

The Birth of the Buddha

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On Some Late Records About the Buddha's Birth and Genealogy

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Abstract:

The purpose of the paper is not to reveal new facts about the birth of the Buddha and the genealogy of his family but simply to draw attention to three little known or unknown late descriptions and to try to determine their sources. As is generally known, Aśvaghōṣa's *Buddhacarita* as edited by Cowell contains a number of additional stanzas — dealing with the birth of the Buddha — in the beginning the first canto as well as three and a half cantos after stanzas 14.31 to make up for the lost portions of the Nepalese manuscript. It was generally held that these additions were composed by the Nepalese scholar Amṛtānanda at the beginning of the 19th century. I was able to show in an article¹ that some of the additional stanzas of the first canto can also be found in chapter 35 of Haribhaṭṭa's *Jātakamālā*, the *Śākyasiṃhajātaka*, which is a short biography of the Buddha. Although this is a later addition to the work of Haribhaṭṭa (fl. c. 400 CE), its first part must have already existed in the 12th century when it was translated into Tibetan. Thus it seemed that Amṛtānanda had borrowed from the *Śākyasiṃhajātaka*. In 1998 my Japanese student Dr. Kiyoshi Okano was able to show that even more stanzas attributed to Amṛtānanda occur in the cosmological text *Mahāsaṃvartanīkathā* composed by the Buddhist poet and grammarian Sarvaraṅṣita, which accounts for their literary quality. Now it looks as if this was the common source of Pseudo-Haribhaṭṭa and Amṛtānanda. The relevant passage from the *Mahāsaṃvartanīkathā* will be presented and analysed. I will also present the beginning of Kṣemendra's *Buddhāvatāra*, the ninth chapter of his

¹ Hahn 1986.

Daśāvatāracarita that deals with the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu. The *Buddhāvatāra* has recently been re-edited, translated and studied under my supervision by another Japanese, Dr. Shōgo Iwai.

The oldest known records about the life of the Buddha – apart from what is contained in the *sūtra* texts themselves – can be found in the Pali *Nidānakathā*, in the *Lalitavistara* and *Mahāvastu*, both of which are written in what is called “Buddhist Sanskrit” or “Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit”, in Aśvagoṣa’s poetical record *Buddhacarita* or “Life of the Buddha”, and in the *Vinayavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivādins. Since 1977, the relevant portions of the last-mentioned source are available in their original Sanskrit. They belong to the *Sanḥabhedavastu* that is preserved in the Pakistani portion of the Gilgit manuscript and was edited by Raniero Gnoli². Other important old sources are preserved in the Chinese Buddhist canon. They were partly translated, and partly analysed by scholars like Samuel Beal³, E. H. Johnston⁴ and André Bareau⁵. The crucial texts, i.e., those referring to the birth of the Buddha, are quoted in the paper of Max Deeg in this volume. We will not dwell longer on them but focus on an apparently very late addition to one of the oldest descriptions of the life of the Buddha, the portions that were added to the incompletely preserved manuscript of Aśvagoṣa’s *Buddhacarita* by Paṇḍit Amṛtānanda in the 19th century in an attempt at filling its gaps at least partially.

It might be useful to recall to the attention the basic facts about the extant portions of the oldest known *mahākāvya* of classical Sanskrit literature. The French scholar Sylvain Lévi⁶ was the first to make this work known to the scholarly world. In 1892 he published its first canto as a specimen of the whole work. Only one year later, in 1893, E.B. Cowell⁷ published the *editio princeps* on the basis of three manuscripts, C and D from Cambridge, and P from Paris. These three MSS go back, either

² Gnoli 1977, 1978.

³ Beal 1883.

⁴ Johnston 1936.

⁵ Bareau 1971-1995.

⁶ Lévi 1892.

⁷ Cowell 1893.

directly or indirectly, to a copy that was prepared in 1828 or 1829 by Paṇḍit Amṛtānanda. The colophon of MS C informs us that cantos 14, 15, 16, and 17 were added by him because his original source was incomplete. Amṛtānanda's source was discovered by the Indian scholar Haraprasād Śāstrī in the Royal Library (Durbar Library) in Kathmandu at the beginning of the 20th century⁸. Later E. H. Johnston named this palm leaf MS A and made it the basis of his revised edition, together with the Tibetan and Chinese translations of the work. By comparing MS A with Cowell's text one can easily see which stanzas do not belong to the original text of the *Buddhacarita*:

Canto 1	Stanzas 1-24, 26-28, 44-45
Canto 13	Stanza 73
Canto 14	Stanzas 33-91
Canto 15	Stanzas 1-119 (the whole canto)
Canto 16	Stanzas 1-132 (the whole canto)
Canto 17	Stanzas 1-31 (the whole canto)

Already in 1914-15 the Polish scholar Gawroński suspected that the beginning of the first canto must have been borrowed from an unknown source. His arguments ran as follows:

“The second point is with regard to the introductory stanzas of the Buddhacarita (as well as to several others in the first Canto) which are wanting in the Tibetan and the Chinese translations. They may or may not be genuine but at any rate they do not come from the pen of Amṛtānanda and seem to be much older. My reasons for this statement are:

- 1) Amṛtānanda himself confesses to have composed Cantos XIV (i.e. XIV. 32 ff) – XVII but he does not maintain the same with respect to the beginning of the poem.*
- 2) With regard to poetical merit the first 24 stanzas in Cowell's edition are by far superior to anything in the last three and a half Cantos of the printed text. In fact, they are scarcely if at all inferior to the remainder of the poem.*

⁸ Śāstrī 1909.

3) *They contain a regular introduction viz. a maṅgala (I.1) and a description of the hero's birth-place (I.2. ff) which reminds us vividly of the Kumārasaṃbhava I.1 ff. The two beginnings closely correspond to each other. [...]*⁹

In order to show the difference between the original *Buddhacarita* and the 'restored' version of Amṛtānanda I will present both of them in abbreviated versions. First I will summarize Johnston's English rendering of the beginning of the poem, done from Tibetan (stanzas 1-8) and Sanskrit (9ff.):

1. Introduction of King Śuddhodana
2. Introduction of his wife, Queen Mahāmāyā.
3. Queen Mahāmāyā becomes pregnant in an undefiled manner.
4. Before her conception, she sees, in a dream, a white elephant entering in her body.
5. Mahāmāyā wishes to go to the forest.
6. With the king's permission, she goes to Lumbinī.
7. The king follows her.
8. The queen realizes that the delivery is imminent and proceeds to a couch.
9. Under the constellation of Puṣya her son is born, without her suffering.
10. The bodhisattva is born in the same manner as Aurva, Pṛthu, Mandhātṛ, and Kaṅṣvat were born, i.e., not in the natural way.
11. The queen remains fully conscious during the delivery.
12. The Bodhisattva resembles both the sun and the moon.
13. Like the sun, he illuminates everything.
14. The seven steps of the Bodhisattva.
15. He utters: "I am born for enlightenment, this is my last birth."
16. Two streams of water fall down upon his head.
17. He lies on a couch, being revered by the lord of the Yakṣas.
18. The gods hold a white umbrella up in the sky, and bow their heads.

⁹ Gawroński 1919: 12–13.

19. They fan him and strew him with flowers.
20. The Śuddhādhivāsa gods rejoice.
- 21-26 Various miraculous events.
27. Kāma alone does not rejoice.
28. The king is disturbed, torn between delight and apprehension.
29. The queen is disturbed, torn between fear and joy.
30. Auspicious rites are performed.
31. Brahmins speak to the king.

One can see that Aśvaghōṣa's text is straightforward. The events leading to the actual birth of the Bodhisattva are described in just seven stanzas. This is the text that is lost in Sanskrit. The birth itself and the events accompanying it are described in much greater detail. The language of stanzas 1.8ff is elegant, but by no means florid; complicated figures of speech are virtually absent. The metre is mostly *upajāti*, the classical version of the epic *triṣṭubh*.

Amṛtānanda's text reads as follows:

- 1 Benedictory stanza — Appraisal of the Buddha
- 2-8 Poetical description of the splendour of the city Kapilavastu
- 9-14 Poetical description of King Śuddhodana
- 15-18 Poetical description of his wife, Queen Māyā
- 19 The Bodhisattva descends from the Tuṣṭita heaven and enters Queen Māyā's womb.
- 20 He assumes the form of a six-tusked elephant and enters Queen Māyā's womb.
- 21 The guardians of the world descend from heaven in order to protect the newly born child.
- 22 The pregnant Queen Māyā makes large donations to the people.
- 23 Queen Māyā goes to the pleasure-grove Lumbinī.
- 24 While she is leaning on a tree, the Bodhisattva is born from her side.

- 25 **He is born in a painless manner at the time of the constellation Puṣya.**
(= Buddhacarita 1.9)
- 26 He illuminates the world.
- 27 Indra pours two pure streams of water down on the Bodhisattva's head.
28. Description of the Bodhisattva's beauty.
- 28A **He is born in a painless manner at the time of the constellation Puṣya.**
(= *Buddhacarita* 1.9)
29. = Buddhacarita 1.10
30. = Buddhacarita 1.11
31. = Buddhacarita 1.12
32. = Buddhacarita 1.13
33. = Buddhacarita 1.14

Amṛtānanda's version is quite different from the brief description of Aśvaghoṣa. With its detailed descriptions of Kapilavastu, King Śuddhodana and Queen Māyā it shows the typical features of a *mahākāvya* or 'ornate epic' ("Kunstgedicht" in German). In this respect too, Gawroński's reference to Kālidāsa's *Kumārasaṃbhava* was completely correct. The linguistic features, however, point to a somewhat later time. In the beginning of the poem with its repetition of sounds we have two good illustrations of alliteration or *anuprāsa* that are rare in Aśvaghoṣa's text:

śriyaṃ parārdhyāṃ vidadhad vidhātṛ-jit
tamo nīrasyann abhibhūta-bhānu-bhṛt |
nudan nidāghaṃ jita-cāru-candramāḥ
sa vandyate 'rhann iha yasya nōpamā || 1.1 ||

“That Arhat is venerated, who has no counterpart in this world,—
who, bestowing supreme happiness, surpasses (Brahman) the
creator,—

who, driving away darkness, vanquishes the sun,—
and, dispelling all burning heat, surpasses the beautiful moon.”

āsīd viśālōnnata-ṣāla-lakṣmyā
*payoda-**paṅktyēva** **parīta-pārśvam** |*
*udagra-dhiṣṇyair **gagane** 'vagāḍham*
puraṃ maharṣeḥ kapilasya vastu || 1.2 ||

“[Once] there was a city, the dwelling-place of the great seer Kapila, that was encircled by the splendour of broad and high [white] walls as if by an assembly of clouds, and that by its high-rising palaces seemed to plunge into the sky.”

I have marked the alliterations in bold face. The triple occurrence of **dh** in line 1.1a and **bha** in line 1.1b can only rarely be found in the earlier *mahākāvyas*. In stanza 7 we find the first illustrations of paronomasia or *yamaka*, and in 1.14-17 a whole sequence that shows the hand of a skilled poet (*kavi*):

*tasy**âtiśobhā**-visṛ**tâtiśobhā***
*ravi-**prabhā** vâsta-tamaḥ-**prabhāvā** |*
*samagra-**devī**-nivahâ**gra-devī***
babhūva m^āyâpagatâiva m^āyā || 1.7 ||

udāra-saṃkhyaiḥ sacivair asaṃkhyaiḥ
*kṛtâ**gra-bhāvaḥ** sa udagra-**bhāvaḥ** |*
*śaṣṭi yathā **bhair** akṛtânyathâ**bhair***
*śākyêndra-**rājaḥ** sutarāṃ rarāja || 1.14 ||*

*tasy**âtiśobhā**-visṛ**tâtiśobhā***
*ravi-**prabhā** vâsta-tamaḥ-**prabhāvā** |*
*samagra-**devī**-nivahâ**gra-devī***
babhūva m^āyâpagatâiva m^āyā || 1.15 ||

prajāsu mātēva hita-pravṛttā
gurau jane bhaktir ivānuvṛttā |
lakṣmīr ivādhīsa-kule kṛtābhā
jagaty abhūd uttama-devatābhā || 1.16 ||

The style of the last three and a half cantos that are—mostly—the work of Amṛtānanda is judged by Cowell as follows:

“It is totally devoid of all attempt at ornament, and it is often grammatically and metrically incorrect.”¹⁰

It is indeed hard to conceive that the same Amṛtānanda wrote the ambitious verses at the beginning of the first canto.

The open question of Amṛtānanda’s possible source(s) has gradually been solved. In 1986 I detected that an as yet unpublished text, the *Śākyasiṃhajātaka*, shows a great affinity to Amṛtānanda’s additional stanzas¹¹. The *Śākyasiṃhajātaka* is a later addition to the *Jātakamālā* composed by Haribhaṭṭa not much later than 400 AD. Originally consisting of 34 legends, like Āryasūra’s *Jātakamālā*, an unknown author later added a brief biography of the Buddha as a new concluding chapter No. 35. This addition exists in two recensions. The first one came into being before the middle of the 12th century AD when Haribhaṭṭa’s *Jātakamālā* was translated into Tibetan since it can be found in the Tibetan version. However, this recension covers only the first half of the legend and breaks off during the final stage of meditation immediately before the attainment of enlightenment. The second recension can be found in a Sanskrit manuscript from Nepal. It continues the legend up to the Buddha’s first sermon after enlightenment, delivered in Benares.

The two parts of the *Śākyasiṃhajātaka* (Śsj) are quite incongruous. Its first half is written in fairly correct Sanskrit (apart from one remarkable exception in 15a where we read—*metri causa*—*imair* instead of *ebhir*), which in many places shows a certain degree of poetical beauty. It starts with a very good imitation of the formal setting Haribhaṭṭa’s legends: a motto in the form of an Āryā stanza, the old and well-known opening

¹⁰ Cowell 1883: vii.

¹¹ Hahn 1986.

formula *tadyathānuśrūyate*, the introductory portion of the main story in prose, and finally the use of eleven different metres, interspersed with portions in ornate prose.

The second half is completely different. From stanza 57 onwards only three (or four) metres are used: Anuṣṭubh (46 times), Upajāti (8 times) and Vaṃśastha (7 times), plus three occurrences of Vaṃśālā, an 'impure' variety of Vaṃśastha not sanctioned by classical metrics. Only stanzas 59-64, 78-85, and 116-118 can be regarded as poetical in their diction; the rest of the stanzas do not rise above mere matter-of-fact description. The same holds true for all prose portions in the latter half of Śsj. Here we note several instances of Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit like *durmanāsi* (instead of *durmanā asi*) in 75a, *ānayitvā* in 76a, *babhāṣa* (instead of *babhāṣe*) in 78a, *etāṃś ca* (referring to neuter substantives) in 79c, *mahotpātam* (nominative) in 97+, *purim* in 102b, *vandya* in 102+, etc. Below, in the discussion of the sources of the Śsj, we shall see what accounts for this change in language and style.

An analysis revealed that the first half by and large follows the first half of the *Buddhacarita*, whereas the second half is based on *parivartas* 23-26 of the *Lalitavistara*. This accounts for the linguistic peculiarities just described. These are the correspondences:

Śākyasiṃhajātaka	Buddhacarita	Lalitavistara (chapter, verse)
2+ to 11+	1.6 to 1.68	
11+	2.17 to 46	
11+ to 14+	3.1 to 3.30	
19	4.44	
25+	5.47 to 5.81	
27 to 29	6.12 to 6.52	
29+		8
29+ to 33+	12.1 to 12.116	
36 to 46	13	
56+ to 61	14.52 to 14.91	
62 to 67		23
68 to 93		24.0; 24.72+ to 24.155
95+ to 99		25.8+ to 25.33+
102 to 108		26.4 to 26.27

It almost looks as if the unknown composer of the Śsj had at his disposal only the same incomplete text of the *Buddhacarita* that is represented by Johnston's MS A and that he was forced to look for another biography of the Buddha in order to bring his story to an end. 11 stanzas were taken from the *Lalitavistara* almost *verbatim*:

Śākyasiṃhajātaka	Lalitavistara
75	24.73
76	24.74
77	24.75
86	24.76
87	24.78
88	24.79
89	24.81/82
90	24.110
91	24.150
93	24.155
102abc	26.4

What is more important in this connection is the fact that 12 stanzas from the Śsj can be found among Amṛtānanda's additions to the *Buddhacarita*. Four of them belong to the first chapter and describe the actual birth of the Buddha.

Śākyasiṃhajātaka	Buddhacarita (ed. Cowell)
2	1.20
3	1.23
4	1.24
5	1.27
49	16.19
50	16.20
51	16.21
52	16.22
53	16.23
54	16.24
55	16.25
56	16.26

My detailed analysis, published in 1986, led me to the following conclusion:

“What Amṛtānanda has done is more or less the same as the compiler of the Śsj had done before him: after noticing the incompleteness of his copy of Aśvaghōṣa's *Buddhacarita* he took recourse to other biographies of the Buddha available at his time. These were obviously the Śsj and the *Lalitavistara*. He interspersed passages from these two works with some well-known dogmatic formulas and with inventions of his own – a practice typical of many Buddhist works composed (or rather compiled) during the present millennium in Nepal.”¹²

However, this picture is not complete. Several years after the publication of my analysis of the Śsj a Japanese student, Kiyoshi Okano from Sendai, requested me for a suitable topic for his Ph. D. thesis. I selected for him an unpublished Sanskrit text from Nepal about which little more than its title *Mahāsaṃvartanīkathā* (MSK) was known. Dr. Okano succeeded in preparing a critical edition, German translation and detailed study of the work¹³. The MSK is actually a Buddhist cosmology written by the Buddhist grammarian and poet Sarvaraṣita, who lived in the 12th century. What makes the MSK rather peculiar is the fact that it represents the views of the Sāṃmitīya school. Sarvaraṣita used as his model an old canonical text in prose that is lost in its original Sanskrit but fortunately is quoted *in toto* in Daśabalaśrīmitra's huge doxographical work *Samskṛt āsaṃskṛtaviniścaya*, still available in its Tibetan translation. Sarvaraṣita preserved the content of his canonical source very faithfully, but he transformed it into very ambitious poetical verses that abound in the figures of speech called *yamaka*.

The whole work is organized into six chapters (*kāṇḍa*) each of which consists of four sections (*viśrāma*). While chapters 2 through 6 deal with cosmological topics, closely following the canonical text, the first chapter serves as a long poetical introduction. Its first section (*upodghātaḥ*), consisting of only four stanzas, is a kind of preface. The second section (*kumārodayaḥ*) describes the birth and youth of the Bodhisattva, the third

¹² Hahn 1986: 8.

¹³ Okano 1998.

(*buddhatvādhigamaḥ*) his attainment of buddhahood, and the fourth (*tīrthyaparājayaḥ*) his defeat of the heretics. The sources that were used by Sarvarakṣita for his introductory chapter are unknown.

Kāṇḍa	1: Nidāna-kāṇḍam	
Viśrāma	1: Upodghātaḥ	(4 stanzas)
Viśrāma	2: Kumārōdayaḥ	(34 stanzas)
Viśrāma	3: Buddhatvādhigamaḥ	(19 stanzas)
Viśrāma	4: Tīrthya-parājayaḥ	(11 stanzas)

The first chapter is transmitted in two slightly different recensions, the older and original recension (MSKa) and the younger recension (MSKn). The main difference between them lies in the wording of the first chapter. An unknown editor added four stanzas from the Śsj (2-5) and three and a half from the *Buddhacarita* (ed. Johnston, 1.9-1.12ab). On the other hand he deleted five genuine stanzas from MSKa (1.2.21 and 1.2.23-26). Moreover he repeats the *maṅgala* stanza 1.1.1 as 1.2.1. The following table shows the relationship between the two editions of the *Buddhacarita*, the two recensions of MSK, and the Śsj.

Buddhacarita (Cowell)	MSKn	MSKa	ŚSJ	Buddhacarita (Johnston)
	1.1.1	1.1.1		
	1.1.2	1.1.2		
	1.1.3	1.1.3		
	1.1.4	1.1.4		
1.1	1.2.1	(1.1.1)		
1.2	1.2.2	1.2.1		
1.3	1.2.3	1.2.2		
1.4	1.2.4	1.2.3		
(etc.)	(etc.)	(etc.)		
1.18	1.2.18	1.2.17		
1.19	1.2.19	1.2.18		
1.20	1.2.20		2	

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1.21	1.2.21	1.2.19	
1.22	1.2.22	1.2.20	
1.23	1.2.23		3
1.24	1.2.24		4
1.25	1.2.27		1.9
1.26	(missing)	1.2.21	
1.27	1.2.25		5
1.28	1.2.26	1.2.22	
1.28A	1.2.27		1.9
1.29	1.2.28		1.10
1.30	1.2.29		1.11
1.31ab	1.2.30ab		1.12ab
1.31cd			1.12cd

We now see that with the exception of 1.25 and 1.26 *Buddhacarita* (Cowell) follows MSKn. Stanza 1.25 seems to have been taken from *Buddhacarita* MS A, 1.26 from MSKa. Starting with 1.28A, which is the first completely preserved stanza in MS A, Amṛtānanda follows MS A. The unnecessarily repeated stanza *Buddhacarita* 1.9 in Amṛtānanda's text was relegated to the footnotes by Cowell. Now we know who was the author of Amṛtānanda's additions in the first chapter – Sarvarakṣita. And we see, with a certain admiration, that Gawroński's assessment and favourable judgment of the long introductory passage was absolutely correct and that Amṛtānanda has preserved a specimen of a precious piece of good classical Sanskrit literature that has become accessible in its entirety only recently. With this solution of an old problem we can now put aside Cowell's *editio princeps* and concentrate on the study of the original works, Aśvaghōṣa's *Buddhacarita* and Sarvarakṣita's *Mahāsaṃvartanīkathā*. As for Amṛtānanda's other additions to MS A of the *Buddhacarita*, we refer to the papers of Koichi Hokazono¹⁴.

¹⁴ Hokazono 1981, 1983.

Appendix

1) Sarvarakṣita's description of the birth of the Buddha, *Mahāsaṃvartanīkathā* 1.2, entitled *Kumārodayaḥ*, as established by Kiyoshi Okano in Sarvarakṣita's *Mahāsaṃvartanīkathā*, Sendai 1998, including all his emendations.

āsīd viśālōnnata-śāla-lakṣmyā
payoda-paṅktyêva parīta-pārśvaṃ |
udagra-dhiṣṇyair gagane 'vagādhaṃ
puram maharṣeḥ kapilasya vastu || [1]

[Once] there was a city, the dwelling-place of the great seer Kapila. It was encircled by the splendour of broad and high [white] walls as if by an assembly of clouds, and by its high-rising palaces it seemed to plunge into the sky.

sitōnnatenâiva cayena hṛtvā
kailāsa-śailasya yad abhra-śobhāṃ |
bhramād upetān vahad ambu-vāhān
sambhāvanāṃ vā saphalī-cakāra || [2]

By its white and high wall alone
it surpassed the beauty of the clouds around mount Kailāsa,
and it enhanced the impression [of being mount Kailāsa]
by bearing the clouds that had approached it.
wrongly assuming [it to be mount Kailāsa].

ratna-prabhôdbhāsini yatra lebhe
tamo na dāridryam ivâvakāśaṃ |
parârdhya-pauraiḥ saha-vāsa-toṣāt
rta-smitêvâtirarāja lakṣmīḥ || [3]

Neither poverty nor darkness found room in it,
because it was illuminated by the splendour of jewels.
Lakṣmī, the Goddess of Wealth, seemed to display a bright smile,
being pleased to live together with excellent/rich citizens.

*yad vedikā-toraṇa-siṃhakarṇe
ratnair dadhānaṃ prati-veśma śobhāṃ |
jagaty adṛṣṭvêva samānam anyat
spardhāṃ sva-gehair mitha eva cakre || [4*

Each building in it was decorated with jewels on the balustrades,
on arched doorways, and on the lion-headed beams.
Since there was nothing to match it in the whole world,
it could be rivalled only by its own houses.

*rāmā-mukhêndūn paribhūta-padmān
yatropayāto 'py avamānya bhānuḥ |
saṃtāpa-yogād iva vāri veṣṭum
paścāt-samudrābhimukhaḥ pratasthe || [5]*

Although the sun had arrived [only because of them],
it disregarded (?) the moon-like faces of the women
that surpassed [the beauty of] lotuses;
because of its intensive pain (jealousy?) it proceeded
towards the western ocean as if wishing to enter its water.

*śākyârjitānāṃ yaśasāṃ janena
dṛṣṭānta-bhāvaṃ gamito 'yam induḥ |
iti dhvajaiś cāru-calat-patākair
yan mārṣṭum asyâṅkam ivôdayacchat || [6]*

“The people compare the fame acquired by the Śākya family
with [the white lustre of] the moon.”
With this in mind [the city] seemed to endeavour to wipe off
the [moon's] marks with its banners, decorated with fluttering ribbons.

*kṛtvâpi rātrau kumuda-prahāsam
indoḥ karair yad rajatālaya-sthaiḥ |
sauvarṇa-harmyeṣu gatârka-pādair
divā saroja-dyutim ālalambe || [7]*

At night, it displayed the bright laughter of white water-lilies
by the rays of the moon reflected in the silvery [shimmering] houses;
in the daytime, it assumed the splendour of lotuses
by the rays of the sun, reflected in the golden [shimmering] palaces.

*mahībhṛtām mūrdhni kṛtābhīṣekaḥ
śuddhodano nāma nrpo 'rka-bandhuḥ |
abdhyāśayaṃ vā sphuṭa-puṇḍarīkaṃ
purādhirājaṃ tad alaṃcakāra || [8]*

A king by the name of Śuddhodana,
belonging to the solar race
and consecrated as the first among the rulers of the earth,
adorned the empress among the cities
like a fully blossomed white lotus [adorns] a pond

*bhūbhṛt-parārdhyo 'pi sa-pakṣa eva
pravṛtta-dāno 'pi madānupetaḥ |
īśo 'pi nityaṃ sama-drṣṭi-pātaḥ
saumya-svabhāvo 'pi pṛthu-pratāpaḥ || [9]*

Although he was the foremost
among the rulers of the earth/among the mountains,
he had only partisans/he still had wings;
although he was generous/sexually aroused,
he was free of pride/he did not emit rut-fluid;
although he was mighty/[like] the three-eyed god Śiva,
his gaze was impartial/the number of his eyes was even;
although he was friendly by nature/possessed the [cooling] qualities
of the moon,
his power was vast/he possessed great heat (or: the heat of fire).

*bhujena yasyābhihatāḥ patanto
dviśad-dvipēndrāḥ samarāṅgaṇeṣu |
udvānta-muktā-prakaraiḥ śirobhir
bhaktyēva puṣpāñjalibhiḥ praṇemuḥ || [10]*

When the mighty elephants of his enemies fell down
on the battlefield, hit by his [strong] arm[s],
they bowed down [before him] with their heads,
emitting masses of pearls
as if they were a handful of flowers, [presented] in devotion.

*atipratāpād avadhūya śatrūn
mahôparāgān iva tigma-bhānuḥ |
uddiyotayām āsa janam samantāt
pradarśayann āśrayañīya-mārgān || [11]*

When by his excessive valour he had dispelled his enemies,
in the same manner as the sun [dispels] the eclipses (darkness),
he enlightened his subjects wherever they lived
by showing them the paths they should adhere to.

*dharmārtha-kāmā viṣayaṃ mitho 'nyam
na te samācakramur asya nītyā |
vispardhamānā iva tûgra-siddhyai
svagocare dīptatarā babhūvuh || [12]*

Because of his [wise] policy, the three goals of life,
rightfulness, acquisition of wealth, and sensual pleasures,
did not interfere with each other;
they became even more brilliant in their own spheres
by [peacefully] rivalling each other for greater success.

*udāra-saṃkhyaiḥ sacivair asaṃkhyaiḥ
kṛtâgra-bhāvaḥ sa udagra-bhāvaḥ |
śaśī yathā bhair akṛtânyathâbhaiḥ
śākyêndra-rājāḥ sutarām rarāja || [13]*

The supreme ruler of the Śākyas,
who had acquired precedence and was of noble character,
shone even more on account of his numerous ministers
who bore famous names/who were noble-minded.

tasyātiśobhā-visṛtātiśobhā
ravi-prabhā vāsta-tamaḥ-prabhāvā |
samagra-devī-nivahâgra-devī
babhūva māyâpagatâiva māyā || [14]

His main queen among all his wives was Māyā.
She had turned away from [all kinds of] deceptions (*māyā*),
her extraordinary beauty shone excessively;
possessing the splendour of the sun,
she broke the power of (mental) darkness.

prajāsu mātêva hita-pravṛttā
gurau jane bhaktir ivânuvṛttā |
lakṣmīr ivâdhīśa-kule kṛtâbhā
jagaty abhūd uttama-devatâbhā || [15]

Like a mother, she cared for the welfare of her subjects;
like devotion in person, she respected those deserving respect;
like Lakṣmī [at the side of Viṣṇu], she shone in the family of the king;
[although being] on earth, she had the appearance of the highest
goddess.

kāmaṃ sadā strī-caritaṃ tamisraṃ
tathâpi tām prāpya bhṛśaṃ vireje |
na hīndu-lekhām upagamyā śubhrām
naktaṃ tathā saṃtamasatvam eti || [16]

Although the conduct of women always contains an element of
darkness,
she nevertheless shone brightly in her womanhood.
Likewise the night does not become completely dark
when it is illuminated by the crescent of the moon.

atīndriyeṇâtmani duṣkuho 'yaṃ
mayā jano yojayituṃ na śakyaḥ |
itīva sūkṣmāṃ prakṛtiṃ vihāya
dharmeṇa sākṣād vihītā sumūrtiḥ || [17]

“These incredulous people are not able to unite themselves with me, because I transcend the organs of the senses.”

As if it were thinking this, the dharma abandoned its subtle nature and assumed a beautiful [visible] shape [in Māyā].

*cyuto 'tha kāyāt tuṣitāt trilokīm
uddiyotayann uttama-bodhisattvaḥ |
viveśa tasyāḥ smṛta eva kukṣau
mandam guhāyām iva nāga-rājah || [18]

Then the Bodhisattva, who had reached the highest stage, descended from the Tuṣita heaven, illuminating the three worlds, and entered her womb in full awareness, in the same manner as the king of the elephants slowly¹⁵ (?) enters his cave.

*rakṣā-vidhānam prati loka-pālā
lokāika-nāthasya divo 'bhijagmuḥ |
sarvatra bhānto 'pi hi candra-pādā
bhajanti kailāsa-girau viśeṣam || [19]*

In order to protection the unique saviour of the world the [four] Guardians of the World descended from heaven. For the rays of the moon, although shining everywhere, display their full splendour [only] when they hit Mount Kailāsa.

*māyāpi tam kukṣi-gataṁ dadhānā
vidyud-vilāsam jaladāvalīva |
dānābhivarṣaiḥ parito janānām
dāridrya-tāpaṁ śamayām babhūva || [20]*

¹⁵ The Ms. has *nandā*, which is emended as *nando* by Okano. I tentatively read and translate **mandam*.

Māyā, for her part, while carrying him in her womb
like clouds carrying flashing lightning,
appeased the burning pain of poverty
through showers of donations for the people around her.

*prātaḥ payodād iva tigma-bhānuḥ
samudbhavan so 'pi ca māṭṛ-kukṣeḥ |
sphuran mayūkhair vihatāndhakāraiś
cakāra lokam kanakāvadātam || [21]*

In the same manner as the sun makes the world shine golden
by its rays that dispel darkness,
when in the morning it breaks through the clouds
with dazzling brightness,
so did he when appearing from his mother's womb.

*sura-pradhānaiḥ paridhāryamāṇo
dehāṃśu-jālair anurañjayams tām |
saṃdhyābhra-jālōpari saṃniviṣṭam
navôḍu-rājam vijigāya lakṣmyā || [22]*

When he was held by the foremost among the gods,
he reddened/gladdened them by the rays coming forth from his
body;
in his beauty, he surpassed the newly risen moon
residing on the clouds at the time of dusk.

*janmôtsave 'syādri-sikhaṇḍakôrvī
prakīrṇa-puṣpābharaṇā cakampe |
sva-phena-carcôpahitāṅga-śobhas
taraṅga-hastair jaladhir nanarta || [23]*

At the festival of his birth the earth trembled,
adorned with various flowers, the mountains forming its tuft.
The ocean danced with its hands, the waves,
its foam being the unguent applied to decorate its body.

*puṣpa-drumâkarṣita-cāru-gandho
janânga-sevyah pravavau samīrah |
satūrya-nṛtaiḥ sura-sundarīnām
pauṣpair vimānaiś ca nabho babhāse || [24]*

A [mild] wind blew that was pleasant for the bodies of the people
and had extracted a lovely smell from the flowers and trees.
And the sky shone with the flower-bedecked chariots of the god-
desses
and their dances that were accompanied by musical instruments.

*samyak-parīṇāma-vaśād ṛtūnām
hatôpatāpā mumude trilokī |
taj-janma-ratnôpahitôpaśobham
viśeṣataḥ śākya-kulam nananda || [25]*

Because the seasons followed each other in the proper order,
[the inhabitants of] the triple world rejoiced, free of pain.
The people of the Śākyas were particularly happy,
because they had been decorated with the jewel of his birth.

*siddhāms tad-arthān abhivikṣya vṛddhāḥ
siddhārtha ity asya tu nāma cakruḥ |
yad-yogavān abhyadhikam babhāse
yathôpta-ratnas tapanīya-niṣkaḥ || [26]*

When the older people saw that all their aims had been fulfilled,
they gave him the name Siddhārtha or “He who has fulfilled [our]
aim.”
Adorned with that [name] he shone excessively,
like a golden ornament decorated with jewels.

*lokâika-nātho bhavitāyam ittham
saṃprāpta-sad-vyākaraṇo munīndrāt |
jñātârgha-cintāmaṇivaj janānām
saṃbhāvanā-bhājanatām jagāma || [27]*

[Asita], the foremost among the seers, rightly predicted:
“He will become the sole saviour of the world.”
Like the wish-fulfilling jewel Cintāmaṇi, whose value is known,
he became the object of worship for the people.

*manorathaiḥ sārdham atho prajānām
sa kalpa-śākhīva vivardhamānaḥ |
sādhāraṇī-kṛtya nijām vibhūtiṃ
cakāra lokam dhanadāyamānam || [28]*

Accompanied by the wishes of the people,
he grew up like the wish-fulfilling tree.
He made the people equal to Kubera, the God of Wealth,
by sharing his own wealth with them.

*vidyā-kalābhiḥ subhagām samagra-
sal-lakṣaṇāptām tanum udvahantaṃ |
kṛtānurāgēva tam ālilinga
prakāma-harṣā nava-yauvana-śrīḥ || [29]*

As if filled with deep affection,
the beauty of youth embraced him with utmost joy,
he whose body was adorned with all the good physical attributes
[of a great being] and lovely by [his mastery] of sciences and art.

*yuvātha dharmaiḥ sa yaśo-mayūkhaiḥ
śuklī-kṛtāśeṣa-jagan-niveśaḥ |
yaśāṃsi martyāmara-puṅgavānām
jyotīṃsi vārko 'titiraścakāra || [30]*

As a young man he now brightened the abodes of the whole world
through the rays of his fame that was based on his [talks about the]
dharma,
and [at the same time] he completely obscured the renown
of the best among men and gods as the sun [completely obscures] the
stars.

*dharmâikatāno vanam eṣa mā gāt
kṛtvēti śaṅkām atha śākya-rājaḥ |
anaṅga-rājasya jayâvahābhiḥ
saṃyojayām āsa vadhūbhir enam || [31]*

Fearing that his son might concentrate
only on the dharma and settle in the [solitude of the] forest
the king of the Śākya brought him into contact with women,
the kind who can guarantee the victory of Anaṅga, the God of Love

*saṃpūrya saṃpūrya śaśī sva-śobhāṃ
jigīṣayêvâsya vadhū-mukhānām |
ajāta-sāmyo 'tivilakṣa-pāṇḍur
jagāma bhūyo sakṛd eva kārśyam || [32]*

Wishing, as it were, to surpass the faces of his women,
the moon became fuller and fuller [in order to display] its own
beauty.
Since it could not even reach [their beauty],
it became pale and thin again because of its great embarrassment.

*abhyāsa-yogād itarāsu nūnaṃ
vivṛddha-vaīdagdhya-vidhir vidhātā |
vinirmame tā lalitāṅga-śobhāḥ
surāṅganānām sprhanīya-rūpāḥ || [33]*

Certainly the creator, whose skill had increased
through experience with other women,
created these [women] with their charming bodies
such that even the wives of the gods longed for such beauty

*manoharais tad-upahitaiḥ sa vibhramair
vilāsavān api nṛpa-līlayānvitāḥ |
jarā-rujā-mṛti-hata-martya-darśanād
grhâśrame na rati-vidhiṃ samāyayau || [34]*

Although he, who was endowed with royal charm,
was amused by the delightful coquettishness they presented,
he did not enjoy the pleasures of love with them in the state of a
householder
because he realized that mortals are hit by old age, sickness, and
death.

2) The beginning of Kṣemendra's *Buddhāvataṛa*, chapter 9 of his *Daśāvatāracarita*, as re-edited by Shogo Iwai in his unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Tokyo 2001.

*kāle prayāte kaliviplavena
rāgagrahogre bhagavān bhavābdhau |
majjatsu saṃmohajale janeṣu
jagannivāsaḥ karuṇānvito 'bhūt || 1 ||*

When time went on with the calamities of the Kali age,
the Blessed One [decided] to live in this world,
full of compassion for the people sinking in the ocean of existence
that is frightening on account of the crocodiles of 'passion'
and filled with the water of 'delusion'.

*sa sarvasattvopakṛtiprayatnaḥ
kṛpākulaḥ śākyakule viśāle |
śuddhodanākhyasya narādhipendor
dhanyasya garbhe 'vatatāra patnyāḥ || 2 ||*

Striving to help all beings and full of compassion,
he descended into the womb of the blessed wife
of Śuddhodana, who was the moon among the kings
and belonged to the great family of the Śākyas.

*māyābhīdhānā naranāthapatnī
garbhe hariṃ viśvaguruṃ vahantī |
āsannacandrevā sudhābdhivelā
nidhānadhanyeva vasuṃdharābhūt || 3 ||*

When queen called Māyā was bearing in her womb
the lion, who was to become the teacher of all,
she was like the tide of an ocean filled with nectar when the moon is
near
and like the earth blessed by the hoards of treasures [hidden in it].

*kukṣiṃ tatas tatkṣaṇam akṣatāyā
vibhidya mātur bhagavān prajātaḥ |
garbhodakāsprṣṭaviśuddhamūrtir
jāmbūnadeneva vinirmitāṅgaḥ || 4 ||*

Then the Blessed One was born after he had split
the womb of his mother in a moment without wounding her.
His body remained pure because it was not touched by the water of
the womb
and his limbs seemed to be made of gold

*sa jātamātras tridaśapramukta-
nabhonadīvāribharābhiṣiktaḥ |
padatrayiṃ kampilasarvalokāṃ
dattvā diśan dikṣu bhṛśaṃ jagāda || 5 ||*

As soon as he was born, he was besprinkled with streams of water
from the heavenly rivers that had been released by the gods.
He took three steps that made the whole world tremble
and spoke in a loud [voice], pointing in the [four] directions:

*pūrvāsthiteyaṃ mama nirvṛtir me
dhīḥ sarvasattvoddhṛtidakṣiṇeyam |
janmasthanīḥ samprati paścimeyaṃ
saṃsārabandhād iyaṃ uttarā ca || 6 ||*

“[Already] *formerly* extinction in this life has been proclaimed for me,
my present mind is *capable* of rescuing all beings,
this [present] state of birth is my *last* one,
the one that *releases* [me] from the bonds of saṃsāra.”¹⁶

*iti bruvāṇaṃ nṛpatis tam etya
dr̥ṣṭvā trilokīpatilakṣaṇāṅkaṃ |
sa jātadivyaṇubhavābhimānaḥ
kulasya bhūtyai dhṛtim ābabandha || 7 ||*

When he had spoken thus, the king went to him,
seeing him sitting in the lap of the queen.
Filled with the pride of divine feelings,
he firmly resolved himself to the welfare of his family.

*taṃ lakṣaṇajñā jagaduḥ saharṣaṃ
ayaṃ śīsur lakṣaṇalakṣyamānaḥ |
prabhur bhaviṣyaty avanīśvarāṇaṃ |
anuttarajñānanidhir munir vā || 8 ||*

Full of joy, the soothsayers spoke to him:
“This child bears the characteristics [that predict]
that he will either become the lord of all kings
or a sage possessing the treasure of the supreme knowledge.”

*sa sarvavidyāviditārthatattvaḥ
saṃprāptaśāstrāstragajāśvaśikṣaḥ |
sarvārthasiddhyā pitur āptakīrtiḥ
sarvārthasiddhābhidhatām jagāma || 9 ||*

¹⁶ As most readers will notice, the stanza contains an extraordinary pun. The four words printed in bold face in the text and in italics in the translation also mean “east” (*pūrva*), “south” (*dakṣiṇa*), “west” (*paścima*), and “north” (*uttara*). These puns are characteristic of Kṣemendra’s style.

Knowing the meaning and essence of all [fields of] knowledge,
having received training in all kinds of weapons
and in [how to deal with] horses and elephants,
having obtained the fame of his father
because of his success in all fields,
he was named Sarvārthasiddha, “the one who has accomplished
everything.”

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