

On *Jātakastava* as a Kind of Buddhist Hymn

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Abstract

In this paper, some genre peculiarities of two Buddhist poems with the same title, Jātakastava, are analyzed. They both contain eulogies on the virtuous deeds performed by the Buddha in his previous lives. Comparing these poems allows us to discover a number of common formal characteristics in them. It is helpful in our examination to note that the same formal characteristics can be revealed in many poems within as well as outside of the Buddhist literary tradition. Turning to non-Buddhist texts helps in attaining some insightful information concerning the history of the poetical form under consideration.

Comparative analysis reveals that this poetical form was not invented inside the Buddhist literary tradition. Rather, the authors of the two extant Jātakastavas incorporated the poetical form known from at least the times of R̥gveda as a literary tool in glorifying the past lives of the Buddha.

Key words: *Jātakastava, jātaka, Buddhist literary poems, stotra, Buddhist eulogies*

The Two *Jātakastavas*

The Sanskrit compound *jātakastava* consists of two components: *jātaka* and *stava*. The first, *jātaka*, indicates the type of genre of Buddhist literature that is dedicated to narrative of the Buddha's previous births. As a designation of this genre, the word has already been used in the Pāli canon. There, it refers to stanza commentaries of a certain type containing stories about the virtuous deeds that the Buddha performed in his former lives, while still being a bodhisattva. These stories were told by the Buddha himself mostly for the purpose of explaining the reasons of someone's destiny or deeds in the present life, by pointing to the *karmic* seeds that the person had attained in the past lives.

The second component of the compound, *stava*, is a noun derived from the verb *stu* "praise, extol"; this noun is synonymous with *stotra* and *stuti* and shares the same derivation with them. All three terms are designated to another literary genre: hymns. Consequently, *jātakastava* can be translated as "praise of the *jātakas*" or "a hymn to the *jātakas*." This compound is known to us as the title of two poetic works.

One of the two is only extant in Khotanese translation made by certain Vedyāśīla from the Sāmānyā congregation in the second half of the tenth century. Mark J. Dresden notes in the introduction to his edition and translation of the text: "Two statements make it clear that the Khotanese is a translation, or rather not an original text. No indication however is given in the prologue or elsewhere in the text which permits the determination of the language of the original. The frequent occurrence of what seem to be 'long compounds' ... seem to point to a Sanskrit original. It has proved impossible so far to find a parallel text" (Dresden 1955, 402).

The other one is a Sanskrit version preserved in Tibetan transliteration. Its authorship is attributed to Jñānayaśas.¹ Because it remains unknown whether the author of the *Jātakastava* and the translator of Buddhist texts into Chinese who lived in the sixth to seventh centuries, and had the same name, were one and the same person, we cannot be sure about the date of this poem.

Because, as H. W. Bailey mentions, "The literary type of this Sanskrit *Jātaka-stava* is the same as that of the Khotanese, but the contents are largely different" (Bailey 1939, 851), we can assume that the similarity of the formal characteristics of both poems could be the reason why they both have the same

title. Ancient Buddhist authors could perceive them as samples of a single poetic genre, and, as it often happened in ancient Indian literature, they could state in their titles that the poems belonged to a certain literary type. (Perhaps *jātakastava* was a designation of a genre?) To describe this literary type and to analyze it, we have to compare the extant *Jātakastavas*, concerning their formal characteristics and the way they treat famous *jātaka*-stories.

Common Features

These two works share a number of common features—related both to their form and content—that should be mentioned. I describe three common features below.

First, both have a kind of a literary “frame” comprised of several of what may be termed, “introductory” stanzas at the beginning of the poem and several “concluding” ones at the end. In the introductory part of both *Jātakastavas*, we can find a common motif: the author or the translator (Vedyaśīla for the Khotanese translation) admits that he is not skillful enough to extol the full mightiness of the bodhisattva’s virtuous deeds, nevertheless, he dares to chant the praises of the *jātakas*.

The Khotanese *Jātakastava*:

1. Birth truly, if associated with full senses and meritorious acts, is great and excellent. So noble faith when it arises pleases one’s heart. However slight may be one single word of praise of the virtues of the *Buddha*, with the thought, “How can I recite all of it to express my affection?”...
2. Yet, though my senses are now weak, my mind not concentrated in trembling confusion, now I will recite as many praises as may be, that it may for me be a great aid to *bodhi*.²

The *Jātakastava* by Jñānayaśas:

1. How can this mind of mine, stupid because of moving about in the stream of rebirths, be compared to the mightiness of virtuous deeds, attained by the mighty one through his ten powers and unstained by [any] qualities? Because of [me], giving praise to [you], Sarasvatī becomes chatty, and her chatter then is similar to a dust, which brings fertile fruits when

offered to you.

2. Marvelous virtuous qualities of those who look upon everything with calmness, transcend the foothold of intelligence, while [the virtuous qualities] of those who are like me, instantly become a matter of talk, because of their roughness. Jewels of the ocean become visible to a seeker when they lie on a sandy shore near the water, but who is able to find them when their glitter is surrounded by the necklace of a rippling wave's splendor? (Bailey 1954, 22–23; Bailey 1939, 853)

This motif of the author's self-humiliation is quite popular in Indian hymnography both within the Buddhist tradition and beyond it.³

The final stanzas of both poems represent an example of a so-called *phalaśruti* (lit. "hearing the fruits"), which is also typical for *stotras*. This part of the hymn tells about the merits one can obtain through composing, memorizing, or reciting the poem. The fruits of these merits can be also transferred to others.

The Khotanese *Jātakastava*:

This *Praise of the Jātakas*, a book of the wondrous deeds of the Buddha, Ṭṣang Kim-śan ordered to write it in love of *bodhi*. In reliance upon the favorable roots of this merit may the emperor Śing-ṭṣun have endless sovereignty, a peculiar place in the stages of life, a peculiar birth, a peculiar station.

At the present time may the enjoyment of a long life come to the king of the *Vajra*-kingdom; may he have great, endless, long life; may all his sins of *karman*, accumulated through the age, disappear; may they [the king] therefore condescend to devote themselves to all-supreme *bodhi*.

This merit I share with Padā śanā, my father, Pūhyā cā pina. May his stages of life be purified.— May my mother Hū-māṃ be long-lived.

This merit I share with my father's own brother Cā ttaiha tcainā Kharūṣa, with his sons and daughters.

This merit I share with my wife Kīma hva and my daughter Rūpājīva, with my daughter Jvālakya, with my brother Sīdyavarrda, the knower of the three *piṭakas*, and Darmajñā, the knower of the three *piṭakas*, with all the teachers and householders of the *Vajrayāna*. May all beings attain a prophecy of attaining bodhi.

May I, Ṭṣang Kim-śan, therefore quickly obtain success in the mantras; may

I devote myself to bodhi.

With my own sister Sūrainaitra. (Dresden 1955, 445–446)

Jātakastava by Jñānayaśas:

20. I, by whom a great abundance of devotion unfolded through the adoration was amassed, have accumulated plenty of blessings that originated from describing the small part of the great superiority of the virtuous deeds you performed. By these blessings may people be highly pleased while serving others, may they not care much about their own benefits, may they focus their mind on the ways of the omniscient ones, who know the benefits of others! (Bailey 1954, 27; Bailey 1939, 859)

The fact that two important and widespread features of an Indian *stotra*—namely the *phalaśruti* and a motif of the self-humiliation of the author, who nevertheless decides to compose his poem—are present in both *jātakastavas*, makes it more clear that these texts need to be treated as a part of the Indian hymnographic tradition.

The second common characteristic of both poems concerns the content of their main part, embraced by the “frame” stanzas. It represents a eulogy on the virtuous deeds performed by the Buddha Śākyamuni in his numerous past lives. This eulogy contains no full retellings of *jātaka*-stories. Instead, the main episode from a *jātaka* can be described or even just mentioned by the author. The story about King Śibi and the pigeon provides us with a good example of the way famous *jātakas* were treated by both poets.

One day, Indra realized that his life-term in heaven was coming to an end. He was upset by the fact that on earth, where he was going to get his new birth, there was no buddha or bodhisattva in whom he could find shelter. Then, Viśvakarman told him that there was a king named Śibi, who was leading a virtuous life, equal to that of a bodhisattva. Indra decided to put him through a trial. He assumed the appearance of a vulture, and Viśvakarman transformed into a pigeon. The vulture started to hunt the pigeon, and the latter flew to Śibi’s palace. He prayed to the king to give him protection and Śibi agreed. When the vulture demanded to give him his prey, the king offered him a ransom of his own flesh for the helpless bird. The vulture replied that the weight of the ransom should be equal to the weight of the pigeon’s body. Scales were brought to the place, but no matter how much flesh the king cut off from

his limbs and put on a scale, every time, the pigeon's body appeared to become heavier. Eventually he had to give his whole body for the life of the poor bird.

Here is how this story is rendered in the *Jātakastavas*.

The Khotanese *Jātakastava*:

158. Again for the pigeon's sake by your virtues you tore the skin and flesh upon your limbs for a ransom. You did not long for the pleasures and the great imperial *śrī* which was yours. (Dresden 1955, 444)

Jātakastava by Jñānayaśas:

16. For the good of a bird whose throat was dried up and trembling because of fearing a hawk—a bird that had approached your knees—you as virtuous King Śibi put your own body, rejoicing in non-attachment on unbalanced scales stained with vomited blood—that is the reason why Māra's weight became so light that he is now quivering like a petal of a *dukūla* flower. (Bailey 1954, 26; Bailey 1939, 858)

Both examples demonstrate that these poems have an evocative function. The information about a past birth of the Buddha, the way how it is presented in the *Jātakastavas*, is not sufficient for a reader (or a listener) to reconstruct the whole story. It is obvious that mentioning a bird frightened by a hawk, and a king placing his own body on the scales, is not enough to convey the idea of the plot, unless one is familiar with the legend being referred to. Alternatively, with the help of a number of key words, the authors are able to remind a literate Buddhist adept about a specific story. In this way a great number of *jātakas* can be described with one, not very large poem.

The third common feature of both *Jātakastavas* is the presence of an iterative structure in the main part of the poem. Such a structure underlies the description (eulogy) of a *jātaka*, and is reproduced from one *jātaka*-praise to another throughout the whole text.

In the *Jātakastava* by Jñānayaśas, one *jātaka*-praise fits into one stanza. We can take the same legend about King Śibi as an example. Here is its Sanskrit text (the original text of the above English translation):

16. śyenotrāsaviśuṣṭakakampitagalasyotsaṅgasamṣarpiṇo
yan niḥsaṅgaratā śivāya śibinā rājñā satā pakṣiṇaḥ

raktodgārakalaṅkitātulatulām āropitā te tanur
māras **tena** dukūlapakṣmataralaṃ nītas tulālāghavam

The whole stanza here is a complex sentence, of which the dependent clause is marked by the word *yat* (“since”), and the main clause by the word *tena* (“for that reason”). The dependent clause mentions the main events and characters of a *jātaka*, while the main clause tells us about the consequences of the virtuous deeds performed by the Buddha in one of his previous births. This is how all stanzas in the main part of the *Jātakastava* by Jñānayaśas are organized.

In the Khotanese *Jātakastava*, the iterative structure is not followed so strictly. The stanza about King Śibi from this poem appears to be not quite a good example of it. This stanza should rather be considered as an exception to the rule, because extolling *jātaka* in such a form is unusual for the Khotanese poem. The eulogy of the famous story about a hare fits much more precisely into the scheme in question:

20. When you saw an old *ṛṣi*, distressed, without protection, lost, because of weariness dizzy, without strength, irritated, thirsty, burning with the fire of hunger so that he fell down, swooning, upon the ground,...
21. just as in a forest an old rotten tree burns, when against it the wind with violent buffeting has struck with a blow,... when he came exceedingly tormented by the fire of two kinds [hunger and thirst], there arose in you on his account strong and supreme [?] compassion.
22. Being the hare you were exceedingly anxious lest the virtuous man should die from hunger. He sat lamenting. You looked to a remedy: you saw a great pit filled with fire.
23. Just as a man tormented by heat bathes in a lotus pool, likewise on an impulse of high respect you threw yourself into that burning fire, [an act of] unsurpassable firmness. Therefore, to you homage. (Dresden 1955, 424)

The way how *jātakas* are described here differs from that in the poem by Jñānayaśas. In the Khotanese text, several stanzas are usually devoted to one story. There is no syntactic structure underlying every *jātaka*-praise. The only structural element we can discover is a specific phrase by which every stanza block is completed. By this phrase, the author designates his intention to pay homage to the Buddha. For instance: “Therefore, to you then homage more

than a hundred myriad times,” “Homage to the remover of people’s fear,” “Therefore to you, O good being, from me at your feet homage,” “Therefore, I bow down to you with faith and reverence,” or, as in the passage quoted above, “Therefore to you homage” (Dresden 1955, 423–425, 431). In this poem, this is a mean enabling the author to draw a clearly visible boundary between one *jātaka* and another. These are the most important common features of the two poems.

Verses with the Same Features Elsewhere in the Buddhist Literature

Though only two literary works titled *Jātakastava* are presently extant, some versed passages that have the same characteristics can be found in some large Buddhist texts. Passages of this kind, alluding to the story of King Śibi, are found in *Lalitavistara*. Here is a small fragment from one poem appearing in Chapter 5:

65. In times past, for many myriads of *kalpas*, you used to give away your beloved sons and daughters. The divine flowers raining down are a fruit of such generosity.
66. You scaled your own flesh, O lord, and bestowed it for the sake of a beloved bird. The food and drinks that appeared in the realm of *pretas* are a fruit of such generosity.
67. In times past, for many myriads of *kalpas*, you used to maintain your righteousness and not to violate your vows. Inopportune, evil states of existence are eliminated—and this is the fruit of such a righteousness. (Hokazono 1994, 378)

Only half of this poem is dedicated to the previous lives of the Buddha. Moreover, not all stanzas from this half contain a praise of a certain *jātaka*. Some of them, like the first and the third stanzas of the fragment quoted above, extol not a deed but a certain virtuous quality that Buddha demonstrated in his previous lives. Nevertheless, there are certain similarities between this poem and both *Jātakastavas* that should not be disregarded.

First, the poem likewise has a frame. It consists of one “introductory” and one “concluding” stanza. In the “introductory” stanza, nothing is said about

the lack of skill for the proper glorification of Buddha's deeds. But still the intention to sing praise is somehow expressed in it:

64. To you who has accumulated good *karma* in times past, to you who has acquired majesty while performing virtuous deeds, to you who has become pure due to true teaching, a great worship is celebrated. (Hokazono 1994, 378)

The “concluding” stanza, in terms of its content, resembles *phalaśruti*: the merits gained through extolling the Buddha are mentioned in it as well as a wish to attain enlightenment that can be considered as a fruit of these merits:

83. We who acquired merits have extolled the mentor, we are filled with love and reverence [towards him], and [through that] we will cultivate enlightenment and will soon become like you, o foremost among men! (Hokazono 1994, 384)

The second feature of the poem similar to that of both *Jātakastavas* can be discovered in the part of the text concerning the previous births of the Buddha. In the case when one stanza is devoted to a certain *jātaka*, the Buddhist legend is treated in it in the same way as in both *Jātakastavas*: apparently the reader of *Lalitavistara* is supposed to be familiar with Buddhist legends, because a mere mentioning of a main event or some main characters of a story, appears to be sufficient for him to recollect its plot. Thus, scaling flesh for the sake of a bird, which we are told about in the second verse of the quoted text fragment—similarly to corresponding examples from *Jātakastavas*—evokes in our minds the entire storyline of the famous *jātaka* about King Śibi and the pigeon.

The third similarity is the iterative structure. Every stanza of a fragment related to the previous births of the Buddha, is dedicated to one *jātaka* or one quality demonstrated by Gautama in the past. Each verse rests upon the same structure which only slightly varies from one verse to another. Schematically, this structure can be drawn as follows:

[In times past, during many myriads of *kalpas*] ... *reference to a jātaka (jātakas)* ... *good consequences in modern times* ... [is a fruit of] ... *a virtuous quality of the Buddha.*

We can compare this structure to the original text of the *Lalitavistara*

fragment in question, translated above (Chapter 5, verses 65–67):

65. **pūrvī tubhyo bahukalpakoṭīyo**
 dānu **dattu** priyaputrādhītarāḥ,
tasya dānacaritasya tat phalaṃ
yena divyakusumāḥ pravaraṣītāḥ.

66. ātmamāṃsa tulayitva te vibho
 so 'bhid**dattu** priyapakṣikāraṇāt,
tasya dānacaritasya tat phalaṃ
 pretaloki labhi pānabhojanam.

67. **pūrvī tubhyo bahukalpakoṭīyo**
 śīla rakṣitam akhaṇḍanavratam,
tasya śīlacaritasya tat phalaṃ
yena akṣaṇa apāya śodhitāḥ. (Hokazono 1994, 378^d)

This is not the only example of such a kind of versed texts in *Lalitavistara*. Passages with similar characteristics can also be found in Chapter 13 of the *sūtra* (see for example verses 22–34).

Some versed passages in the *Mahāvastu*, constituting a eulogy to the Buddha or being a part of such a eulogy, also bear a considerable resemblance to *Jātakastavas*, though this resemblance is not as close as that of the *Lalitavistara* verses. A good example of it is a praise uttered to the Buddha by one of Māra's sons:

In the whole world, there is no one comparable to you. These are the deeds you performed in previous [lives], O great ṛṣi.

In previous [lives], for innumerable *kalpas*, you used to perform abandoning. You abandoned superior capital cities that belonged to you, numerous elephants, numerous horses, splendid chariots. This is the reason why you are illuminating all the cardinal points, o foremost among beings!

You abandoned your wife as well as your own flesh, your sons, your daughters and your own eyes. In previous [lives], you abandoned your head that was dear to you. This is the reason why you are illuminating the cardinal points all around!

You abandoned divine bright jewels, various palaces adorned with visible jewels and shining like stars in the sky, shining like lightning. The whole [your body] is shining forth in front of people! (Senart 1890, 337–338)

An iterative structure is likewise inherent to these verses, which can be easily ascertained through examining the Sanskrit text of the *Mahāvastu* fragment translated above:

na kaścīd asti samo sarvaloke
tathāsi pūrvacarito maharṣi ||

tyāgyāsi pūrve caraṃ kalpanantāṃ
tyaktā viśiṣṭā tava rājadhāni |
hastigaṇā aśva bahu puṇyayānaṃ
tena prabhāsi diśa satvasāra ||

tyajitva bhāryā tatha cātmamāṃsaṃ
putrā ca dhītā nayanātmamāṃsaṃ |
tyajitva pūrvam priyaUttamāṅgaṃ
tena prabhāsi diśatāṃ samantā ||

tyajitva divyā ratanāni śuddhā
nānā vimānā sphuṭaratnacitrā |
nakṣatraĀbhā nabhe vidyutābhā
sarvo vibhāsi purato janasya ||

The content of the stanzas, likewise, points to the virtuous deeds performed by the Buddha in his previous lives, however, no reference is made to any specific *jātaka* story. Rather, we are told here about the might of the “perfection of giving,” which he possessed. In the *Mahāvastu*, as well as in the *Lalitavistara*, versed fragments of such a kind, form a part of the voluminous praises addressed to the Buddha. These praises are often prefaced by an announcement telling the reader that somebody will glorify Śākyamuni (Senart 1890, 337; Hokazono 1994, 376). The Sanskrit verb *stu* is used in it in different grammatical forms and with different verbal prefixes. From this verbal root, as we have already mentioned, different Sanskrit terms denoting “hymn” genre are derived,

including *stotra*, *stuti*, or *stava*. The third one of these terms is used as a second component in the *jātaka-stava* compound known as the title of the two poems in question.

Similar Poetical Form in the *Ṛgveda*

As I mentioned above, in order to examine genre peculiarities of the *Jātakastavas*, one should treat them as a part of the Indian hymnographic tradition. Speaking about the “hymn” genre (*stotra*, *stuti*, *stava*) in Indian literature, one has to deal with poems which have very different formal and content features. Researchers of ancient and medieval Indian hymnography admit that it is hardly possible to give a more or less accurate definition of that genre, and eventually every specialist defines it in his own way.⁵

To trace back the history of this genre in ancient India, it is necessary to turn to the oldest samples of it—namely to the poems of the *Ṛgveda*. Regarding Vedic hymns, T. Elizarenkova describes their standard model as consisting of two parts: appellative and explicative (1999, 483–486; 1995, 9). The narrative presented in the explicative part can be divided into four levels: 1) attributes, i.e. objects and qualities related to a given deity, 2) epithets, 3) ties with other mythological figures, 4) naming of actions performed by a given deity (the last one traditionally corresponds to the so called “epic” part of a hymn in studies of ancient Greek hymnography).

Elizarenkova notes that the appellative part in Vedic poetry can often be reduced to nothing and completely replaced by the explicative part. Numerous examples of such forms of hymns can be discovered outside the Vedic tradition as well. Among them, there are many eulogies with the explicative part expressed mainly through its “epic” level (i.e. consisting in the naming of actions). The same can be said about a considerable number of Buddhist hymns.⁶

Some Vedic hymns demonstrate the dominance of the “epic” level of the explicative part in their content, and at the same time display certain similarities with the *Jātakastavas*, which are worth mentioning. Here are some stanzas from the English translation⁷ of the hymn 2.15:

1. Here, I am going to praise the great ones of the great one,
The true deeds of the true one.

On *trikadruta* [festivals] he drank [much] of pressed [*soma*],
Being intoxicated with it, Indra killed the snake.

2. Without pillars, he fixed the vast sky.
He filled heaven and earth, the intermediate space.
He maintained the earth and broadened it.
Being intoxicated with *soma*, he performed these [deeds].
3. With measures, he measured the forward-looking [mountains], like if they
were a seat [on a sacrifice].
He cleaved corridors for the rivers with the *vajra*.
He let the water flow easily down the long ways.
Being intoxicated with *soma*, he performed these [deeds].
4. Having besieged those who took away Dabhīti,
He burned away all [their] weapons in the flamed-up fire.
He provided [Dabhīti] with cows, horses and chariots.
Being intoxicated with *soma*, he performed these [deeds]. ...
10. Let this generous cow, being the [reward] of yours, o Indra,
Give milk to the singer according to [his] will!
Befriend the worshippers! Let our share not go beyond!
[Desiring to obtain] good, manful [sons], we are going to pronounce a loud
word among those who assembled [for the oblation].

Like both *Jātakastavas* (and like the whole Indian hymnography for the most part), this hymn has an “introductory” and a “concluding” stanzas. They represent typical motifs: in the beginning of the eulogy, the author announces his will to praise Indra, and in the final stanza, which can be considered a kind of a *phalaśruti*, he expresses his hope to receive a reward for his effort.

The content of all the verses embraced by this “frame,” represents almost exclusively the “epic” level of a hymn, consisting solely of the enumeration of Indra’s glorious deeds (e.g. killing the snake, fixing the vast sky, maintaining and broadening the earth, cleaving corridors for the rivers with the *vajra*, etc.).

Each of these verses has the same structure, expressed by the fourth line repeated in each one of them (“Being intoxicated with *soma*, he performed these

[deeds]”). It can be easily seen both from the above English translation, and from the original Sanskrit text (verses 2–4 of the same fragment):

2. avaṃśé dyám astabhāyad bṛhāntam
 á ródasī aprṇad antárikṣam |
 sá dhārayat pṛthivīm papráthac ca
sómasya tá máda índras cakāra ||
3. sádmeva práco ví mimāya mánair
 vájreṇa kháni atṛṇan nadínām |
 vṛthāsṛjat pathíbhir dīrghayātháiḥ
sómasya tá máda índras cakāra ||
4. sá pravolḥṣṇ parigátyā dabhíter
 víśvam adhāg áyudham iddhé agnáu |
 sám góbbhir áśvair asṛjad ráthebbhiḥ
sómasya tá máda índras cakāra || (Sontakke 1976, 62–65)

However, unlike the *Jātakastavas*, the iterative structure here does not bear the function of dividing the content of these verses into separate stories about Indra’s virtuous deeds. In this hymn, no correspondence can be seen between the number of textual blocks with the same structure, and the number of the deeds mentioned.

Taking them separately, these characteristics of the Vedic hymn in question, namely “introductory” and “concluding” stanzas of a certain content, enumeration of the god’s virtuous deeds, a specific iterative structure of its verses, can be discovered elsewhere in the Indian hymnography with little effort. But it is not easy to find a considerable number of hymns where all these features would be present together. The conjunction of these features in one poetic work makes us consider it as a sample of a specific genre, of a certain type of hymns. This specific genre, in relation to its form and partially to its content, can be of the same origin as the genre, represented by the two extant *Jātakastavas*. Accepting this assumption, we can make some conclusions concerning the history of the “literary type” of both *Jātakastavas*.

Conclusion

In the *R̥gveda*, one can find several other hymns with similar characteristics (compare, for example, I.80, I.112, II.12, II.13, II.14). This makes evident that the authors of *Jātakastavas* composed their poems using a literary form that developed long before the emergence of Buddhism. The presence of the Buddhist hymns of the same genre in the versed fragments of the *Mahāvastu* and *Lalitavistara* leads us to the conclusion that the Buddhist authors and compilers were familiar with this form since rather early times (namely, since the first century C.E.⁸). At a certain point in time, it came to be used in the Buddhist literary tradition for composing independent poems similar to *Jātakastavas*. This form turned out to be perfect for glorifying numerous virtuous deeds of the Buddha, performed by him in his numerous births, in a single poem. Thanks to its inherent iterative structure, ancient Buddhist poets had an opportunity to compose a kind of a list of *jātakas*, in which one *jātaka* could be easily separated from another. Every item of this list could be furnished with poetic figures in order to give aesthetic pleasure to the reader. Otherwise it could have solely an evocative function—making readers recollect certain *jātaka* stories in their minds through naming them.

Notes

- 1 Bailey (1939, 851–860). See also an English translation of its Sanskrit version, in Bailey (1954, 22–29).
- 2 All the quotations from the Khotanese *Jātakastava* in this paper are rendered in the English translation by Dresden (1955, 401–404).
- 3 See for instance, Stainton (2013, 20).
- 4 For another example of this kind of eulogy from the *Lalitavistara*, see Hokazono (1994, 612–616).
- 5 See for example, Stainton (2013, 13–16), Bronner (2007, 2), and Cutler (1987, 19). Jan Gonda gives no clear definition of *stotra* (Gonda 1977, 232–270). See also, Lienhard (1984, 128–131).
- 6 See for example the famous *Śatapañcāsatka* by Mātṛceṭa (Bailey 1951).
- 7 My translation follows the Russian translation by T. Elizarenkova (1999, 253–254).
- 8 On the dating of the *Lalitavistara* and the *Mahāvastu*, see De Jong (1997–98, 252–253), Jones (1949, xi), and Tournier (2012, 87–104).

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