-bhikṣu-saṅghasya ca cīvara-piṇḍapāta-śayanāsana-glāna-pratyaya-bhaiṣajya-pariṣkāropayogāya bhagavatām ca buddhānām pūjā-snapana-gandha-puṣpa-mālya-dīpa-tailādy-avyavacchittaye vihārasya ca khaṇḍa-sphuṭita-pratisamskārāya*).⁶² The main purposes of Maitraka endowments to Buddhists are specified by the respective “beneficiaries,” mostly in the genitive case.

⁵⁹ Gadre, “Five Vala Copper-Plate Grants,” 79, line 18.

⁶⁰ For the “ownership” of *vihāras*, see Gregory Schopen, “The Lay Ownership of Monasteries and the Role of the Monk in Mūlasarvāstivādin Monasticism,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 19, no. 1 (1996): 81–126. See also Petra Kieffer-Pülz, “The Owner of a Residential Building or Monastery (*sāmi[ka]*, *āvāsasāmika*, *vihārasāmi[ka]*) in the Theravāda Tradition,” in *Connecting the Art, Literature, and Religion of South and Central Asia. Studies in Honour of Monika Zin*, ed. Ines Konczak-Nagel, Satomi Hiyama, and Astrid Klein (New Delhi: Dev Publishers and Distributors, 2022), 189–198.

⁶¹ In most of the Buddhist charters of the Maitrakas, the Buddha is referred to in the plural, which might indicate an honorific use of these forms. In a few cases, this worship formula has a different “addressee,” e.g., another Buddhist deity.

⁶² Shastri and Dholakia, “Śīlāditya 1-lānum Āmbalāsa dānapatra,” 183, lines 16–29, with modifications; my translation.

Formally, such a Maitraka endowment would have had three beneficiaries: a local community (*saṅgha*) of monks or nuns, the Buddha, and the monastery (*vihāra*).⁶³ Examples as the one just cited show that the authors of the inscriptions seem to have identified a kind of triple group of beneficiaries. However, it would be interesting to check whether any element of this triad was given a preferential status.⁶⁴ Gregory Schopen has expressed the opinion that the Buddha was regarded as permanent resident in medieval Indian monasteries and as the recipient (or owner) of land grants. The Maitraka evidence does not fully support the assumption that the Buddha was *the* donee or the *main* recipient of Buddhist endowments in early medieval Gujarat. In the light of examples from the Maitrakas, Schopen remarked: “When taken together, statements of this sort would seem to suggest that the Valabhī grants were intended to provide for the needs of two groups, both of which appear to have been thought of as residing in the local monasteries: Buddhas and monks.”⁶⁵ In two of the endowments of Dhruvasena I (nos. 2 and 3, table p. 66), the Buddha(s) are classified as *pratiṣṭhāpita* in a *vihāra* or in a sub-structure:

...our passage says that the Buddhas were “established” (*pratiṣṭ[h]āpita-*) in the monastery, but the monks were “dwelling” (*prativāsi-*) in it. This verbal difference may be thought to be significant, and perhaps it is. However, it is important to remember that the first meaning of *prati-sthā* is “to stand, stay, abide, dwell,” and that the causative ... has marked tones of “permanence,” “fixity,” and “continued existence over time.” ... The Buddhas, then, may have been considered the only permanent residents of a monastery.⁶⁶

⁶³ This triple group is not identical with the concept of *triratna*; see also Annette Schmiedchen, “Formulas Determining the Purposes of Donations to Buddhist Monasteries in West and East India from the 5th to the 9th cent. A.D.,” in *South Asian Archaeology 1991. Proceedings of the Eleventh International Conference of the Association of South Asian Archaeologists in Western Europe (Berlin 1–5 July 1991)*, ed. Adalbert J. Gail and Gerd J. R. Mevissen (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner), 592. For the diverse use of the term *saṅgha*, see Petra Kieffer-Pülz, “Die buddhistische Gemeinde,” in *Der Buddhismus I: Der indische Buddhismus und seine Verzweigungen*, ed. Heinz Bechert (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2000), 282.

⁶⁴ For a discussion of the relevant material from a wider perspective of medieval North India, cf. Annette Schmiedchen, “Untersuchungen an Dorf-, Land- und Geldschenkungenschriften zugunsten buddhistischer Klöster in Nordindien vom 5. bis 8. Jahrhundert” (PhD diss., Humboldt University, Berlin, 1994), 93–119.

⁶⁵ Schopen, “The Buddha as an Owner of Property,” 186.

⁶⁶ Schopen, “The Buddha as an Owner of Property,” 187–188.

Oskar von Hinüber, however, has objected that “trotz G. Schopen ... kann *prati-ṣṭhā* als bautechnischer *terminus technicus* nur ‘aufstellen (von Statuen usw.)’, aber nicht ‘wohnen’ meinen.”⁶⁷

On the other hand, there is some Maitraka epigraphic evidence indicating that one of the “beneficiaries” in the threefold formula is singled out and earmarked as the main or only recipient of the grants. However, this was not the Buddha, but the local *saṅgha*.⁶⁸ Whereas genitive attributes are always used for the stipulations in the endowments regarding the worship of the Buddha(s), and the upkeep and repairs of the monastic building, the phrase about the maintenance of the local order of monks or nuns is sometimes given in a specific form, with the word *saṅgha* in the dative case. The wording *ārya-bhikṣu-saṅghāya* is attested for the first time in two inscriptions of Guhasena dated 566 and 567 CE (nos. 6 and 7, table p. 66), which, moreover, mention merely a single purpose for the respective royal endowments: the maintenance of the *bhikṣu-saṅgha*.⁶⁹ Besides, it seems to have become rather common in the 7th century to clearly “tag” the order of monks or the order of nuns as the actual recipients of these grants of villages (and land) through the use of the dative case, as indicated in the following passages⁷⁰:

⁶⁷ Hinüber, “Verwischte Spuren,” 331, fn. 50.

⁶⁸ For the variance in rating the reward derived from gifts to the Buddha and to the *saṅgha* in different *nikāyas*, see Étienne Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism* (Louvain-La Neuve: Peters Press, 1988), 633–634: “... the Theravādins ... and Sarvāstivādins ... were of the opinion that a gift to the Buddha and a gift to the Saṅgha both yielded a great fruit. ... For the Mahīśāsakas, ... a gift made to the Buddha in Nirvāṇa is less advantageous than a gift made to the Saṅgha which consists of living persons. Conversely, for the Dharmaguptakas, the Buddha is not included in the Saṅgha. Since the Buddha is the supreme and peerless being, a gift made to him greatly surpasses that of a gift made to the Saṅgha.”

⁶⁹ Georg Bühler, “A Grant of King Guhasena of Valabhī,” *Indian Antiquary* 4 (1875): 175, lines 8–9; Bühler, “Grants from Valabhī: B,” 207, line 7.

⁷⁰ See Bühler, “A Grant of King Guhasena, 175, lines 8–9 (no. 6, table p. 66); Bühler, “Grants from Valabhī: B,” 207, line 7 (no. 7, table p. 66); Georg Bühler, “Further Valabhī Grants: B.—The Grant of Dhruvasena II,” *Indian Antiquary* 6 (1877): 15, lines [35–40] (no. 18, table p. 66); Gadre, “Five Vala Copper-Plate Grants,” 91, lines 34–38 (no. 19, table p. 66); Schmiedchen, “Buddhist Endowments by Śaiva Kings,” 129, lines 12–18 (no. 20, table p. 66); Diskalkar, “Some Unpublished Copper-Plates,” 36, lines 12–15 (no. 23, table, p. 66); 62, lines 52–56 (no. 25, table p. 66); 42, lines 22–23 (no. 26, table p. 66). In Brahmanical endowment charters of the Maitrakas, the recipients are usually given in the dative case and the grants were bestowed for a single purpose, the performance of Vedic rituals.

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|----------------|----------------|--|
| Guhasena | 566 CE, no. 6 | <i>āryya-bhikṣu-saṅgh[ā]ya ... atisṛṣṭam</i> |
| | 567 CE, no. 7 | <i>āryya-bhikṣu-sa[ṅghā]ya ... pratipāditam</i> |
| Dhruvasena II | 629 CE, no. 18 | <i>[ār]yya-bhikṣu-saṅ[gh]āya ... brahma-dāyo prasṛṣṭo</i> |
| | 638 CE, no. 19 | <i>āryya-bhikṣuṅī-saṅghāya ... [dh]armma-dāyo nisṛṣṭah</i> |
| Dharasena IV | 644 CE, no. 20 | <i>āryya-bhikṣu-saṅghāya ... dharmma-dāyo ni[sṛṣṭo]</i> |
| Dhruvasena III | date?, no. 23 | <i>[bhikṣu-saṅ]ghāya ... dharmma-dāyo nisṛṣṭah</i> |
| Śīlāditya III | 675 CE, no. 25 | <i>āryya-bhikṣu-saṅghāya ... dharmma-dāyo nisṛṣṭah</i> |
| | date?, no. 26 | <i>ā[ryya-bhī]kṣu-saṅghāya ...</i> |

Whereas the donative passages with a threefold genitive construction can be rendered as: “[XYZ] ...has been *given for the purposes* [1] to [3],” the clause with *saṅgha* in the dative case should be understood to mean: “[XYZ] has been *given to* the order of monks/nuns [1] for [their] maintenance, [2] for the worship of the Buddha(s), and [3] for the upkeep of the monastic building.”

The situation is different in two fragmentary mid-7th-century charters of the king Dharasena IV (nos. 21 and 22, table p. 66), which mention a Tārā temple instead of a Buddhist *vihāra*. In both cases, the stipulation regarding the cultic practices heads the enumeration of the purposes of the endowments. It is not related to the Buddha(s), but to Tārādevī instead, given in the dative case as *tārādevīpādebhyaḥ*, whereas the clause regarding provisions of food, robes, furniture, and medicine refers to the *saṅgha* in the form of a genitive attribute.⁷¹ Hence, the female Bodhisattva Tārā could be regarded as the recipient of these two grants.

In Buddhist charters of the Maitrakas from the 7th century, a fourth objective was added to the traditional threefold formula: the grants—at least those for male monastic communities—should also be used “for the livelihood of [those who are at] the soles of the feet” (*pādamūla-prajīvanāya*), i.e., for the sustenance of the servants.⁷² The same formula is attested in Maitraka grants for Hindu temples, and a

⁷¹ Srinivasan, “Two Fragmentary Charters,” 222, lines 38–41; 224, lines *7–9. See above, fn. 18–20, for necessary amendments to Srinivasan’s edition.

⁷² Franz Kielhorn, “Pādamūla. Pādamūlika,” *Indian Antiquary* 27 (1898), 252; Schmiedchen, “Formulas Determining the Purposes,” 587–591; Silk, *Managing Monks*, 203–204.

similar one in contemporary charters of the Bhauma-Kara dynasty from Orissa, recording grants for Buddhist and Hindu institutions.⁷³

In a Buddhist endowment record dated 605 CE and probably issued by the Maitraka king Śīlāditya I (no. 13, table p. 66), these monastic servants are defined as *kalpikāra-pādamūla*.⁷⁴ If we take this as a *dvanda* compound and follow Schopen's translation of *kalpikāra* as a generic Buddhist term,⁷⁵ *kalpikāra-pādamūla* could be rendered as "proper bondmen and servants." However, this compound could also refer to the specific *vinaya* meaning of *kalpikāra* as "an individual who acts as a middleman by accepting things that monks cannot (e.g., money) and converting them into things that they can,"⁷⁶ and the compound *kalpikāra-pādamūla* might then be translated as "servants who are legalizers." In two charters (nos. 25 and 26, table p. 66), the term *pādamūla* is further qualified as [*e*]ta[*t*]-*pratibaddha*, "bound to it," or as *vihāra-pra*[*tibaddha*], "bound to the monastery."⁷⁷ The antecedent of the pronoun in *etat-pratibaddha* is unclear.⁷⁸ The *vihāra* as well as the *saṅgha* residing there are mentioned before this formula; hence, a reference to either of them is possible. But in the light of the attestation

⁷³ Cf. Snigdha Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, vol. 2: Inscriptions of the Bhauma-Karas (Delhi: Indian Council of Historical Research & Pratibha Prakashan, 2000), 127, 142, 149, 157, 159, 164, 166. The use of the term *pādamūla* for monastic servants is also attested in a metal vase inscription from 8th-century Chittagong; see Furui's contribution (pp. 118–119).

⁷⁴ Diskalkar, "Some Unpublished Copper-Plates," 27, line 5; for the significant combination of Buddhist (*kalpikāra*) and Brahmanical (*prajīvana*) terminology, cf. Hinüber, "Verwischte Spuren," 167 and 332, fn. 58.

⁷⁵ Gregory Schopen, "The Monastic Ownership of Servants or Slaves. Local and Legal Factors in the Redactional History of two *Vinayas*," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 17, no. 2 (1994): 160. While noting this particular Maitraka charter, Schopen ("The Monastic Ownership," 172, fn. 59) has misunderstood the formula: "*pāda-mūla* and *prajīvana* being two additional—largely undefinable—categories of 'servants' ...". Edgerton has given the meaning of *kalpi-kāra* in Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit as "some kind of servant of monks in a temple or monastery"; cf. Franklin Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, vol. 2: Dictionary (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), 173. For the term *kalpi-kāra* in the sense of "middleman," see also *Sanskrit-Wörterbuch der buddhistischen Texte aus den Turfanfunden und der kanonischen Literatur der Sarvāstivāda-Schule*. Vol. 2: *k – dhvāṅkṣin*, ed. Ernst Waldschmidt et al. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 38: "kalpi-kāra m. Mittelsmann (, der eine Sache für Mönche legal macht ...)."

⁷⁶ Schopen, "The Monastic Ownership of Servants or Slaves," 164. For the Pāli *kappiṇya-kāraka*, see Petra Kieffer-Pülz, "Stretching the *Vinaya* Rules and Getting Away with It," *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 29 (2007): 20–21.

⁷⁷ Diskalkar, "Some Unpublished Copper-Plates," 42, line 24; 63, line 53.

⁷⁸ See also Silk, *Managing Monks*, 204, fn. 5.

for the term *vihāra-pratibaddha*, it seems more likely that the phrase *etat-pratibaddha* was used similarly. Besides, the acceptance of servants or slaves is a problematic *vinaya* issue, and it was rather permitted to give forbidden “items” to the monastery than to the *saṅgha*.

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| Śīlāditya I | 605 CE, no. 13 | <i>kalpikāra-pādamūla-prajīvanāya</i> |
| Śīlāditya III | 675 CE, no. 25 | [e]ta[t]-pratibaddha-pādamūla-prajīvanāya |
| | date?, no. 26 | vihāra-pra[tibaddha-pā]damūla-[pra?]jīva- nāya |

In some Buddhist Maitraka charters, further additions to and modifications of the threefold formula can be found, which contain details on the Buddhist cult practices showing mutual borrowings between Buddhist and Hindu-Brahmanical concepts and vocabulary. The Buddhist grants dating from the late 6th and early 7th centuries clearly specify for what purpose flowers, incense, fragrance, lamps, oil, etc. should be used, namely for *pūjā-snapana*.⁷⁹ This phrase meaning “worship and [ceremonial] bathing” is perhaps rather unusual in Buddhist epigraphy, but it is possible that the official responsible for drafting this text simply borrowed it from similar passages in endowments bestowing land on Hindu temples. Oskar von Hinüber has argued that formulae such as *pūjā-snapana-gandha-dhūpa-puṣpa-dīpa-tailādy-artham*, “for fragrance, incense, flowers, lamps, oil, etc. for the cult and [ceremonial] bathing (of the image[s]),” combine Hindu-Brahmanical (*pūjā-snapana*) and Buddhist (*gandha-dhūpa-puṣpa-dīpa-tailādi*) technical terminology.⁸⁰ In Buddhist texts such as the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*, the basic formula for descriptions of the *stūpa* worship is *puṣpa-dhūpa-gandha-mālyā-vilepana-cūrṇa-cīvara-cchattra-dhvaja-patākā*.⁸¹ On the other hand, the use of formulae such as *pūjā-snapana-gandha-dhūpa-puṣpa-dīpa-tailādy-artham* in endowments with non-Buddhist beneficiaries from the Gupta period onwards can perhaps be explained by borrowings from Buddhist epigraphic terminology.

Another example for potential epigraphic borrowings is attested in an undated, early-7th-century Buddhist endowment of Śīlāditya I to

⁷⁹ Cf., for instance, Shastri and Dholakia, “Śīlāditya 1-lānum Āmbalāsa dānapatra,” 183, line 28 (no. 15, table p. 66): *bhagavatām ca buddhānām pūjā-snapana-gandha-puṣpa-mālyā-dīpa-tailādy-avyavacchittaye*. The editors omitted *buddhānām*, but it is clearly visible on the photographs that I received from the Junagadh Museum in 2013.

⁸⁰ Hinüber, “Verwischte Spuren,” 166–167. See also Schmiedchen, “Formulas Determining the Purposes,” 587.

⁸¹ Y. Ejima, *Index to the Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra. Sanskrit, Tibetan, Chinese*, vol. 7: Puruṣottama – bauddha (Tokyo: Reiyukai, 1990), 640.

the monastery founded by himself (*asmat-kārīta*; no. 17, table p. 66; also p. 73). It contains the stipulation that this donation was, *inter alia*, meant to be used for “instrumental and vocal music as well as dance” (*vādyā-gīta-nṛtya*).⁸² The very same formula is found in Śīlāditya I’s endowments for Mahādeva and Ādityadeva temples, i.e., in his Dhank plates of 609 CE and his Bhadreniyaka grant of 611 CE.⁸³ However, this expression also matches with Buddhist textual descriptions of the *stūpa* cult, and with the report of Yijing on the image cult in Eastern India.⁸⁴

Charitable purposes, on the other hand, have been rarely recorded in Maitraka charters. However, the benevolent feeding of beggars and strangers is referred to in the Piṣpalaśedhikā grant of Dharasena IV (no. 21), a donation for a Tārā shrine. The king dedicated one half of the village of Piṣpalaśedhikā and a tank (*taṭāka*) for altogether four purposes: for the worship of the goddess Tārā, for repairs of the Tārā temple, for the sustenance of the servants (*pādamūla*), and for the maintenance of the superintendents (*vārika*) residing in the Śrī-Tārā temple and appointed by the order of monks of the Duḍḍāvihāra in Valabhī.⁸⁵ The other half should be used for the charitable feeding

⁸² Diskalkar, “Some Unpublished Copper-Plates,” 34, line 24.

⁸³ Georg Bühler, “Valabhī Grants: No. XV,” *Indian Antiquary* 9 (1880): 237–239; R. D. Banerji, “The Bhadreniyaka Grant of Siladitya I; G. E. 292,” *Epigraphia Indica*, 21 (1931/32): 116–119.

⁸⁴ André Bareau, “La construction et le culte des stūpa d’après les Vinayapīṭaka,” *BEFEO* 50, no. 2 (1962): 246. Takakusu, *A Record of the Buddhist Religion*, 147–148: “In Indian monasteries, when the monastics are going to bathe the image in the forenoon, the priest in charge (Karmadāna) strikes a Ghantā (a gong) for an announcement. After stretching a jewelled canopy over the court of the monastery, and ranging perfumed waterjars in rows at the side of the temple, an image either of gold, silver, copper, or stone is put in a basin of the same material, while a band of girls plays music there. The image having been anointed with scent, water with perfume is poured over it.” See also Li Rongxi, *Buddhist Monastic Traditions of Southern Asia*, 135–138.

⁸⁵ Srinivasan, “Two Fragmentary Charters,” 222, lines 39–42. Several passages have not been read by Srinivasan, *inter alia*, the first 14 *akṣaras* of line 41. For the term *vārika*, see above, p. 68. The stipulations defining the purposes of this endowment are phrased in parallel to the usual ones in grants to monasteries: worship of Tārādevī instead of worship of the Buddha; repairs of the *devakula* instead of repairs of the *vihāra*; sustenance of the *pādamūlas*; and maintenance (*cīvara-piṇḍapāta-śayanāsana-glāna-bhaiṣajyādy-artha[m]*) of the *vārikas* instead of the local *bhikṣu-saṅgha*. This phrasing makes it likely that these *vārikas* were members of the monastic order, not simple guards. For *gandhakuṭī-vārika*, see Schopen, “The Buddha as an Owner of Property,” 193–194; Silk, *Managing Monks*, 120–121; von Hinüber, “Buddhistische Mönche als Verwalter,” 387–388.

(*sa[t]tra*) of beggars and strangers (*karppatika-vaideśy-ādīnām satropayogārtham piṣpalaśedhikā-grāma-dvītīya-pratyarddham*).⁸⁶

4. Donative objects, purposes, and stipulations

In contrast to the majority of the Brahmanical grants issued by the Maitraka kings, most of their Buddhist donations consisted of endowments of whole villages, and not of individual plots of land. Sometimes more than one single village was bestowed with an individual charter: altogether four villages in favor of the *Ḍuḍḍamahāvihāra* in Guhasena's record dated 566 CE (no. 6, table p. 66);⁸⁷ two villages each, to the *Bappapādīyavihāra* in Dharasena II's inscription of 588 CE (no. 8),⁸⁸ as well as to the *vihāra* erected by Śīlāditya I in an undated epigraph of this king (no. 17).⁸⁹ Occasionally, the very same village where the monastery itself had been founded was donated, as in the cases of the Buddhist *vihāra* established in *Āmalakavasatīgrāma* (no. 1),⁹⁰ or of the *Mahāyānikavihāra* at *Yodhāvaka-grāma* (no. 20).⁹¹ One of the charters of Śīlāditya I dated 605 CE (no. 12) records the grant of a village, four plots of arable land, two cisterns, and four wells with flower gardens in favor of the *Ḍuḍḍāvihāra*. This charter is an exception also in another sense: although the majority of the *bhikṣu-vihāras* and all the *bhikṣuṇī-vihāras* mentioned in the Maitraka records were situated in or near *Valabhī*, the monasteries rarely received land on the city territory of the capital. However, the four wells and four flower gardens bestowed upon the *Ḍuḍḍāvihāra* are described as lying on the border of *Valabhī* (*valabī-svatala-sīmni*).⁹²

⁸⁶ Srinivasan, "Two Fragmentary Charters," 222, line 42. The last ten *akṣaras* have not been read by Srinivasan, see also above, fn. 18.

⁸⁷ Bühler, "A Grant of King Guhasena," 175, lines 9–10: ... | *evam etad grāmacatuṣṭayam*. According to the description in this inscription (no. 6, table p. 66), one of the villages granted, i.e., *Śam[ī]padravāṭaka*, lay close to the village of *Pippalarumkharī*, which had been already bestowed upon the *Ḍuḍḍāvihāra* with no. 2, table p. 66; cf. Bühler, "A Grant of King Dhruvasena I.," 105, line [23].

⁸⁸ Bühler, "Further *Valabhī* Grants: A," 12, line [21].

⁸⁹ Diskalkar, "Some Unpublished Copper-Plates," 34, line 26: *etad grāmadvayam*.

⁹⁰ Shastri and Dholakia, "Valabhīnā Maitraka rājā Dhruvasena 1-lānuṃ dānapatra," 238, lines 14–18. The charter does not record a new endowment, but the confirmation of an earlier donation. The details of the regulations are not fully comprehensible, despite their being rather clearly legible on the plate.

⁹¹ Schmiechen, "Buddhist Endowments by Śaiva Kings," 128–129, lines 12–18.

⁹² Franz Kielhorn, "A Copper-Plate Grant of Siladitya I. of Valabhi," *Indian Antiquary* 14 (1885): 330, lines 25–26.

The Buddhist grants of the Maitrakas were endowed with a wide range of fiscal and administrative privileges and immunities, specifying the rights of the monastic communities over the donative objects. Under the kings of the Maitraka dynasty, the majority of these privileges were almost indiscriminately used for all kinds of landed estates (i.e., for whole villages as well as for individual plots of land)⁹³ and for the different religious beneficiaries (i.e., for *vihāras* much in the same manner as for Brāhmaṇas).

There are only a few typically “Brahmanical” phrases, particularly the formula allowing the donee to pass the donative object on to his (male) offspring, which had to be substituted in Buddhist grants. The Brahmanical “inheritance formula” generally used under the Maitrakas was *putra-pautrānvaya-bhogya*, “to be enjoyed by sons, grandsons, and [further] descendants.” In Buddhist grants, several expressions were “experimented” with: *avyavacchitti-bhogya*,⁹⁴ “to be enjoyed without interruption,” *vihāra-saṅghopabhogya*, “to be enjoyed by the order of the monastery,”⁹⁵ or *vihārārya-bhikṣuṇī-saṅghopabhogya*,⁹⁶ “to be enjoyed by the noble order of nuns of the monastery.”

Whereas all the early Brahmanical grants of the Maitrakas were called *brahma-deya* or *brahma-dāya*, “gift to a Brāhmaṇa,” the phrasing of the first known donations of this dynasty in favor of Buddhist monasteries was still not standardized. But from the end of the 6th century onwards, most Maitraka endowments, regardless of their religious orientation, were unanimously labelled with the more general term *dharmadāya*, “religious gift,” probably due to Buddhist influence. Thus, in the Ambalasa plates of the year 609 CE (no. 15, table p. 66), the village of Madayantikāpada “was bestowed as religious gift to be enjoyed by the order of the monastery” (*vihāra-saṅghopabhogyaḥ dharmadāyo niṣṛṣṭaḥ*), which is described some lines before as *kuberanagara-svatala-niviṣṭa-yaśonandi-kārita-vaḍḍavihāra*.⁹⁷

Whereas Maitraka land grants in favor of Brāhmaṇas, Buddhist monasteries, as well as Hindu temples were all formally “bestowed as *dharmadāya*” from the end of the 6th century onwards, the conditions

⁹³ This observation also concerns the question about the difference between the grant of a plot of land and of a village.

⁹⁴ Kielhorn, “A Copper-Plate Grant of Siladitya I.,” 330, lines 25–26 (no. 12, table p. 66).

⁹⁵ Shastri and Dholakia, “Śīlāditya 1-lānum Āmbalāsa dānapatra,” 183, line 32 (no. 15, table p. 66).

⁹⁶ Gadre, “Five Vala Copper-Plate Grants,” 84, line 27 (no. 16, table p. 66).

⁹⁷ Shastri and Dholakia, “Śīlāditya 1-lānum Āmbalāsa dānapatra,” 183, lines 29–33.

of the endowment following this specification of the donative object explicitly stipulate that Brahmanical grants were to be utilized according to “the condition of a gift in favor of a Brāhmaṇa” (*brahma-dāya-sthiti/brama-deya-sthiti*). For Buddhist endowments (and those in favor of Hindu temples), the phrasing was not fixed in the same way. Here, different expressions occur, such as, for instance, “the condition of a rent-free holding in favor of a god” (*devāgrāhāra-sthiti*),⁹⁸ or “the condition as described above” (*uparilikhita-sthiti*),⁹⁹ thus referring to the privileges listed before.

There is hardly any information preserved on how the Buddhist monasteries in the Maitraka kingdom actually managed their grants. However, the phrasing of the stipulations on the use of the land permits some conclusions. The stock phrase attested in Brahmanical endowments reads as follows:

Therefore not even a slight hindrance should be made or [any] objection [be raised] by anyone against the one (= the Brahmanical donee) who is, according to the proper condition of a grant in favor of a Brāhmaṇa, enjoying [the village/land], cultivating [it], having [it] cultivated, or assigning [it to others for cultivation] (*yato 'syocitayā brahma-dāya-sthityā bhūñjataḥ kṛṣataḥ karṣayataḥ pradiśato vā na kaiścit svalpāpy ābādhā vicāranā vā kāryyā*).¹⁰⁰

This regulation entitled the recipient to simple usufruct as well as to—at least *de iure*—more complex usages of the object donated. In particular, when plots of arable land were singled out and then bestowed, the stipulation can be seen as even more important, because it permitted the beneficiaries to carry out different kinds of agricultural activity.

A similarly complex equivalent was used in several Buddhist endowments of the Maitrakas, but the formula tended to be altered, perhaps after a request by monastic clergy for a more appropriate Buddhist adaptation. One such modified formula reads as follows: “Therefore, no impairment should be made or [any kind of] objection [be raised] by anyone against those appointed there, who are having that which grows there collected” (*yataḥ tatrādhikṛtānām yat tatrotpadyate tad udgrāhayatām na kenacit pratiśedho vicāranā vā kāryyā*).¹⁰¹ Under the king Śīlāditya I, a particular formula was used that stresses

⁹⁸ The term *devāgrāhāra* seems to distinguish grants for collective religious bodies from those in favor of individuals; see, e.g., Kielhorn, “A Copper-Plate Grant of Silāditya I.,” 330, line 29 (no. 12, table p. 66).

⁹⁹ Gadre, “Five Vala Copper-Plate Grants,” 85, line 28 (no. 16, table p. 66).

¹⁰⁰ V. S. Sukthankar, “Bhavnagar Plates of Dhruvasena I: [Valabhi-]Samvat 210,” *Epigraphia Indica* 15 (1919/20): 257, lines 19–20.

¹⁰¹ See, e.g., Bühler, “A Grant of King Dhruvasena I.,” 105, lines [23–25] (no. 2, table p. 66).

the rather passive approach of Buddhist beneficiaries: “And therefore, [the endowment,] being enjoyed according to the proper condition of a rent-free holding in favor of a god, shall not be obstructed by anyone” (*yata uci[ta]yā [ca] devāgrāhārasthityā bhujyam[ā]nakaḥ na kaiścit paripanthanīyah*).¹⁰²

In comparison to Brahmanical grants, this somewhat ambiguous handling of the prescriptions in Maitraka endowments to *vihāras* may perhaps be explained by the Buddhists’ generally strict attitude toward agriculture and their not being allowed to get directly involved in farming and gardening due to the *vinaya* prohibition of digging the soil for monastics. Regarding this question, the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Yijing quotes the comment of another monk on the practice followed in Tāmralipti in Bengal in the 7th century:

When I for the first time visited Tāmralipti, I saw in a square outside the monastery some of its tenants who, having entered there, divided some vegetables into three portions, and, having presented one of the three to the priests, retired from thence, taking the other portions with them. I could not understand what they did, and asked of the venerable Tashang Tang (Mahāyāna Pradīpa) what was the motive. He replied: “The priests in this monastery are mostly observers of the precepts. As cultivation by the priests themselves is prohibited by the great Sage, they suffer their taxable lands to be cultivated by others freely, and partake of only a portion of the products.” Thus they live their just life, avoiding worldly affairs, and free from the faults of destroying lives by ploughing and watering fields.¹⁰³

But opinions on how to cope with this doctrinal problem seem to have differed from region to region:

According to the teaching of the Vinaya, when a cornfield is cultivated by the Saṅgha (the Brotherhood or community), a share in the product is to be given to the monastic servants or some other families by whom the actual tilling has been done. Every product should be divided into six parts, and one-sixth should be levied by the Saṅgha; the Saṅgha has to provide the bulls as well as the ground for cultivation, while the Saṅgha is responsible for nothing else. Sometimes the division of the product should be modified according to the seasons.

¹⁰² See, e.g., Kielhorn, “A Copper-Plate Grant of Siladitya I.,” 330, line 29 (no. 12, table p. 66).

¹⁰³ Takakusu, *A Record of the Buddhist Religion*, 62; Li Rongxi, *Buddhist Monastic Traditions of Southern Asia*, 60f.

Most of the monasteries in the West [= India – A.S.] follow the above custom, but there are some who are very avaricious and do not divide the produce, but the priests themselves give out the work to the servants, male and female, and see that the farming is properly done.¹⁰⁴

Yijing's record indicates that the undesirable nature of involvement in agriculture, which must have been inevitably related to the endowments of land and villages, had the potential to cause violations of *vinaya* rules by the monastics, which had to be avoided.

5. Buddhist schools and Mahāyāna

According to Xuanzang's testimony, the region around Valabhī was a stronghold of the Saṃmitīyas, with 100 monasteries and 6,000 monks.¹⁰⁵ But in contrast to epigraphs from the first centuries CE from many parts of India, the names of specific *nikāyas* of early Buddhism are not attested in the 6th/7th-century Maitraka charters. Tournier has suggested that the “diminution ... of the mentions of *nikāyas* in the epigraphic record of the period could, in part, be explained by the necessity to stress a ‘Buddhist’ identity, constructed in opposition to the non-Buddhist institutionalized cults, which rose to prominence ...”¹⁰⁶ The three extant grants of Guhasena (nos. 5–7, table p. 66), however, do refer to the conventional number of 18 *nikāyas* with regard to the communities of monks in two different monasteries. These grants were made to “the Buddhist noble order of monks within the eighteen *nikāyas* coming from all directions” (*nānā-deśa-samabhyāgatāṣṭādaśa-nikāyābhyantarārya-bhikṣu-saṅgha nānā-dig-abhyāgatāṣṭādaśa-nikāyābhyantara-sākya-rya-bhikṣu-saṅgha*, or *nānā-dig-abhyāgatāṣṭādaśa-nikāyābhyantarārya-bhikṣu-saṅgha*).¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Takakusu, *A Record of the Buddhist Religion*, 61; Li Rongxi, *Buddhist Monastic Traditions of Southern Asia*, 59. For these observations by Yijing, see also Furui's contribution (pp. 129–131).

¹⁰⁵ Beal, *Si-Yu-Ki*, vol. 2, 266; Li Rongxi, *The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions*, 302; see also Tournier, “Buddhist Lineages,” 887.

¹⁰⁶ Vincent Tournier, “A 4th/5th Century *sūtra* of the Saṃmitīya Canon? On the So-Called ‘Continental Pāli’ Inscription from Devnimori,” in *Proceedings of the Third International Pāli Studies Week—Paris 2018*, ed. C. Cicuzza (Lumbini: Fragile Palm Leaf Foundation; Lumbini International Research Institute, forthcoming).

¹⁰⁷ Georg Bühler, “Additional Valabhī Grants, Nos. IX–XIV: No. IX.—A Grant of Guhasena,” *Indian Antiquary* 7 (1878): 67, line [21] (no. 5, table p. 66); Bühler, “A Grant of King Guhasena, 175, lines 8–9 (no. 6, table p. 66); Bühler, “Grants from Valabhī: B,” 207, line 7 (no. 7, table p. 66). The compound *sākya-rya-*

There is also direct evidence for Mahāyāna influence. Divirapati Skandabhaṭa [II], who started his career as a chief secretary under Dhruvasena II and who was later responsible for composing the title-deeds of Dharasena IV,¹⁰⁸ seems to have founded several Mahāyāna institutions in the mid-7th century. The monastery established by him in the village of Yodhāvaka in the ancient district of Hastavapra (modern Hathab) in Surāṣṭra was specifically labelled as a Mahāyānikavihāra (no. 20, table p. 66).¹⁰⁹ The same high-ranking official had erected the Tārā temple (Tārāpura, also called *devakula*) mentioned above (no. 21, table p. 66), which is apparently called *gandhakuṭī* in no. 22, in the village of Kāṇasīhānaka in the Surāṣṭra region.¹¹⁰ The explicit references to Surāṣṭra are significant in the light of the fact that Xuanzang asserted the presence of a group he called *Mahāyāna-Sthāvīrīyas in this area.¹¹¹

Buddhist literary influence can be found in three copper-plate charters composed by Skandabhaṭa [I] in the second half of the 6th

bhikṣu reminds us of the term *śākya-bhikṣu*. For an allegedly Mahāyāna connotation of this term, see Gregory Schopen, “Mahāyāna in Indian Inscriptions,” *Indo-Iranian Journal* 21 (1979): 8–15. Schopen’s interpretation has been contested by L. S. Cousins, “Sākiyabhikkhu / Sakyabhikkhu / Sākyabhikṣu: A Mistaken Link to the Mahāyāna?,” *Nagoya Studies in Indian Culture and Buddhism: Saṃbhāṣā* 23 (2003): 1–27; and Schopen has later replied to Cousins in the reprint of his previous article; cf. Gregory Schopen, *Figments and Fragments of Mahāyāna Buddhism in India: More Collected Papers* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2005), 244–246.

¹⁰⁸ Annette Schmiedchen, “Kings, Authors, and Messengers: The Composition of the Maitraka Copper Plate Charters,” in: *New Horizons in Indology: Prof. Dr. H. G. Shastri Commemoration Volume*, ed. Bharati Shelat and Thomas Parmar (Ahmedabad: Shri Nandan H. Shastri, 2018), 38.

¹⁰⁹ See above, p. 74. For the edition, see Schmiedchen, “Buddhist Endowments by Śaiva Kings,” 129, lines 12–13, 19.

¹¹⁰ See above, pp. 68–69, and 80. The term *gandhakuṭī* is also attested in no. 25, table p. 66, the Kasaka grant of the year 675 CE. In this charter of Śīlāditya III, it is used in the stipulation regarding the worship of the Buddha; see Diskalkar, “Some Unpublished Copper-Plates,” 63, line 53. For the possible interpretation of the term *kuṭī* as *gandhakuṭī* in charter no. 3, table p. 66, the Vaṭaprajyaka grant of the year 536 CE, see fn. 14.

¹¹¹ Beal, *Si-Yu-Ki*, vol. 2, 269; Li Rongxi, *The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions*, 303. For this term, see Bangwai Wang, “Buddhist Nikāyas through Ancient Chinese Eyes,” in *Untersuchungen zur buddhistischen Literatur*, ed. Frank Bandurski et al. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 177–178; Kieffer-Pülz, “Die buddhistische Gemeinde,” 289–290; Joseph Walser, *Nāgārjuna in Context: Mahāyāna Buddhism and Early Indian Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 41–42.

century.¹¹² These charters issued by the Maitraka kings Guhasena and Dharasena II record grants in favor of the Buddhist monasteries established respectively by a lady named Mimmā (no. 7, table p. 66), by the monk Sthiramati (no. 8), and by the merchant Kakkamākila (no. 9). After the usual imprecatory and benedictory verses at the end of these epigraphs, an Upajāti stanza is cited from the *Jātakamālā* of Āryaśūra.¹¹³ In the *Jātakamālā*, this stanza (25.28) reads:

lakṣmīniketaṃ yadapāśrayeṇa prāpto 'si lokābhimataṃ ṅṛpatvaṃ |
*tāny eva puṇyāni vivardhayethā na karṣaṇīyo hy upakāripakṣaḥ ||*¹¹⁴

You should increase the very same [religious] merits, based on which you have obtained the royalty respected by the people, which is the abode of [regal] fortune; for the supporters (i.e., the merits) are not to be weakened.¹¹⁵

In one of the Maitraka charters (no. 9), the reading of this stanza is identical with Āryaśūra's version.¹¹⁶ In the other two relevant copper-

¹¹² On a similar phenomenon of epigraphic citation from a known Buddhist literary work, see Arlo Griffiths, "Four More Gupta-period Copper-plate Grants from Bengal," *Pratnasamiksha*, New Series 9 (2018), 45.

¹¹³ On this author, see Roland Steiner, "Āryaśūra," in *Brill's Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, vol. 2: *Lives*, ed. Jonathan Silk et al. (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2019), 70–72. The association of Āryaśūra with Mahāyāna is far from clear.

¹¹⁴ Hendrik Kern, *The Jātakamālā. Stories of the Buddha's Former Incarnations. Otherwise Entitled Bodhisattva-Avadāna-Mālā by Ārya-Śūra. Critically Edited in the Original Sanskrit* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1943), 166. A version of this stanza, with *prabhutvaṃ* instead of *ṅṛpatvaṃ*, also occurs as 1.6 in the *Subhāṣitaratnakaraṇḍakakathā: lakṣmīniketaṃ yadupāśrayeṇa prāpto 'si lokābhimataṃ prabhutvaṃ | tāny eva puṇyāni vivardhayethā na karṣaṇīyo hy upakāripakṣaḥ ||*; see Michael Hahn, *Die Subhāṣitaratnakaraṇḍakakathā. Ein spät-buddhistischer Text zur Verdienstlehre*. Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen. I. Philologisch-historische Klasse. Jahrgang 1982. Nr. 9 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), 331–332.

¹¹⁵ This is my translation. J. S. Speyer, *The Jātakamālā. Garland of Birth-Stories of Āryaśūra* (Reprint. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, [1895] 1971), 233, has translated this stanza as: "It is by pursuing meritorious actions that thou obtainedst the royal dignity, a thing highly esteemed by men and the abode of bliss. That very store of merit you must enlarge, thou shouldst not enfeeble the ranks of the benefactors."

¹¹⁶ Only parts of charter no. 9 have been edited by G. V. Acharya, "Notes on Some Unpublished Valabhī Copper-Plates Belonging to the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society and Lent to the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India: No. II.—Plates of Dharasena II, dated [Gupta-]Samvat 270," *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, N.S., 1 (1925): 66–69. Lines 31–33, containing the relevant stanza 2, have been omitted by Acharya. The stanza has been read by me on photographs of the originals, which I received from the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai, in 2012, and on photographs of the estampages preserved in the Epigraphy Branch of the Archaeological Survey

plate inscriptions, this stanza is given with slight modifications, using *puṇyāny abhivardhayethā* instead of *puṇyāni vivardhayethā* (no. 7), or saying that the [religious] merits should not be “neglected” (*hāpanīya* instead of *karṣaṇīya* in no. 8).¹¹⁷

6. Conclusion

One quarter of the Maitraka copper-plate charters record endowments in favor of Buddhist institutions, which were issued between the first half of the 6th and the second half of the 7th century. This corpus testifies the existence of economically independent nunneries in the capital Valabhī and mentions a Mahāyāna monastery as well as one or more Tārā shrines in villages. The beneficiaries in all the grants seem to have been local monastic communities of monks or nuns. Only in one title deed (no. 3, table p. 66), the order of monks is described as “residing in two monasteries” (*ubhaya[vihāra]prati[vāsin]*), namely the Duḍḍāvihāra and another *vihāra* probably attached to it. The Maitraka charters seem to indicate a kind of royal monopoly on endowments to existing *vihāras*.

The last extant grants of the Maitraka kings in favor of monasteries date from around 675 CE, while donations to Brāhmaṇas continued to be made until the very end of Maitraka rule (i.e., until 765 or 766

of India, Mysore, which I also received in 2012: *lakṣmīniketaṁ yadapāśrayeṇa prāpto 'si lokābhimataṁ nṛpatvaṁ | tāny eva puṇyāni vivarddhayethā na karṣa- [nī]yo hy upakāripakṣaḥ ||*.

¹¹⁷ The connection between the stanza in the *Subhāṣitaratnakaraṇḍakakathā* and the stanza occurring in two Maitraka charters (nos. 7 and 8 here) was already recognized by V. V. Mirashi, “A Note on the Subhāṣitaratnakaraṇḍakakathā of Āryaśūra,” *The Adyar Library Bulletin* 25 (1961): 305–306. Without giving the actual references to the editions of the two charters, Mirashi remarks: “Owing to the corrupt form the verse was not properly understood by the editors of the grants.” Georg Bühler had edited the two inscriptions in 1876 and 1877. For no. 7, see Bühler, “Grants from Valabhī: B,” 207, lines 13–14, stanza 3; for no. 8, see Bühler, “Further Valabhī Grants: A,” 12, line [30], stanza 6. Bühler seems not to have fully comprehended the stanza. However, this was not so much due to the corrupt transmission of these verses, as to the state of preservation of the two copper plates. On the basis of published and unpublished estampages, I could improve Bühler’s reading of no. 7, verse 3b, as *prāpto 'si ... pakṣaṁ to prāpto 'si [lokābhimataṁ] [n]ṛpa[tvaṁ]*. His reading of *nṛpārthaṁ* in no. 8, vers 6b, can also be corrected to *nṛpa[tv]am*.

CE).¹¹⁸ The comparison of the stipulations in Buddhist and Brahmanical endowments of the Maitrakas suggests that one reason for the decrease in royal patronage of Buddhism might have been the monastic communities' comparatively limited interest in village life, their traditional basis in India always having been the towns and cities rather than the countryside. Brahmanical donees, on the other hand, seem to have fulfilled the expectations of the kings in shaping the rural landscape much better, with a number of them being personally active in agricultural activities, particularly if they received individual plots of land, not whole villages. Similar trends can be observed in many parts of early medieval India.¹¹⁹

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¹¹⁸ Annette Schmiedchen, "Medieval Endowment Cultures in Western India: Buddhist and Muslim Encounters—Some Preliminary Observations," in *Encountering Buddhism and Islam in Premodern Central and South Asia*, ed. Blain Auer and Ingo Strauch (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 206.

¹¹⁹ For the phenomenon of the so-called agrarian expansion, see, e.g., Bhairabi Prasad Sahu, "From Regional Histories to Histories of the Regions and Beyond," *Social Scientist* 43, no. 3/4 (2015): 33–47.

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