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## INTRODUCTION BY THE GUEST EDITORS

ANNETTE SCHMIEDCHEN, ARLO GRIFFITHS  
*and* RYOSUKE FURUI

The seven papers in this volume are based on lectures given during a workshop entitled “**Epigraphic Evidence on Patronage and Social Context of Buddhist Monasteries in Medieval South and Southeast Asia,**” held at the Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia, The University of Tokyo, on 27th and 28th May 2019. The workshop attempted to address a range of questions related to Buddhist *vihāras*, such as (1) Who were the patrons and how were they located in local power structure? Related to this, what were the relations between *vihāras* and temporal powers? (2) What were the forms of patronage and how were they connected with economy and subsistence of particular periods and regions? (3) What was the social context of Buddhist *vihāras*? In other words, what was the structure of the societies in which *vihāras* were located and their relation and interaction with monastic institutions? Participants were asked to provide epigraphic materials and to discuss their interpretation, in the hope that this would pave the way to answering such questions while also revealing the specific characteristic of *vihāras* in various regions of South and Southeast Asia, over a period covering more than a millennium.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This workshop was hosted by the Japanese Society for the Promotion of Sciences Project VIHARA (Comprehensive Studies of Indian Buddhist Monasteries from the Gupta Period Onward [JSPS KAKENHI Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (A) 18H03569]) and co-funded by the European Research Council Project DHARMA (The Domestication of “Hindu” Asceticism and the Religious Making of South and Southeast Asia [ERC 809994], in which latter almost all contributors are involved. For the publication in the journal *Buddhism, Law & Society*, the authors have attempted to respond to the (unpublished) comparative comments by Shayne Clarke, who was discussant at the workshop, and to pay closer attention to legal aspects than was foreseen in the conceptual planning for the Tokyo event. Nevertheless, while all the articles focus on various facets of the interrelation between Buddhism and society, the treatment of law is rather diverse in the individual contributions. These differences are caused by the specific academic foci of the authors and even more by dissimilarities in the relevant sources. For some fields of study, fundamental philological research still had to be conducted. For other areas, the competition between different

The articles resulting from the workshop focus on the Buddhist monastic cultures and the epigraphic use of the term *vihāra* in several **sub-regions** of the greater region of South and Southeast Asia. The geographical scope ranges from Gujarat in the west to Java and Bali in the east. Most of the contributions are dedicated to the period that may, for want of a more satisfactory and cross-culturally applicable term, still be referred to as **medieval**, with a particular emphasis on the time from the 6th through the 13th and 14th centuries. Some of the authors present longue-durée studies: Ryosuke Furui on Bengal in eastern India (including parts of present-day Bangladesh), Arlo Griffiths, Salomé Pichon, and William Southworth on Campā (in present-day Vietnam), Kunthea Chhom on Cambodia (including parts of present-day Thailand), and Arlo Griffiths on Java and Bali (in present-day Indonesia). Due to the limitations of sources, the paper by Annette Schmiedchen on Gujarat in western India is confined to the 6th and 7th centuries. Vincent Tournier discusses material from Āndhra in southeast India, which dates from an earlier period, namely from the 1st century BCE through the first centuries CE, thus complementing the findings on the potential changes in patronage patterns. Whereas most of the Burmese material (from present-day Myanmar) which has been examined by Christian Lammerts dates from the 12th and 13th centuries, his analysis also includes later sources, hence giving an outlook of developments beyond the 14th century. The time frame of several of the studies is related to the regional history of Buddhism at large, namely its decline in India (earlier in western India than in eastern and southern India), its disappearance in most parts of Indonesia through the advent of Islam, or its relatively uninterrupted development in Burma through the early modern period down to the present. The inevitable gaps in our geographic and chronological coverage and the remoteness between some of the contexts that we do cover obviously complicate meaningful comparison and the formulation of valid generalizations. But comparison does reveal a number of significant trends and discontinuities.

All the observations presented in this volume relate to similar types of **sources**. While inscriptions are central to each contribution, this epigraphic evidence is contrasted with other textual sources as well as archaeological or architectural findings. The major types of inscriptions were stone epigraphs on stelae, pillars, beams, etc., as well as copper-plate char-

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legal traditions, Buddhist and non-Buddhist ones, is too profound to be extensively addressed in a volume on the social context of Buddhist monasticism.

ters. There are a few records engraved on other materials, for instance, metal vases from Bengal and cult utensils from Campā. As in most parts of the pre-modern world, lithic records were also prevalent in many sub-regions of South and Southeast Asia. Although less common as epigraphic media, engraved sets of copper plates were the predominant inscriptional genre in some regions of India in the early medieval period and have also been found in Indonesia. In India, as indicated by Vincent Tournier (p. 2–3), the shift from stone inscriptions to copper plates (and later back to lithic epigraphs) can be read as one indication for changes in patronage patterns from non-royal to royal (and vice versa).

It is beyond doubt that copper-plate inscriptions were **legal documents**. And many of the stone epigraphs discussed in this volume fall into the same category, as has been convincingly shown by Christian Lammerts (p. 328). Following the indological epigraphical tradition, we refer to records engraved on copper plates as “charters” (in the sense of German “Urkunde”), because the majority of them are official decrees on royal donations to religious beneficiaries (in the sources studied here, mainly in favor of Buddhist recipients of such gifts). These copper-plate charters served as title deeds, as they were usually the written record of land grants, handed over to the donees. Copper-plate charters as well as stone inscriptions documenting religious grants of different kinds of assets can be regarded as **endowment** records, because they recorded property transfer in the form of endowment (German “Stiftung”). The surplus of certain assets was assigned to particular groups of beneficiaries, in order to enable and encourage them to act on behalf of and in line with the grantors, i.e., their benefactors, usually in perpetuity, which is in Sanskrit expressed with the term *akṣayanīvī*, discussed by Vincent Tournier (p. 5).

The use of **Sanskrit** as supra-regional epigraphic language is attested in all the sub-regions investigated here from late antiquity onwards. Whereas the inscriptions from Bengal and Gujarat of the early medieval period examined by Ryosuke Furui and Annette Schmiedchen were exclusively composed in Sanskrit, the epigraphic material from the several sub-regions in Southeast Asia studied by Arlo Griffiths, Kunthea Chhom, Christian Lammerts and others was characterized by a steady increase in the use of **vernacular idioms**, the ones relevant in this volume being Cham, Khmer, Javanese, Balinese, and Burmese. The increasing importance of regional languages in epigraphy is also well attested for the Indian subcontinent, but these linguistic developments set in at a time when Buddhism was already on the decline in India and did not touch all

regions where Buddhism remained important longer than it did elsewhere, notably in Bengal. This is why the vernacular turn does not pertain to the South Asian sources under study here.

The most important non-epigraphic textual sources for the subject of this volume are **Chinese accounts** on the respective sub-regions, first and foremost those of the two famous Buddhist pilgrims Xuanzang and Yijing. Whereas Xuanzang traveled through Central Asia to India, but never visited any part of Southeast Asia, Yijing traveled through insular Southeast Asia to India. Xuanzang perambulated large parts of the Indian sub-continent and recorded specific details of the regions he visited. He sometimes amalgamated his own eyewitness report with hearsay evidence. Yijing, on the other hand, provides first-hand information on Sumatra and the Bihar/Bengal area, where he stayed for longer periods, but his account is often more a treatise on *vinaya*, i.e., on the monastic law code of the Mūlasarvāstivāda school, than a real travelogue, describing theory rather than practice, often in a polemical way. For this reason, Shayne Clarke advises caution in using Yijing's work and the need for other evidence to confirm his claims.

The same holds true for many **archaeological and architectural findings**, which ideally should corroborate the data derived from the inscriptions. However, the papers in this volume show that archaeological and epigraphic data sets often do not match with each other at all, or at least not to the desired extent. Annette Schmiedchen postulates that, despite pertinent attestations in some 26 copper-plate charters of the Maitraka dynasty and despite Xuanzang's references to monasteries in 6th/7th-century Valabhī in Gujarat, practically no archaeological remains of monastic structures are known so far, as present-day Valabhipur is an inhabited site mostly unexcavated to date. Kunthea Chhom, on the other hand, finds that architectural remains of only two of the Buddhist *vihāras* mentioned in some 20 stone inscriptions from the Khmer kingdom have survived, namely the Royal Monastery (K. 273 / 1186 CE), identified with Ta Prohm (in Siem Reap Province, Cambodia), and the Brai Svāy Monastery (K. 413 / 1361 CE), present-day Prey Svay (in Sukhothai Province, Thailand). Arlo Griffiths points to the fact that the provenance of Javanese inscriptions found in the 19th century has not been recorded with a degree of precision that would allow to establish a geographic relationship to known archaeological sites, while not a single site has convincingly been interpreted as a *vihāra* by archaeologists. Although *vihāras* figure in some 20 inscriptions from Campā, Griffiths, Pichon, and Southworth find a par-

adoxical absence of clearly identifiable *vihāras* in the archaeological data also in this cultural context.

We thus encounter difficulty in identifying extant architectural structures as *vihāras* in more than one of the sub-regions in Southeast Asia. In the architectural context of early medieval western and eastern India, a Buddhist *vihāra* is traditionally associated with a **living space**, to which are attached cells for monks (or nuns) to reside in, most often arranged around a rectangular courtyard.<sup>2</sup> But according to Griffiths, Pichon, and Southworth, no traces of such cells have yet been revealed among the surviving architectural remains of Campā. In contrast, the Buddhist complex of Ta Prohm in Cambodia once housed 94 cells in brick and laterite. Kunthea Chhom, however, notes that in K. 273, several hundreds of cells (*veśman*) made of stone and brick were clearly mentioned for the so-called Royal Monastery, and hence the figures in the epigraphic description by far outnumber “what can be noticed on the ground today.” Kunthea Chhom as well as Griffiths, Pichon, and Southworth discuss the potential deduction that the residential quarters might have been built—partly or completely—of “light” or “perishable” material. This observation reminds us of what is known about the Sri Lankan medieval monasteries of Anurādhapura and Polonnaruva, which also seem to differ from the common architectural “templates” of ancient and medieval India. H. T. Basnayake has concluded:

The present remains ... do not warrant us to make an exhaustive study on the residences of the saṅgha mainly because most of the buildings of this type are ruined beyond recognition, for ... these buildings had not been built of durable materials. The concept that guided the builders in constructing this type of buildings seems to be that these edifices should not be given the same durable character as those of worship ...<sup>3</sup>

In this context, Griffiths, Pichon, and Southworth have expressed the relevance of the question what the term *vihāra* was intended to mean in Southeast Asian inscriptions. Kunthea Chhom shows that in the Old Khmer epigraph K. 413 of Prey Svay in Thailand, which mentions a *kuṭi-vihāra*, the term *vihāra* would have referred rather to the hall where the Buddha statue was installed, while cells were designated by the term *kuṭi*.

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<sup>2</sup> There are, of course, other regional varieties. Thus, in South India (Āndhra), cells were built in a line with a veranda in front, not grouped around a courtyard.

<sup>3</sup> Henri Thisera Basnayake, *Sri Lankan Monastic Architecture* (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1986), 89.

She also proposes that this *vihāra* may be identified with the remains of the brick hall in front of the *stūpas*, whereas there seem to be no traces of a *kuṭi*. The use of the otherwise unattested compound *kuṭi-vihāra*, rendered as “*kuṭi(s)* and *vihāra*,” is interesting in view of the fact that in K. 413 the Siamese king is described as having ordered the construction of this *kuṭi-vihāra* to host a delegation of monks from the island of Laṅka. This connection reminds us of the term used in Sri Lankan monastic culture for cells, namely *kuṭi*, which, according to H. T. Basnayake, were housed in groups of small buildings:

Though brick and mortar were used in constructing *kuṭis* as evidenced by some extant remains, one can notice that the quality of the materials used in them was inferior to that of the materials used in the buildings for worship. The superstructures however were always built of wood.<sup>4</sup>

Arlo Griffiths concludes, on the basis of the Javanese epigraphic and non-epigraphic evidence, that (1) the term *kuṭi* could mean “cell,” (2) that a *kuṭi* could be converted into a *vihāra*, suggesting that the *kuṭi* could be a simpler structure than a *vihāra*, and (3) that *kuṭi* also seems to have been used as a quasi-synonym for *vihāra*. For Campā from the 11th century onwards, Griffiths, Pichon, and Southworth observe that the terms *kuṭi* and *vihāra* occur in lists of religious buildings restored after the wars against the Khmers.

The term *kuṭi* also features in the epigraphic material from India, although it is not as prominent there as in the inscriptions from Southeast Asia, and usually appears in the compound technical term *gandhakuṭi*, “perfume chamber,” denoting a sub-structure of a monastery, i.e., the sanctum of a *vihāra*. At least two 7th-century copper-plate charters of the Maitraka dynasty from Gujarat discussed by Annette Schmedchen mention such *gandhakuṭis*, one housing a Buddha image and the other one probably housing an image of the female Bodhisattva Tārā. Both “perfume chambers” seem to have been taken care of by the *saṅghas*, the monastic communities, residing in the *vihāras* to which these *gandhakuṭis* belonged. The term *gandhakuṭi* is also attested in the Bengal corpus studied by Ryosuke Furui, namely in an 8th-century copper-plate charter of the Pāla dynasty. This inscription refers, *inter alia*, to the foundation of a *gandhakuṭi*, “perfume chamber,” and a *vihārikā*, “small monastery,” both being sub-structures of the great monastery (*mahāvihāra*) of *Somapura*,

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<sup>4</sup> Basnayake, *Sri Lankan Monastic Architecture*, 89.



identified with Paharpur in present Bangladesh. Ryosuke Furui points out that each facility, including the *gandhakuṭī*, had its own *saṅgha*. He links the epigraphic data from Bengal with sigillary evidence from neighboring Bihar which mentions monks “residing” (*vāsin*) in several “perfume chambers” of the great monastery at Nālandā. We may wonder whether monks could live in such structures. Perhaps this phrase refers to residential buildings where the *gandhakuṭī* with the Buddha image formed the center of the back wall.

There was not only regional and chronological variation within the Buddhist terminology used to describe the monastic institutions in different sub-regions of South and Southeast Asia, but the articles in this volume also present evidence for terminological borrowings and **convergence** between Buddhists and non-Buddhists, which was particularly salient in Southeast Asia. If one comes across the word *vihāra* in an Indian epigraphic context, this term most likely refers to a Buddhist monastery, with a few exceptions from Gupta-period Bengal where the term *vihāra* can also stand for Jaina monasteries. In Southeast Asia, however, the situation is notably different. Griffiths, Pichon, and Southworth state that the term *vihāra* can denote a Buddhist or a Śaiva foundation in Campā. Conversely, Kunthea Chhom emphasizes that in Khmer epigraphy, the use of the term *āśrama* is attested for religious institutions of diverse affiliations: for Brahmanical (*brāhmaṇāśrama*), Vaiṣṇava (*vaiṣṇavāśrama*) and Śaiva (*māheśvarāśrama*) hermitages, but also for Buddhist ones (*sau-gatāśrama*). We know of adaptations of Śaiva practices into Buddhism in India as the result of Śaiva-Buddhist encounters, too; however, these are usually less evident in epigraphic sources. In terms of terminological borrowings, it is remarkable that, according to Ryosuke Furui, the term *maṭhikā*—like *vihārikā* from *vihāra* a diminutive of the term *maṭha*, usually denoting a Hindu-Brahmanical institution—occurs with reference to a Buddhist institution in a Bengal inscription.

The differences of the epigraphic evidence for Buddhist monasticism from South Asia when compared with the Southeast Asian data are not only discernible in the vocabulary but also in several functional aspects. The majority of the inscriptions mentioning Buddhist institutions record **foundations and endowments** in their favor. The focal point of such patronage in India in late antiquity and in the medieval period were *vihāras* with the *saṅghas* residing therein, so that the function of monasteries as **living quarters** was generally stressed. By contrast, and in the light of disparate archaeological findings, the focus in Southeast Asian Buddhism

seems to have been much more on structures, labeled as “temples” in secondary literature, with a stronger emphasis on their function as **places of worship**. Griffiths, Pichon, and Southworth remind us of the fact that the *vihāras* in Campā were named in a way that combined the name of the founder with that of the Buddhist deity installed there. Arlo Griffiths highlights the association of *vihāras* with named deities also for Java. Furthermore, he notes that the only case of a Śailendra inscription mentioning the foundation of a *vihāra* without an associated temple is the so-called Abhayagirivihāra for monks from Sri Lanka. And Christian Lammerts illustrates that according to one of the mid-17-century Burmese compendia on jurisprudence, Buddhist shrine land was favored over monastery land in cases of dispute and not *vice versa*.

In stone inscriptions, the **foundation** of a *vihāra* and the **endowment** of this institution with certain assets to provide the means for its maintenance are often described as consecutive pious acts. This can be seen in the material from ancient Āndhra discussed by Vincent Tournier as well as in the epigraphs from Cambodia, Campā, Java and Bali studied by Kunthea Chhom, Arlo Griffiths, and others. In many copper-plate charters from India, as illustrated in the studies by Annette Schmiedchen and Ryosuke Furui, we find a clear separation between the foundation of a Buddhist *vihāra* and an endowment for its maintenance. Whereas Indian title-deeds engraved on copper plates certify endowments in favor of monasteries, they only indirectly refer to the foundation of the institutions which benefitted from such grants, and specific foundation records of these *vihāras* are mostly missing.

The separation between foundation and endowment of Buddhist *vihāras* in early medieval India (and partly also in Java) follows from the different roles played by the agents involved in both donative acts: the **founder** and the **donor**. According to Annette Schmiedchen, kings, noble ladies, officials, monks, as well as traders founded monasteries in 6th/7th-century Gujarat, while the rulers of the Maitraka dynasty supported the *vihāras* established by others through the permanent transfer of the tax revenue from villages. In Bengal, as pointed out by Ryosuke Furui, the overall patronage pattern was similar, with a distinct dichotomy between the different roles of kings and subordinate rulers and with a marked focus on petitions expressed by the founders of *vihāras* toward the potential royal donors.

This distinction between founder and foundation on the one hand and donor and endowment on the other also raises the question of the relation-

ship between the **royal** and **non-royal** spheres in the patronage of Buddhist monasticism in South and Southeast Asia. While the involvement of royal agents differed by region and time period, it was more common for rulers to maintain *vihāras* than establish them. In India, this tendency is linked to specific features of copper-plate inscriptions, which served first and foremost as royal endowment records. Whereas Tournier, with reference to early Āndhra, opines that these charters “shed important light on a kind of patronage poorly documented in earlier periods” (p. 3), we would like to interpret the emergence of title-deeds engraved on copper plates not merely as a shift in document types, but rather as an indication of changes in actual donative practices. The issuance of copper-plate charters was a royal prerogative, but kings could have had engraved lithic records in the same way that private donors did and were not bound to perishable writing materials.

In the donative records, a number of similarities can be traced between Buddhist endowments in South Asia and in Southeast Asia, but also several significant differences. A standard copper-plate grant for a Buddhist monastery consisted of individual plots of **land** or even whole villages, i.e., the revenue income derived from them, often described in a highly formulaic and standardized way. In contrast, Southeast Asian epigraphs on stone and other supports are usually more specific and detailed in their information on the donative objects. An essential feature in Buddhist (as well as other religious) grants from mainland Southeast Asia seems to have been that besides agricultural land also **unfree laborers**—men, women, and children—were a standard element in the lists of assets bestowed on the beneficiaries. Arlo Griffiths, Salomé Pichon, and William Southworth as well as Christian Lammerts call them “slaves,” while Kunthea Chhom labels them “servants.” As Petra Kieffer-Pülz has shown,<sup>5</sup> the acceptance of **servants or slaves** violated certain *vinaya* rules. However, giving such forbidden “items” to a monastery rather than to a *saṅgha* was permitted. Hence, it is perhaps not surprising that we rarely find references to the existence of unfree laborers in Buddhist grants from the Indian subcontinent; and if these are mentioned, they are usually not listed among the donative assets.

Specific *vinaya* terms for servants like *ārāmika* do not occur in Indian epigraphs; the expression *pādamūla*, however, is found in inscriptions

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<sup>5</sup> Petra Kieffer-Pülz, “Stretching the Vinaya Rules and Getting Away with It,” *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 29 (2007): 10–15.

from Gujarat, Bengal, and Orissa. Buddhist copper-plate charters of the Maitrakas from 7th-century Gujarat stipulate that one of the purposes of the grants documented therein was to use them, *inter alia*, “for the livelihood of [those who are at] the soles of the feet” (*pādamūla-prajīvanāya*), i.e., for the sustenance of the servants. As observed by Annette Schmiechen, the same formula is attested in Maitraka grants for Hindu temples, and a similar one is found in contemporary charters of the Bhauma-Kara dynasty from Orissa, recording grants for Buddhist and Hindu institutions. According to Ryosuke Furui’s reading of a metal-vase inscription from 8th-century Chittagong recording land purchases in favor of a *vihāra*, most of the transactions were carried out by residents (*nivāsin*) of the very same monastery, who were partly monks and partly *pādamūlas*. In Bengal and elsewhere, the epigraphically attested *pādamūlas* clearly did not belong to the *saṅghas* of the *vihāras*. But the nature of their possible roles can only be deduced for Bengal where some of them are labeled as scribes (*karaṇin*). Unfortunately, there is no information on how the servants had “joined” the monasteries, or—in other words—had come into the “possession” of these *vihāras*.

The lack of epigraphic evidence for the large-scale deployment of slaves and bonded laborers to cultivate the agricultural land in the possession of Buddhist monasteries in many parts of medieval India, unlike in Southeast Asia, seems to indicate that there was sufficient supply of **free workforce** on the Indian subcontinent. Ryosuke Furui observes several hierarchical layers of **tenure** as presented in the Bengal records: (1) the actual cultivators, (2) the beneficiaries of the grants, (3) the donors of the land, and (4) the rulers who had the privilege of tax collection. In charters from 6th/7th-Gujarat, there is also evidence for different levels of tenure over land granted for religious purposes. Such plots were described as either “held” (*pratyaya*) or “cultivated” (*prakṛṣṭa*) by somebody. The situation in Āndhra might have been different, as can be seen in epigraphs from Alluru (Krishna District, Andhra Pradesh). Vincent Tournier refers to a series of records engraved in two nearly identical copies on two large limestone pillars (EIAD 200–201) and dating from the 1st or 2nd century CE. The extant portions of the respective texts record several gifts of buildings, fields, **unfree laborers**, cattle, and money, much in the same way as in the lists of assets in many later stone inscriptions from Southeast Asia, where—as Kunthea Chhom and Christian Lammerts illustrate—the inscriptions not only give the total numbers of such donated servants, but also enumerate them individually.

The income from land and other assets bestowed upon Buddhist institutions ought to be used for the maintenance of *vihāras* and for the subsistence and activities of their residents. Local *saṅghas* are attested in the epigraphic sources from Āndhra, Gujarat, and Bengal as well as from Cambodia. But in general, the term *saṅgha* is less frequently used in Southeast Asian inscriptions than in the relevant material from India, as pointed out by Griffiths, Pichon, and Southworth. This fact may imply that whereas in many parts of India, *saṅghas* acted as legal persons and recipients of endowments, in Southeast Asia, *vihāras* and other Buddhist institutions were the beneficiaries of grants. A similar scenario can be observed with regard to the term *bhikṣu* as designation for monks. Whereas the use of this term is standard in Indian Buddhist inscriptions, the epigraphic record from Southeast Asia contains far fewer references to *bhikṣus* than it does to *vihāras*, as Arlo Griffiths and his co-authors show in their contributions on Campā and Indonesia. To complicate things even more, Arlo Griffiths notes that in Java, the term *bhikṣu* could not only designate Buddhist monks, but also Śaiva mendicants. In addition, Javanese epigraphic and non-epigraphic sources refer to Buddhist monks bound to celibacy as well as non-celibate clerics. Married clergymen were sometimes associated with the *vihāras* discussed in inscriptions that also mention the worship of Tantric deities. Whereas references to *bhikṣus* occur in all of the sub-regions, *bhikṣuṇīs* or Buddhist nuns are less visible in the material studied here. Only Annette Schmiechen documents the presence of charters and endowments for nunneries in 6th/7th-century Gujarat.

The article by Vincent Tournier provides ample epigraphic evidence from Āndhra in the first centuries CE for the attachment of monastic donors and beneficiaries to specific Buddhist schools, i.e., their *nikāya* affiliation. In the 6th century, Xuanzang records the *nikāyas* prevalent in the different sub-regions of South Asia, and Yijing also reports which *nikāyas* were predominant in Southeast Asia and eastern India. But in contrast to the inscriptions of the first centuries CE from many parts of India and the information from the contemporary accounts of the Chinese pilgrims, the names of specific *nikāyas* are not attested in the 6th/7th-century Buddhist copper-plate charters from Gujarat. Whereas the epigraphic corpora from Bengal and Cambodia contain a few references to *nikāyas*, no mention of such lineages has been found so far in the sources from Campā and Indonesia.

Except for most pre-5th century corpora from Āndhra and the Burmese epigraphs, there is direct and indirect evidence for Mahāyāna influ-

ence in the other corpora, particularly those from Campā and Cambodia. Besides attestations for the terms *mahāyāna* as well as *mahāyānika/māhāyānika* with reference to *vihāras* and *bhikṣusaṅghas*, Bodhisattvas as, for instance, Avalokiteśvara, Tārā, and Prajāpāramitā and their temples are mentioned in the inscriptions from South and Southeast Asia. Allusions to **Tantric** deities and concepts can also be discerned in the epigraphs from Cambodia, Campā, and Indonesia. The epigraphic evidence for *nikāya* affiliation as well as Mahāyāna and Tantric orientation is significant for our knowledge on the influence of particular groups of Buddhists in certain regions and periods.

To recap, we would like to repeat that Buddhist copper-plate charters and many Buddhist stone inscriptions—the sources studied in this volume—were donative records and hence can be read as a kind of **legal document**. However, their function seems to have gone beyond that, as these epigraphs were also **commemorative**. They could contain eulogies of the donors and of the beneficiaries and often commemorated specific events. Immovable lithic inscriptions were either engraved on architectural elements of the *vihāras* benefitting from the donations or on stelae or other stone supports put up in or near these Buddhist establishments. Movable copper-plate charters must have been handed over as title-deeds to the recipients. As the inscriptions record a specific kind of property transfer, i.e., pious foundations and endowments meant for eternity, their particular form is not only due to the fact that they were legal documents, but also an expression of a permanent socio-religious relationship between the donors, the beneficiaries, and other potential actors, where the enduring flow of income from the donated assets constantly generated *punya*, merit, past their lifetimes. The character of these foundation and endowment records as legal documents is underpinned by their often formulaic style. Especially in the “functional” portions, these texts tell us only what was “legally” important to say and are therefore sometimes difficult to understand.

Christian Lammerts states that “in temporal terms ... the legal inscription is oriented toward the **future**.” This is certainly true, although we often do not know anything about the implementation of these endowments and can only speculate about their management through the beneficiaries, the *vihāras*. In this regard, the common reissue of copper-plate charters in 14th-century Java is remarkable, as it indicates the continued existence of certain endowments or, at least, of tenure claims. In many of

the examples discussed in this volume, a few years or at best one or two decades may have elapsed between the establishment of a monastery and the endowment of landed property in favor of it, with some of the *vihāras* still not built at the time of these grants. Vincent Tournier, however, discusses an exceptional case, a 6th-century copper-plate charter from Āndhra (EIAD 187), where the king bestowed a village on a monastery which had been established by a predecessor who had not only belonged to another dynasty, but had lived half a millennium or more before him. This timeline indicates how **past**, present, and future are intertwined in the medieval epigraphical sources.

