

On “*Shakuson Eden*,”
a Tibetan Illustrated Biography of the Buddha

The Edification of Ajātaśatru and the Nirvāṇa of the Buddha

〈in English〉

Masaaki Nohnin

Abstract

The *Shakuson Eden* 釋尊繪傳 (henceforth, IBSB) is a Tibetan illustrated biography of Śākyamuni Buddha, which consists of 25 scrolls in total and contains 120 episodes. In this paper, I focus on the 112th scene of “the eight-portion distribution of the Buddha’s relics,” which consists of four themes: (1) worship of the relics, (2) claim for the relics, (3) the story of King Ajātaśatru and (4) the eight-portion distribution of the relics. I examine the characteristics of the IBSB through 1) a comparison with the reliefs of biographies of the Buddha found in Gandhara and central Asia and 2) an analysis of the textual sources of this work.

The result for part 1) the comparison of biographies is that no examples of the story of King Ajātaśatru can be confirmed in Gandhara but similar scenes are painted at Kizil cave in central Asia. As for part 2) the analysis of the texts, I have confirmed that this work is closely related to the Sarvāstivādin tradition. I have also pointed out that the story of King Ajātaśatru is closely connected with the theme of the establishment of the true Dharma after the Buddha’s passing into nirvāṇa found in the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*. Furthermore, according to previous research, the IBSB was produced on the basis of a text of the biography of the Buddha, “Summarized Description of the Acts of the King Bhagavat Muni (henceforth, SD)” that had collected materials mainly from the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya* and a painting manual, “Record of Paintings of Hundred Acts of the Venerable King Śākya (henceforth, RP),” both of which were written by Tāranātha. However, the structures of the stories are different between the SD and the RP. Taking notice of this point, I have clarified through the examination of the structure of the IBSB that a series of episodes of the edification of Ajātaśatru play an important role in the process of a reorganization of the Buddha’s biography. From this I propose the possibility that the IBSB was produced on the basis of the RP which was written by reorganizing the structure of the SD.

要 旨

「釈尊絵伝」は全25幅・120話から構成されるチベットの仏伝図である。本論文では、そのうちの第112話、(1)舍利供養、(2)舍利争奪戦、(3)阿闍世王故事、(4)舍利八分、という四つの主題から構成される「舍利八分」を取り上げ、1)ガンダーラや中央アジアに伝わる仏伝図との比較、および2)出典となったテキストの分析を通してその特徴を考察する。

その結果、1)について阿闍世王故事(3)はその作例をガンダーラに確認することができなかった。しかし、中央アジアのキジル石窟の壁画に同様の場面の描かれていることを確認した。また 2)について、説一切有部の伝承と密接にかかわっていることを確認すると同時に、釈迦牟尼涅槃後の正法の確立という『根本有部律』の主題と阿闍世王故事(3)が密接に結びついていることを指摘した。さらに先行研究によれば、「釈尊絵伝」は、主に『根本有部律』から仏伝の題材を収集したターラナータ作の仏伝テキスト、すなわち『牟尼御行の略説』(以下、略説)、および描画のための手引き書、すなわち『釈迦百行の作画録』(以下、作画録)にもとづいて描かれたとされる。しかし、物語の構成は『略説』と『作画録』で相違する。この点に着目して、改編に際し一連の阿闍世教化のエピソードが重要な役割を果たしていることを「釈尊絵伝」の構成の分析を通して明らかにした。そして、『略説』の構成を改編した『作画録』にもとづいて「釈尊絵伝」が描かれた可能性を指摘した。

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1. Introduction

Tohkan Tada (1890-1967) stayed as an exchange student in Lhasa from September, 1913 to January, 1923, which was a promise between thirteenth Dalai Lama and Kozui Otani, Nishi-hongwanji twentysecond Monshu. During his stay, he, as a Tibetan monk at Sera Monastery, devoted himself to the study of Buddhism so far as to be entitled to dGe bshes. After his return home, Tada built the foundation of Tibetan Studies and Buddhist Studies in Japan on the basis of the Buddhist sutras, texts and paintings he brought back from Tibet.

As one of these materials, the *Shakuson Eden* 釋尊繪傳 (henceforth, IBSB) was sent to Tada in 1937 according to the last will of the Dalai Lama. The IBSB consists of 25 scrolls in total and contains 120 episodes. It is a biography of Śākyamuni Buddha, expressed in detailed, minutely painted pictures. We could call it a masterpiece of illustrated biographies of the Buddha that will remain throughout history.

In this paper, I will first focus on the scene of “eight-portion distribution of the Buddha’s relics.” I would like to elucidate the characteristics of this Tibetan illustrated biography of the Buddha, through its comparison with 1) the reliefs of the biography of the Buddha found in Gandhara and central Asia and 2) the texts of other biographies of the Buddha. Secondly, I would like to shed light upon the circumstances in which the IBSB was produced through the examination of the Buddha’s act that involves his edification of Ajātaśatru.

2. Related texts and previous studies

Naoji Okuyama has published a general study of this illustrated biography of the Buddha (Okuyama[1996]). It has shown that the framework for the story of this work derives from a text called “Summarized Description of the Acts of the King Bhagavat Muni (*bCom ldan 'das Thub pa'i*

dbang po'i mdzad pa mdo tsam brjod pa⁽¹⁾)” (henceforth, SD) and that the pictures of this work were produced according to a painting manual called “Record of Paintings of Hundred Acts of the Venerable King Śākya (*sTon pa Śākya'i dbang po'i mdzad pa brgya pa'i bris yig*⁽²⁾)” (henceforth, RP), both of which were written by Tāranātha (1575–1638) around the 17th century A.D..⁽³⁾

It is said that in Tibet the life of Śākyamuni Buddha is made into pictures on the basis of “mdzad brgya” (Hundred Acts).⁽⁴⁾ Since the SD was written by Tāranātha who belonged to the Jo nang tradition and is called “Jo nang mdzad brgya” (Hundred Acts of Jo nang tradition), we can count it as one of the traditional works of mdzad brgya.

Moreover, the *dPag bsam ljon bzang* written by Sumbha mkhan po (1702-74) carries the names of 125 scenes, the order and contents of which are in accordance with those of the SD, although some of the Tibetan wordings of the names are different.⁽⁵⁾ As previous studies have also shown,⁽⁶⁾ we can assume that, after the production of the SD, these 125 scenes set a standard for the biography of the Buddha in Tibet.⁽⁷⁾

Tāranātha collected the materials from the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*, to compose the biography of the Buddha. He employs the descriptions of the Vinaya as framework of the SD and supplements it with texts of the Śrāvakayāna. The SD is a compilation of the acts of Śākyamuni Buddha in 125 episodes, beginning with the scene of his descent from Tuṣita Heaven and ending with his nirvāṇa and the First Council that follows. His editing policy for the Buddha's biography is that styles of Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna should be distinguished and not intermingled. The postscript of SD states

⁽¹⁾ *The Collected Works of jo-nañ rje-btsun Tāranātha*, Reproduced from of prints from the Rtan-brtan phun-tshogs-glin blocks preserved in the library of the Stog Palace in Ladak vol.12, 1985, fol. 1-331.

⁽²⁾ *op. cit.*, fol. 333-501.

⁽³⁾ See Okuyama[1996b: 68, 73-74].

⁽⁴⁾ I would like to thank Professor Emeritus Tsultrim Kelsang Khangkar (Otani University) who has kindly informed me of this point. In 藏汉大辞典, we find a biography of the Buddha called “sTon pa śākya thub pa'i skyes rabs brgya rtsa brgyad ston pa'i rnam thar/ <Shijiabaixingzhuan 釋迦百行傳>” in the entry of “mdzad brgya” (2334 left).

⁽⁵⁾ *dPag bsam ljon bzang* (Rinsen Buddhist text series 5, Kyoto: Rinsen Books, 1984), pp.33.9-36.2. See Kawaguchi[1999: 308-319].

⁽⁶⁾ See Tucci[1949: 357], Okuyama[1996b: 75].

⁽⁷⁾ Ekai Kawaguchi (1866-1945) once created a new text of a biography of the Buddha. He took some of the names of the *dPag bsam ljon bzang* as its chapters' names and added some new chapters as well. He then fleshed out these chapters based on the *Lalitavistara*, a Mahāyāna biography of the Buddha, *Samdhinirmocana-sūtra* which tells the second and third turnings of the wheel of Dharma, Tantras and so forth. Kawaguchi's such method of editing a biography of the Buddha runs counter to that of Tāranātha who thinks that Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna should be distinguished. See Kawaguchi[1999].

as follows.⁽⁸⁾

Biographies of the Tathāgata are told equally in Three Treasuries (of Bodhisattvayāna and of Śrāvakayāna), but it is clear that we should distinguish between Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna. It is a Mahāyāna style that detailed descriptions are provided before the First Sermon because, in the holy *Lalitavistara*, the Leader dwells in the Tuṣita Heaven. Thus, if we want to describe the following part, we should integrate stories of two eminent disciples in the *Ratnakeṭu* of [Mahā-]samnipāta, a story in the *Pitāputrasamāgama-sūtra* of Ratnakūṭa, the great miraculous transformations in the *Xianyu jing* 賢愚經, and those found in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa[-sūtra]* of the several chapters on nirvāṇa, and so forth. If we complement it only with Mahāyāna sutras in this way, it will make a very good biography.

Here one should note that, among Mahāyāna sutras that relate to Mahāyāna biographies of the Buddha, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* (myang 'das chen po) that being the Mahāyāna Nirvāṇa-sūtra which deals with the act of nirvāṇa, is given. However, the SD excluded Mahāyāna sutras in this way, and was composed as a Śrāvakayāna biography of Śākyamuni Buddha.

The result of bibliographical analysis of the IBSB, the SD, and the RP can be found in Okuyama's comparative list (1996b: 80-85). It is a highly convenient list in which we can see differences of wording, addition and omission of stories, sources, and so forth at first glance. When we compare the structure of 125 episodes of the SD with that of the IBSB, we find some differences between them, but the structure of the IBSB agrees with that of the RP. That is to say, we recognize the change of order of 125 episodes between the IBSB and the SD. This means that there are differences in terms of the order of episodes between the SD and the RP which are written by the same author and thus have a close relation with each other. We cannot entirely rule out the possibility that the structure of biography of the Buddha found in the IBSB already existed before the production of the SD, but the IBSB is written and painted in accordance with the order of the RP. What has brought about the differences before and after the IBSB? For what purpose has the change of order been made? In any case, this is a problem associated with the editorial purpose of the IBSB in the history of Tibetan biographies of the Buddha.

⁽⁸⁾ SD, 329.4-7: de bzhin gshegs pa'i nman par thar pa sde snod gsum las byung mnyam yin yang / theg pa che chung gi dbye ba phyed dgos par snang ste / 'phags pa rgya che rol pa las / ston pa dga' ldan du bzhugs pa nas / chos 'khor thog mar bskor ba'i bar rgyas par 'byung ba lta bu / theg chen gyi lugs yin pas de'i rjes 'thud par 'dod na / 'dus pa rin po che tog las 'byung ba'i mchog zung gi lo rgyus dang / dkon mchog brtsegs pa'i nang gi yab sras mzal ba'i mdo las 'byung ba'i lo rgyus dang / mdzangs blun nas bshad pa'i cho 'phrul chen po dang / mya ngan las 'das pa'i skor nams myang 'das chen po las 'byung sogs / mdor na theg chen gyi mdo kho na las kha bskang na shin tu legs par 'gyur la /.

3. The eight-portion distribution of the Buddha's relics

Let us now turn to the scene of the “eight-portion distribution of the Buddha's relics,” IBSB[112] (=episode 112 of the IBSB, which agrees with episode 120 of the SD) in the picture 12 on the left <fig.1>. Needless to say, this scene is located in the series of topics such as nirvāṇa (IBSB[110]), the cremation of the Buddha (IBSB[111]) and the First Council (IBSB[113]).

IBSB[112] consists of four parts that are as follows.

- (1) People's worshipping in front of the urn of relics. (Worship of relics)
- (2) The tribes' dispatching of their troops to Kuśinagara for the claim of the relics. (Claim of relics)
- (3) The king Ajātaśatru's fainting in great agony after knowing the nirvāṇa of the Buddha. (Story of King Ajātaśatru)
- (4) The opening of the urn of relics and the relics' distribution into eight portions. (Eight-portion distribution of relics)

(1), (2) and (4) are the episodes that form the essential parts of the “eight-portion distribution of the Buddha's relics.” We can find detailed descriptions of these events in the Nirvāṇa-sūtra and other related texts.⁽⁹⁾ In the IBSB, (1) and (4) are painted in the upper middle of picture 12 on the left. On the lower right to a boundary of a river, (2) is painted and, further below part, episode (3) is painted in detail.

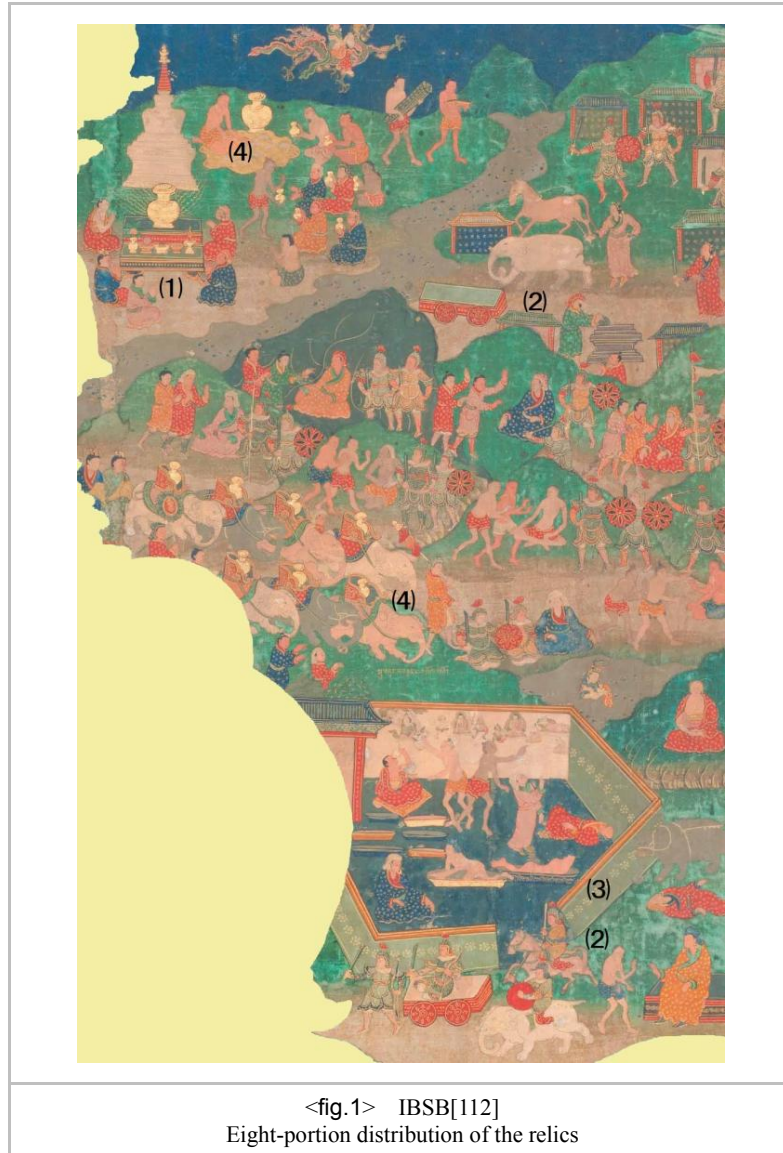
After the cremation, the relics were put into a golden urn, which was brought to and enshrined at a hall in the walled city of Kuśinagara. People of Malla tribe in Kuśinagara offered various things to it and worshiped it.

Upon hearing the nirvāṇa of Śākyamuni Buddha, seven tribes advance on the city with their troops to claim the relics of the Buddha from whom they received benevolence, in order to build Buddha-stūpas where the relics were to be enshrined and worshiped. Reliefs and wall paintings that represent the “claim of relics” are found at Sanchi, Amaravati and Gandhara in India,⁽¹⁰⁾ as well as at

⁽⁹⁾ The correspondent locations of the act of “eight-portion distribution of the relics” in the Nirvāṇa-sūtra are as follows. (1) *Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta* 6.23-28 (*Dīgha Nikāya* II, ed. by Rhys Davids and J. Estlin Carpenter, pp.164.20-168.4), (2) *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* 49.26-51.27 (*Das Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, ed. by Ernst Waldschmidt), (3) *Youxingjing* 遊行經, T1:1, 29a29-30b4, (4) *Fobonihuanjing* 佛般泥洹經, T5:1, 175a4-24, (5) *Bonihuanjing* 般泥洹經, T6:1, 190a18-c18, (6) *Daboniepanjing* 大般涅槃經, T7:1, 207a15-c10. Furthermore, we find a description corresponding to the Sanskrit version in *Genbenshuoyiqieyoubu pinaiye yaoshi* 根本說一切有部毗奈耶雜事 38-39, T1451:24, 401b26-402c4 and its Tibetan translation, '*Dul ba phran tshogs kyi gshi*, D6:da297a1-301a3.

⁽¹⁰⁾ See Miyaji[1992: 178-179, fig.76]. Isao KURITA, *Gandhāra Art I*, A revised and enlarged edition, Tokyo: Nigensha, 2003, pls.518,519.

Kizil caves in central Asia.⁽¹¹⁾ We should note that the relics of the Buddha were thought to be as precious as jewels to the extent that a battle over them nearly occurred. We could say that this scene puts the accent on the episode of the eight-portion distribution of the Buddha’s relics.



As to episode (2), the description of the dispatch of troops found in SD[120] (=episode 120 of SD) corresponds with that of the Sanskrit version of the *Nirvāṇa-sūtra* and of its Chinese translation. Moreover, it agrees with the description of the MSV Kṣ. However, in the Pāli version of the *sūtra*, we find no word that directly mentions the dispatch of troops. The SD states as follows.⁽¹²⁾

⁽¹¹⁾ See Miyaji[1992: 504-506, fig.307].

⁽¹²⁾ (2)-1, SD[120] 304.7-305.1: de'i tshe ①yul sdig pa can gyi gyad rnams kyis / ston pa 'das nas zhag bdun lon / sku gdung zhugs la gzhen par yang thos nas dpung yan lag bzhi go bskon te /

(2)-1: At that time, ①Malla tribe of Pāpā, hearing that seven days had passed after the Leader's decease and his body was cremated, dispatched their troops that consisted of four kinds of soldiers. ...

(2)-2: "[The Leader] entered nirvāṇa near your town. Now, we claim that you distribute his relics to us. We will build a Buddha-stūpa to enshrine them in our country." People [of Malla tribe] of Kuśinagara did not accept [that claim]. "If you do not give them to us, we will take them by force." "You can do so, if you want." Antagonism prevailed. Besides them, ②Bulaka kṣatriya tribe of Calakalpa, ③Kraudya kṣatriya tribe of Rāmagrāma, ④a brāhmaṇa of Viṣṇudvīpa, ⑤Śākya tribe of Kapilavastu and ⑥Licchavi tribe of Vaiśālī also came with arms in hand. They did the same as the previous [Malla tribe of Pāpā].

...(3)... Since ⑦King [Ajātaśatru of Magadha] could not go, he dispatched Minister Varṣākāra, a brāhmaṇa, with their troops and said the same as the previous tribes⁽¹³⁾.

As for picturing this episode of "claim for relics," the RP gives instructions: "Inside the city, [men of] Malla tribe are clad in armor and women, young and old alike, take bows and arrows in hand,"⁽¹⁴⁾ and "Dispose horses, elephants and chariots."⁽¹⁵⁾ It tries to describe a tense situation that all the inhabitants of Kuśinagara, taking up arms, are prepared for all-out confrontation. This situation is also fully described in the IBSB.

The RP depicts the troops that came to Kuśinagara as follows.⁽¹⁶⁾

Outside the city, there are seven troops in seven small separate districts. Among them, two chiefs as brāhmaṇa and commanders of other troops as kṣatriyas are depicted. A situation that a pair of brāhmaṇa and his attendant go to each of them, and persuade them one by one [is depicted].

⁽¹³⁾ (2)-2, SD[120] 305.2-4, 6-7: de khyed kyi grong gi nye skor du mya ngan las 'das te / da ni khyed kyis nged la gdung shā ri ram gyi skal ba byin cig / nged kyi yul du mchod rten byas la dus ston byed do // ces zer ba rtsa can pa nams kyis khas ma blangs so // mi ster na dmag gis 'phrog go byas pas de bzhin du bya'o zhes 'khon rgyas su gyur / gzhan yang ②yul rtog pa gyo ba na gnas pa'i rgyal rigs u lu ka dang / ③yul sgra sgrogs kyi rgyal rigs ra ṇḍa ka dang / ④khyab 'jug gi gling gi bram ze dang / ⑤ser skya'i sha kya dang / ⑥yangs pa can gyi li tsa bi nams kyang dpung dang bcas pa 'ongs te snga ma bzhin no // ... (3)... ⑦rgyal po 'gro ma thub nas bram ze dbyar byed dmag dpung dang bcas pa btang ste / snga ma dang 'dra bar smras so // de dag gi bar du dmag du ma 'dus pa mthong ste /

⁽¹⁴⁾ RP, 492.2-3: grong khyer gyi nang na gyad go mtshon thogs pa dang / bud med rgan gzhon nams kyang mda' gzhu dang ral gyi thogs pa.

⁽¹⁵⁾ RP, 492.3: rta dang glang po dang shing rta bshams pa.

⁽¹⁶⁾ RP, 492.3-4: grong khyer gyi phyi rol dang / yul ljongs phra mo mi 'dra tsam bdun dang / dmag tsho tshan bdun yod pa la / gnyis kyi mgo mi bram ze yin la / gzhan dmag dpon rgyal rigs kyi mnam pa 'bri'o // de nams re re'i drung du / bram ze 'khor dang bcas pa gcig rim kyi song nas so sor gnam smra ba'i tshul dang /

It thus gives instruction that two of the commanders of the seven troops should be depicted as brāhmaṇa.

As for the tribes that came to Kuśinagara to claim the relics with their troops, the SD clearly states that tribes ② and ③ are kṣatriya and tribe ④ is brāhmaṇa. However, the representative of Maghada was Ajātaśatru, but it was Minister Varṣākāra, a brāhmaṇa, who actually came. This means that two brāhmaṇas came to the city, which the Sanskrit version of the sūtra also tells us. In this connection, the Pāli version of the sūtra does not refer to troops, but it says that the number of the tribes are seven in total, and that five of them call themselves kṣatriya, one of them brāhmaṇa, and the last of them Śākya tribe, which is a relative of the Buddha.

As RP instructs, brāhmaṇas who came with troops are not one but two in number. The reason is that King Ajātaśatru of Magadha dispatched Minister Varṣākāra, a brāhmaṇa. In the IBSB, we find two persons who, stripped to the waist, are likely to be brāhmaṇa, possibly commanders of their troops. This shows the policy of the IBSB that scenes should be depicted faithfully to the text. Nonetheless, besides the four persons who are wearing robes and hoods, and likely to be kings, we also find another person, who are wearing a hood and stripped to the waist, and likely to be both king and brāhmaṇa, which differs from the RP. Who is intended by this person is not clear.

Why, then, could King Ajātaśatru not go to Kuśinagara? We omitted this part in the above quotation, but the SD says as follows,⁽¹⁷⁾ after its mention to Licchavi tribe ⑥ and before the account ⑦ of King Ajātaśatru’s dispatch of troops.:

(3): King Ajātaśatru awoke from his faint and slightly recovered himself thanks to Varṣākāra, a brāhmaṇa, who dealt with the situation just as he was beforehand instructed by Mahākāśyapa. Being informed that other people had gone there to claim the relics, the king said “I am also going there.” He then deployed his troops and was about to leave, but remembering the Bhagavat [Śākyamuni], he again fainted and fell down. When he awoke again, tried to go by riding a horse, but, again, he did the same.

This scene, which derives from the MSV Kṣ,⁽¹⁸⁾ is found neither in the Chinese version of the

⁽¹⁷⁾ (3), SD[120] 305.4-6: rgyal po ma skyes dgra ni / sngar 'od srungs chen pos bstan pa bzhin du bram ze dbyar byed kyis kyang byas pas brgyal ba sangs shing cung zad bde bar gnas pa na / sku gdung gi skal ba len par gzhan de dag song zhes thos te / nga yang 'gro'o gsung nas dpung rnams bshams / glang po che la zhon nas 'gro bar brtsams pa na / bcom ldan 'das dran te yang brgyal zhing bog go // yang de sangs pa na / rta la bskyon nas 'gro bar brtsams kyang de bzhin du gyur to //.

⁽¹⁸⁾ MSV Kṣ, D6:da298a2: rgyal po ma skyes dgra yang glang po che la zhon pa dang / des bcom ldan 'das kyi yon tan rjes su dran pas brgyal bar gyur to / de nas glang po che las phab ste / rta la bskyon pa dang / der yang brgyal bar gyur te /. T1451:24(38), 401c23-26:時未生怨王遂乘大象欲往佛所。纔昇象上念佛恩深。心便悶絕從象墜墮宛轉于地。良久乃酥便乘馬去。念佛恩故不能抑止。還墮于地久酥息已。

Nirvāṇa-sūtra nor in its Pāli version.⁽¹⁹⁾ It is a unique scene in that neither is it found in the illustrated biographies of the Buddha of Gandhara. Ajātaśatru, who killed his father and ascended the throne, later changed his mind and deeply respected Śākyamuni Buddha. The SD tells us that, when the Buddha passed into nirvāṇa, King Ajātaśatru held him in particular reverence. He should have gone in haste to obtain the relics, but he could not go. We here find Ajātaśatru engulfed by grief and agony that is deeper than those caused by his father's death.

How, then, did Varṣākāra deal with Ajātaśatru in such a situation? The RP tells us as follows⁽²⁰⁾:

There is a temple near the city of Rājagṛha. Position a brāhmaṇa at the temple, and [depict] a painter who is painting. Illustrating pictures of the Buddha's "birth," "subduing demon," "turning the wheel of Dharma," "miraculous acts," "descent from the heaven," and "nirvāṇa," he explains them twice. Depicted are minute pictures with thin layers of paint. Position seven vessels filled with yogurt and a vessel filled with sandalwood perfume. There, King Ajātaśatru arrives. The brāhmaṇa who illustrates [what happened] by pictures [is depicted]. The scene of the king's fainting after hearing that, only to be resuscitated by being laid down in yogurt and sandalwood perfume is depicted.

Mahākāśyapa thought that Ajātaśatru, who held the Buddha in reverence, would die of astonishment and sorrow if he was informed of his decease without preparation. Mahākāśyapa thus ordered Minister Varṣākāra to deal with the situation in advance. First, Varṣākāra ordered to paint the life of the Buddha and, then he illustrated it to Ajātaśatru by means of the pictures to let him know the nirvāṇa of the Buddha. Since Ajātaśatru would faint even if this is done, Varṣākāra ordered to prepare vessels filled with yogurt, sandalwood and perfume for resuscitation. Ajātaśatru who, having known the nirvāṇa of the Buddha, fainted in agony actually escaped death at Mahākāśyapa's direction to prepare the prescription in advance. This is followed by the above quote (3). We can say that the nirvāṇa of the Buddha is the problem of Ajātaśatru's own life and death, which is a matter that awaits spiritual solution.

A difference of pictures between the RP and the IBSB can be noticed in the illustrated biography of the Buddha which a painter depicts in the IBSB. SD[120] mentions six phases, which are four

⁽¹⁹⁾ *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* 50.14. This part of the Sanskrit manuscript is not collected.

⁽²⁰⁾ RP, 493.4-494.1: grong khyer rgyal po'i pho brang dang bcas pa'i 'khris na skyed mos tshal gcig dang / skyed mos tshal der bram ze gcig gi bkod pa byas nas / ri mo mkhan gyi ri mo 'bri ba'i tshul / de yang sku bltams pa dang / bdud brtul ba dang / chos 'khor bskor ba dang / cho 'phrul dang / lha babs dang / myang 'das kyi bar du bris pa mtshon byed gnyis ri mo phra mo hang tshon du bri / gzhong pa mar khus bkang ba bdun dang / tsandan gyi lde gus bkang ba gcig bshams / der rgyal po ma skyes dgra yang byon zhing / bram ze des ri mo la rten bshad byed ba'i tshal bya / de nas rgyal po de 'gyel ba dang / mar khu'i nang du lus bcug pa dang / tsandan gyi lde gu'i nang du bcug pas sos pa'i tshul 'bri /. Cf. MSV Ks, D6:da290a5-291b2; T1451:24(38), 399b15-c23.

phases and miraculous transformation and descent from heaven. The four phases are birth, subduing Māra, preaching the Dharma and nirvāṇa. The RP usually follows the description of the SD, but what is actually depicted in the IBSB is these four phases. There is a vacant space in the lower part of the wall of the temple, where something more can be painted, but, since the scene of the nirvāṇa is finished, we assume that the four phases were completed in the way as they are. It is reported that a similar relief was found at Kizil cave in central Asia. At cave 205, in particular, the four phases of birth, subduing Māra, preaching the Dharma and nirvāṇa are painted on the entire surface of a sheet.⁽²¹⁾ But, Ajātaśatru who is surprised to see them is depicted in a pot. Several other characteristic descriptions can be pointed out, but, we should note here, Kucha kingdom in which Kizil cave existed was under the influence of Sarvāstivādin, as Xuanzang reports in his *Datangxiyuji* 大唐西域記⁽²²⁾. I only briefly point out that there existed a Saṅgha which had kept the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* at Kizil. This fact serves as the background of production of illustrated biographies of the Buddha that share a scene of “eight-portion distribution of the relics” that is common to Tibet and Kizil.

Through the good offices of a brāhmaṇa, the war for the relics was avoided. The Buddha’s relics were thus distributed to eight tribes. The Nirvāṇa-sūtra completes its teaching with “building of Buddha-stūpa.” The MSV Kṣ further moves on to the theme of the “First Council” to tell the “establishment of the true Dharma.”⁽²³⁾ It develops in the form of the edification of Ajātaśatru who has lost the Buddha, which is incorporated in the “eight-portion distribution of the Buddha’s relics.” The IBSB is painted, and edited, in accord with this theme. Additionally, this description cannot be found in any other vinayas.

4. The Edification of Ajātaśatru

Among 120 episodes of the IBSB, Ajātaśatru appears in twelve of them. They are [67]: SD[70](Jyotiṣka becomes a monk), [70]: SD[77](Devadatta’s supernatural power is accomplished), [72]: SD[79](Rebellion of Ajātaśatru), [73]: SD[80](Rebellion of Devadatta), [74]: SD[81](Taming of a mad elephant), [78]: SD[90](Protecting Ajātaśatru from fear), [79]: SD[91](Making Ajātaśatru abide in faith), [82]: SD[94](Talk on the way to Vaiśālī), [100]: SD[109](Telling conditions on which things do not decline), [110]: SD[118](Manifesting nirvāṇa), [112]: SD[120](Distributing the relics in eight portions) and [113]: SD[121](Chapter on the First Council).

⁽²¹⁾ See Miyaji[1992: 508-510, fig.313].

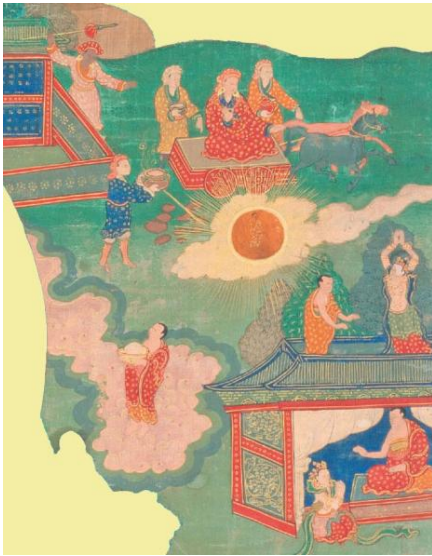
⁽²²⁾ T2087:51, 870a24-26: 伽藍百餘所僧徒五千餘人。習學小乘教說一切有部。經教律儀取則印度。其習讀者即本文矣。

⁽²³⁾ See Miyaji[1992: 512]. It points out that pictures of the “eight-portion distribution of relics” and the “First Council” represent the last and ultimate foundations left for Buddhists after the Buddha’s decease, his “relics” and “Dharma.”

The act of the edification of Ajātaśatru consists of these episodes as a set. In the following, I will introduce some of the main scenes.

IBSB[72](=SD[79], 208.6-) Ajātaśatru is instigated by Devadatta to kill his father, King Bimbisāra, with a spear, who is riding on a carriage to visit the Buddha and offer him a meal. But he does not succeed <fig.2, MSV S⁽²⁴⁾>.

Next, he confines his father in prison and tries to starve him to death, but his mother, Vaidehī, visits him and secretly provides him with food. He then prohibits his mother from visiting him, but his father continues to be alive because he has the “staff of life,” that is, the joy he gains from looking up to the Buddha on the Mt. Gṛdhra-kūṭa from the window of the prison. He further closes the window and cut the king’s feet so that he cannot stand. But the Buddha dispatches Maudgalyāyana who has command of supernatural power and let Bimbisāra know that he is now having the result of his own karma. Meanwhile, Ajātaśatru is told by his mother that he received his father’s deep love in his childhood. Upon hearing it, he intends to free his father in haste but he happens to kill him against his will <fig.3, MSV S⁽²⁵⁾>.



<fig.2> IBSB[72]
Ajātaśatru throwing his spear, intended to kill his father



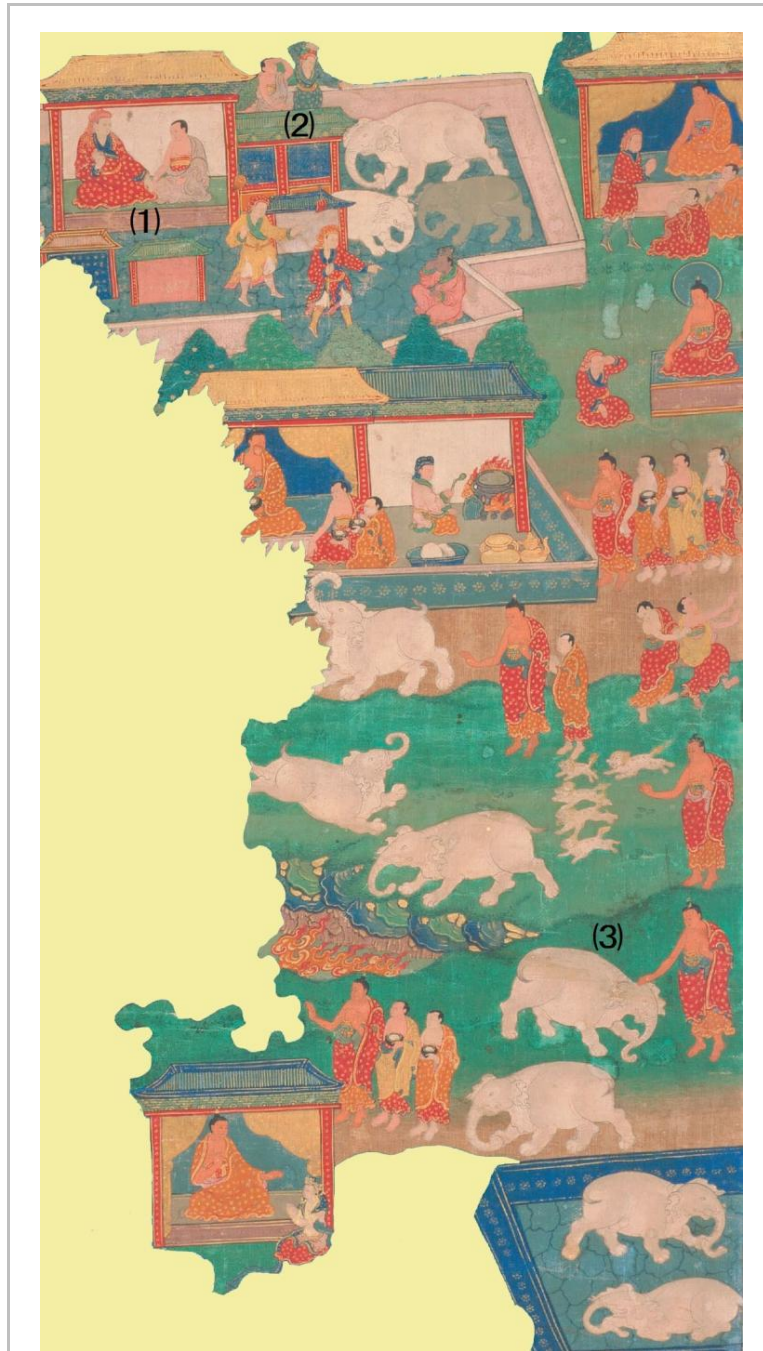
<fig.3> IBSB[72]
Bimbisāra imprisoned in the castle

IBSB[74](=SD[81], 216.4-) This is the episode of “taming of a mad elephant.” Ajātaśatru is told Devadatta’s scheme to kill the Buddha by setting a mad elephant on him, and he agrees to it <fig.4, MSV S⁽²⁶⁾>.

⁽²⁴⁾ MSV S, D1:nga211b2-; T1450:24(16), 184c19-185b08.

⁽²⁵⁾ MSV S, D1:nga214a7-; T1450:24(17-18), 187c20-191b26. Cf. Tucci[1949: 486, pl.114].

⁽²⁶⁾ MSV S, D1:nga238a2-; T1450:24(19), 197b28-198b10. Cf. Tucci[1949: 472, pl.110].



<fig.4> IBSB[74]

Upper left, (1) in the palace, Devadatta instigates Ajātaśatru to a scheme to make a mad elephant attack the Buddha. On its right, (2) the two, Devadatta and Ajātaśatru, who see from roof floor how the mad elephant attacks the Buddha. (3) represents the Buddha taming the mad elephant.

IBSB[78](=SD[90], 234.3-) Neighboring kings make a charge against Ajātaśatru who ascended the throne by killing his father, a king who was following the true Dharma, and they dispatch troops to Magadha. The Dragon King damages crops by hailstone. Natural drought makes ponds dried up and

the kings throw poison into rivers. Plagues become prevalent at Rājagṛha causing heavy casualties. The king is put in a predicament. Ajātaśatru, who has lost all protections from his surroundings, becomes utterly exhausted, body and soul knackered, and his face reveals a look of distress. His mother who cannot bear to see his distress advises him that this situation is caused by your not having attached due importance to the Buddha. She thus suggests that he should confess his sins to the Buddha and beg his pardon. Taking this opportunity, Ajātaśatru invites Śākyamuni Buddha, who is staying at Śrāvastī, to Rājagṛha. Śākyamuni Buddha observes that a good opportunity for his edification has come ('dul ba'i dus su). He accepts his invitation and goes to Rājagṛha to finally receive his offerings <fig.5, MSV Bh⁽²⁷⁾>.



<fig.5> IBSB[78]
The Buddha who sets out to edify Ajātaśatru in agony.

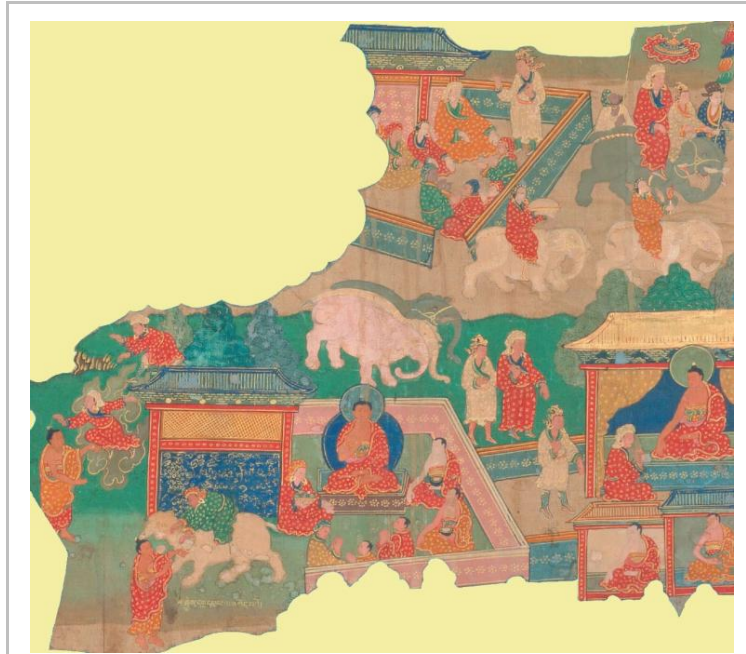
The intension of the Buddha who, knowing that this is the opportunity of Ajātaśatru's edification, agreed to go to Rājagṛha is assumed to be that he should make him to have "faith with no root (gzhi med pa'i dad)." ⁽²⁸⁾

IBSB[79](=SD[91], 235.6-) At a night with a bright moon in the clear sky, he talks with the queen and ministers on what he should do. Having neglected ministers' advice to give offerings to six non-Buddhist teachers, he accepts Jīvaka's opinion that he should give offering to the Buddha. He

⁽²⁷⁾ MSV Bh, D1:kha13a6-17a5; T1448:24(5), 19c20-20c19.

⁽²⁸⁾ MSV Bh, D1:kha13b3-4; T1448:24(5), 19c14-15: 此未生怨太子作無量罪。我當令此住無根信。

comes to visit the Buddha who is staying at Āmra garden for the summer retreat. Ajātaśatru, who has heard the teaching of the fruit of śramaṇa, confesses his sin of killing his father to the Buddha. His confession is accepted by the Buddha and the faith with no root arises in him. The workings of the faith with no root is depicted by scenes in which Ajātaśatru, entrusting himself to the Buddha, jumps from a high tower or from an elephant onto him, who receives him <fig.6, MSV S⁽²⁹⁾>.



<fig.6> IBSB[79]

Lower left, the figure of Ajātaśatru who has repented, listened to the teaching of the Buddha and aroused the faith with no root.

According to a traditional interpretation,⁽³⁰⁾ faith is a pure mind, which acknowledges that the four truths, three treasures, wholesome and unwholesome karmas and their fruits really exist. The “faith with no root” means that it arises without depending on truths such as three treasures. We could say that Ajātaśatru’s faith with no root is the faith that is aroused in those who earnestly implore the Buddha’s compassion on the ground of the Buddha’s supernatural powers.⁽³¹⁾

⁽²⁹⁾ MSV S, D1:nga286a3-; T1450:24(20, 10), 205a9-b24, 147c6-23.

⁽³⁰⁾ *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya*, Pradhan second ed., p.55.6-7: tatra śraddhā cetasaḥ prasāsaḥ / satyaratnakarmaphalābhisampratyaaya ity apare /.

⁽³¹⁾ SD, 238.3-4: gang gi tshe rgyal po ma skyes dgra de gzhi med pa'i dad pa la bkod pa de phyin chad rang nyid khang steng ngam / glang po che'i steng la songs pa gang na yod kyang / ston pa mthong na de ma thag tsham tshom med par mchongs nas 'gro'o ston pas kyang rdzu 'phrul gyis bar snang nas blangs te sa la 'jog par mdzad do /. Since that King Ajātaśatru aroused the faith with no root, as soon as he sees the Buddha, he jumps onto him

IBSB[112](=SD[120], 304.8-) King Ajātaśatru who is going to Kuśinagara, upon remembering the Bhagavat (bcom ldan 'das dran te), faints away and falls from the elephant (see <fig.1 (3)>). This situation makes us presume that Ajātaśatru's faith with no root is impaired. It depicts the state, I assume, that Ajātaśatru has lost the ground for his faith since he lost the object of remembrance due to the Buddha's nirvāṇa <MSV Kṣ⁽³²⁾>.

IBSB[113](=SD[121], 307.4-) Many Arhats entered nirvāṇa following the Buddha's nirvāṇa, which makes gods feel a sense of crisis that the true Dharma (saddharma, dam pa'i chos) will be lost. Mahākāśyapa thus decides to hold a council. King Ajātaśatru sees Mahākāśyapa who came to Magadha to hold a council and, remembering the Buddha (sang rgyas dran te), the king jumps from his elephant onto Mahākāśyapa, who receives him with his supernatural power and puts him down on the ground. This, I assume, represents Ajātaśatru's faith with no root which has arisen again.

What is the difference from the preceding episode? In IBSB[112], Ajātaśatru only saw a picture image of the Buddha that was portrayed by a painter and was explained by Varṣākāra, although Mahākāśyapa had so prescribed. There was a figure of the Buddha, but the working of true Dharma was lacking.⁽³²⁾ On the other hand, there is no figure of the Buddha in IBSB[113] but Ajātaśatru sees Mahākāśyapa who came with his determination for the establishment of the true Dharma. Here, Ajātaśatru who remembers the Buddha sees the true Dharma working behind the visible figure of Mahākāśyapa.

Śākyamuni Buddha attained the dharmakāya (chos kyi sku) under the bodhi-tree in Magadha.⁽³³⁾ The act of teaching of Śākyamuni Buddha who attained the dharmakāya, we could say, is a manifestation of the truth of his awakening for sentient beings. This episode shows that, according to Mahākāśyapa's proposal, the First Council was held at this historic place, Magadha, and the true Dharma he has taught was established in the Saṅgha. At the same time, it tells us that the true Dharma has the meaning of dharmakāya that never stops working even after the Buddha's entering nirvāṇa, in which agonized Ajātaśatru took a refuge <MSV Kṣ⁽³⁴⁾>.

without hesitation, wherever he is, that is, by himself, on a house or on an elephant. The Master receives him in the air with his supernatural power and set him down on the ground.

⁽³²⁾ MSV Kṣ, D6:da297a3-301a3; T1451:24(38-39), 401c1-402c4.

⁽³²⁾ Cf. *Vakkali* 22.87, *Saṃyutta Nikāya* III, p.120.27-31: yo kho ... dhammaṃ passati so maṃ passati / yo maṃ passati so dhammaṃ passati // Who sees the Dharma indeed sees me (the Buddha), who sees me (the Buddha) sees the Dharma.

⁽³³⁾ SD, 310.2-3: 'od srungs kyis smras pa rgyal po chen po ma ga dhar ston pas chos kyi sku brnyes pa yin pas / dge 'dun rnams kyang lam du zhugs te 'ong gi chos kyi tshul bgro bar 'tshal lo // Mahākāśyapa said, "Great king! In [this place of] Magadha, the Master attained the Dharmakāya. Thus, I would like the Saṅgha to enter [this] place and to hold a council of the Dharma.

⁽³⁴⁾ MSV Kṣ, D6:da301a4-; T1451:24(39-40), 402c9-408b23.

5. Significance of the exposition of the retribution of karma

The order of twelve episodes about Ajātaśatru in the IBSB is the same as that of the SD. We should notice, however, that episodes before and after the twelve episodes have been exchanged. That is to say, SD[106] becomes IBSB[77] and SD[85]-[89] is to IBSB[94]-[98]. It is SD[106], an episode on the “exposition of the retribution of karma,” I think, is the key for the revision of the story. The examination of how this episode is placed in the structure of the story will lead us to an understanding of the circumstances in which the IBSB is produced.

According to SD[106], the “exposition of the retribution of karma” is one of ten works that should be performed by the Buddha upon appearing in this world. The ten works are as follows⁽³⁵⁾.

- (1) To predict [the appearance of a] Buddha
- (2) To arouse the mind of awakening in many sentient beings
- (3) To edify all of those who should be edified
- (4) To point out a pair of the best [śrāvakas]
- (5) To establish restricted areas for practice
- (6) To abandon one fifth of one’s lifetime
- (7) To show great miraculous transformations [at Śrāvastī]
- (8) To show the descendant from heaven [at Sāṃkāśya]
- (9) To make his parents abide in the truth
- (10) To expound the retribution of karma to the śrāvaka Saṅgha

The seventh work is told in IBSB[58] and the eighth in IBSB[59]. The tenth work is performed with śrāvakas at the Lake Anavatapta at the request of monks. Beginning with the competition of supernatural powers between two eminent disciples, Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana, the Buddha tells their causal situation stories in their past lives. Next, following Mahākāśyapa, other disciples tell, one after another, their karmas and their retributions in their past lives. Finally, Śākyamuni Buddha himself tells his karma in his past lives, revealing why he had to practice asceticism for six years. The idea of cause and result that depends on karma forms the basis of the Śrāvakayāna doctrine.

In this connection, Tucci has once presented a *thang ka* on which the “retribution of karma” is

⁽³⁵⁾ SD, 275.1-4: (1) 'ga' zhig sangs rgyas su lung stan pa dang / (2) mang po dag byang chub tu sems bskyed pa dang / (3) gdul bya thams cad btul ba dang / (4) mchog zung geig bstan pa dang / (5) mtshams bcad pa dang / (6) sku tshe'i lnga cha btang ba dang / (7) cho 'phrul chen po bstan pa dang / (8) lha las babs pa dang / (9) yab yum bden pa la bkod pa dang / (10) nyan thos kyi dge 'dun rnams las kyi rgyu ba lung ston tu 'jug par mdzad pa rnams so //. Cf. MSV Bh (Vaidya ed., Buddhist Sanskrit Texts 16), p.90.9-15, 'Dul ba gzhi, D1:kha 281b2-4; T1448:24(16), 76c4-11; *Divyāvadāna*, 12 *Prātihāryasūtra* (Bagchi ed., Buddhist Sanskrit Texts 20), p.93.5-12.

depicted.⁽³⁶⁾ We find in both works an almost same picture of a lotus flower in Lake Anavatapta and Śākyamuni sitting on it, which is a symbolic scene of this episode. Tucci introduces the episodes of ten unwholesome karmas Śākyamuni Buddha committed in the past and their retributions, one of which is that he suffered from headaches when the Śākya family was about to fall. The SD connects such “exposition of the retribution of karma” (SD[106]) with the “edification of the Śākya family” (SD[107]) which was going out of existence. The SD has the structure of the story that, with their edification, the Buddha completes his act of teaching and goes to Kuśinagara to enter nirvāṇa.

The IBSB, on the other hand, relates the “exposition of the retribution of karma”(IBSB[77]) to the edification of evil persons such as Aṅgulimāla (IBSB[76]) who killed 999 people to make a necklace with their fingers and even tried to kill his own mother, Ajātaśatru (IBSB[78][79]) who killed his father, and Devadatta (IBSB[80]) who injured the Buddha’s body and caused a schism of Buddhist order. We should here recognize a difference between the SD and the IBSB, which, I point out, serves as a unique character of the IBSB. Aṅgulimāla attains the awakening of Arhat in this world and Devadatta is given an assurance that he will become a pratyekabuddha after one lifetime in hell, but nothing is done for Ajātaśatru. The IBSB thematizes the edification of Ajātaśatru that is not yet completed in order to present the establishment and workings of the true Dharma after the nirvāṇa of the Buddha.

6. Conclusion

Our examination leads us to the conclusion that the IBSB is a biography that, focusing on Ajātaśatru, integrates more than 120 episodes of the edification by Śākyamuni Buddha. When Śākyamuni Buddha was still in this world, only the faith with no root was told and the edification of Ajātaśatru was not completed. The *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* tells us the “establishment of the true Dharma” in the Saṅgha after the Buddha’s passing into nirvāṇa, which is closely related to the edification of Ajātaśatru. Succeeding the theme of the “establishment of the true Dharma,” I argue that the IBSB was produced under this theme with a visual appeal.

We cannot deny a possibility that there was an illustrated biography of the Buddha which had a structure of the same kind as that of the IBSB before it was written. However, since we think that the IBSB was produced with an intention to thematize Ajātaśatru, it is more natural to suppose that the IBSB was made on the premise of the structure of the SD than vice versa. I would thus propose that the IBSB was constructed based on the RP which was written upon taking the true essence of Śākyamuni’s life preachings as the edification of Ajātaśatru as revealed in the SD, a biography of the Buddha based on gatherings from the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*. Tāranātha, who was well-versed in biographies of the Buddha, would be a figure who is in the position closest to its production.

⁽³⁶⁾ See Tucci [1949: 489-492, pl.115].

Tibet, where Saṅgha was maintained under the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*, was also a region where Mahāyāna Buddhism had been believed and practiced. The *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* was rendered into Tibetan, including a re-translation from its Chinese translation. The gist of this Mahāyāna nirvāṇa-sūtra is in the doctrines that “dharmakāya is everlasting” and that “all sentient beings possess Buddha-nature.” Particularly in the sūtra that discloses the teaching of Buddha-nature, Ajātaśatru was indispensable for Buddha’s edificatory purpose. Indeed, the IBSB is a Śrāvakayāna biography of the Buddha that excludes Mahāyāna sutras. However, the relationship between the “establishment of the true Dharma” after the Buddha’s passing into nirvāṇa and the “edification of Ajātaśatru” make us anticipate its development towards Mahāyāna. In this sense, we could regard it as a biography of Śākyamuni Buddha that implies “Mahāyāna.”

An additional note

This article is a revised and expanded version of a manuscript which I presented at the seminar of International Tibetan Studies held in Beijing in August, 2016. I would like to thank Mr. Akira Miyaji (Senior Fellow Professor, Ryukoku University), Mr. Kensuke Okamoto (Associate Professor, Ryukoku University), and Ms. Tomoko Iwata (Instructor, Ryukoku Museum) for their helpful comments and generous assistance. All of them are the members of a research project group of the Research Institute for Buddhist Culture, Ryukoku University. The title of the project is “Research for the Study of Tibetan Buddhist Culture in Japan: Tohkan Tada’s collection.” I also thank Mr. Kaoru Onishi for translating this article into English.

Abbreviations

D	sDe dge edition of Tibetan Tripiṭaka
IBSB	<i>Illustrated Biography of Śākyamuni Buddha</i> 釈迦牟尼世尊絵伝, in Hanamaki City Museum 花巻市博物館
MSV Bh	<i>Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya-vastu Bhaiṣajyavastu</i> ; 'Dul ba gzhi, D1; 根本説一切有部毗奈耶藥事, T1448.
MSV Kṣ	<i>Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya-vastu Kṣudrakavastu</i> ; 'Dul ba phran tshegs kyi gshi, D6; 根本説一切有部毗奈耶雜事, T1451.
MSV S	<i>Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya-vastu Saṅghabhedavastu</i> ; 'Dul ba gzhi, D1; 根本説一切有部毗奈耶破僧事, T1450.
RP	<i>sTon pa Śākya'i dbang po'i mdzad pa brgya pa'i bris yig</i> (Record of Paintings of Hundred Acts of the Venerable King Śākya).
SD	<i>bCom ldan 'das Thub pa'i dbang po'i mdzad pa mdo tsam brjod pa mthong bas don ldan rab tu dag' ba dang bcas pas dad pa'i nyin byed phyogs brgyar 'char ba zhes bya ba</i> (Summarized Description of the Acts of the King Bhagavat Muni).
T	<i>Taisho shinshu daizokyo</i> 大正新脩大藏經.

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