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Challenging the Buddha's Authority: a narrative perspective of power dynamics between the Buddha and his disciples

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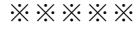
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Chapter 5. After the Buddha Entered *Parinirvāṇa*:

Successors to the Buddha's Authority



Buddhists rarely deny the enormous havoc the death of Śākyamuni Buddha wreaked on his still-young Buddhist community. The pain of losing the great leader, their absolute source of confidence, has been recorded and transmitted in the most graphic detail, represented over and over in a variety of Buddhist texts and artistic works. However, the desperate situation the monastic community confronted after they lost their leader was, at least partially, imputed to the Buddha himself: the predominant Buddhist view, greatly influenced by a notion from the “Mainstream” *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, an early *sūtra* preserved in multiple languages, maintains that even on his deathbed, the Buddha still refused to appoint a successor to lead the monastic community.

Śāriputra could have been the leading candidate for heirship, as he assumes a prominent role in conventional portraits of Śākyamuni's *saṅgha*. This is not limited to his aforementioned epithets such as the “Second Teacher” and the “Second Buddha,” which illustrate his profound religious significance and status as a potential successor of the Buddha as we mentioned above. Moreover, in the *Cātumasutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya* (MN. i. 459) and its Chinese parallels (T. 125 [II] 770c13–771b23; T. 137 [II] 860a21–861a3), the Buddha acknowledged the status of Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana as potential leaders of the monastic community. However, Śākyamuni had already explicitly refused to transfer leadership to Śāriputra during the time when the latter was still alive. Just recall the Buddha's harsh response to Devadatta's demand for leadership discussed in chapter 3: “Devadatta! I would not even give the monastic community to Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana. Why should I entrust it to you, corpse, lickspittle?” (Vin. ii. 188).⁵²⁵ As we are frequently informed, Śākyamuni seems to have been reluctant to entrust a successor with the leadership of the community, which inevitably resulted in a power vacuum after the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*.

⁵²⁵ Buddhists texts consistently place Śāriputra's death prior to the *parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha (cf. Li 2019b). In this light, we can say that the narrative tradition of the Buddha's refusal of Śāriputra's heirship and that of Śāriputra's death are two compatible traditions.

Therefore, for Buddhist monks living in a period when the Buddha is absent, determining how to preserve and transmit the Buddha's spiritual legacy is always a serious problem that urgently awaits solutions. Overall, two different strategies have been devised to guide Buddhist monks on how to confront this power void. On the one hand, the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* advances a crucial proposition concerning the significance of the Buddha within the monastic community: the Buddha denied his absolute authority and ascribed the ultimate refuge to the Dharma instead of himself. On the other hand, despite Śākyamuni's well-documented reluctance to entrust a successor with the leadership of the community, Buddhists have composed various records, mostly in the form of narratives, in which Śākyamuni openly addresses the issue of who his heir could be. The notion of identifying a sanctioned heir (or collective heir) to the Buddha's authority never fades from Buddhist texts, especially those in the form of narratives.

In this chapter, I will demonstrate that Buddhists proposed multiple ways of inheriting the Buddha's religious legacy, which include taking refuge in the Dharma as advanced in the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*; following the leadership of Mahākāśyapa or Ānanda, as most of the Buddhist narratives imply; or the *saṅgha* collectively enjoying the right of inheritors. Throughout the recurrent controversy around the inheritance of the Buddha's authority, ancient Buddhists endeavored to promote different understandings of the buddha nature, legitimate their own traditions, and forge new paths within Buddhism, both theologically and economically.

5.1 The *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*: The Dharma as a refuge in the Buddha's absence

To a certain extent, Buddhism can be understood as comprising the groups of religious followers that coalesce around the figure of the Buddha (or buddhas). The universal topic of worshipping the Buddha in Buddhist literature makes it unnecessary to belabor his religious significance.⁵²⁶ Despite this, the Buddha's central authority is still not an unproblematic given. The controversy mainly arises from the famous discussion, found in the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* corpus, in which the Buddha directly denies his position as the leader of the monastic community when Ānanda asks for further instructions before the Buddha's

⁵²⁶ Generally speaking, the cult of the Buddha is quite popularly depicted in Buddhist literature ranging from ancient to modern, from Mainstream "schools" to Mahāyāna. There are also plenty of academic studies on this, a complete list of which is unnecessary to supply here. For selected references to relevant modern academic works, see Yu (1981: 4).

parinirvāṇa.⁵²⁷ The highly controversial idea contained in the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* (the *Mahāyāna-mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra* is excluded)⁵²⁸ can be read—even from a contemporary perspective—as an innovative and bold proposition whose most visceral concern is how to continue to be a Buddhist in the absence of the cult’s founder. In order to fully understand the strategy advanced by the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* to cope with the issues of succession, legitimacy, and authority confronting post-*parinirvāṇa* Buddhist societies, we must again examine what is discussed and signified in this text.

The *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* is preserved in many languages and affiliated with diverse schools. Complete versions include the Pāli *Mahāparinibbānasutta* of the *Dīghanikāya* (No. 16), the Chinese *Youxing jing* 遊行經 of the *Dīrghāgama* (T. 1) of the Dharmaguptaka school, three separate Chinese editions (T. 5, 6, 7) and the Tibetan and Chinese versions of the MSV *Kṣudrakavastu* (Waldschmidt 1950–1951: II & III), in addition to many Sanskrit fragments of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* found in Turfan (Waldschmidt 1950) and several Gāndhārī fragments possibly affiliated with the Dharmaguptaka school (Allon & Salomon 2000: 271–272). Of these different versions, only six contain the Buddha’s response to Ānanda’s entreaty that the Buddha should give additional Dharma instructions before entering *parinirvāṇa*:

- (1) The Pāli *Dīghanikāya* version, which appears also in the *Gilānosutta* of the *Samyuttanikāya*.⁵²⁹

⁵²⁷ Based on the Buddha’s statement, many scholars argue for a lower position of the Buddha in the monastic community. For instance, Yu (1981: 4–5, 9–11) claims that the Buddha himself denied his authority, and ascribed the ultimate refuge to the Dharma instead of himself, based on the English translation of the Pāli *Mahāparinibbānasutta* and *Majjhimanikāya*. Similarly, Ui Hakuju (1965: 14) states that the Buddha possesses no special authoritative power on the basis of the content of the *Mahāparinibbānasutta*. This viewpoint is also shared by Dutt 1962: 28 (“Buddhism was never a ‘church’: among the monk-communities, there existed no central authority or central control; even in a single community of monks there was no head or chief—the principle of hegemony or headship having been ruled out by the Founder himself”). In another work, Dutt (1924: 142) tries to explain the inconsistency between the common view of the Buddha as the leader and the denial of his leadership: “The obvious explanation is that the idea that there was no leader of the *saṅgha*, no one on whom the *saṅgha* was dependent, came to the fore after the death of the first master (*Saṭṭhā*), and this later idea is put into the mouth of Buddha in the *Mahāparinibbāna Suttanta*.”

⁵²⁸ My discussion is restricted to mainstream “schools,” although I am aware that the Mahāyāna texts fully develop their own viewpoints of the buddha nature and how to transmit the Dharma. See, for instance, Silk 2003: 180 for the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra*’s proposition that Mahākāśyapa was the successor of the Buddha.

⁵²⁹ DN. ii. 100 = SN. v. 152: *Kim pan’ ānanda, bhikkhusaṃgho mayi paccāsiṃsati? Desito, ānanda, mayā dhammo anantaram abhiraṃ karitvā. Natth’ ānanda, tathāgatassa dhammesu ācariyamuṭṭhi. Yassa nūna,*

(The Buddha spoke:) “Ānanda! What then does the monastic community expect from me? I have preached the teaching without making any distinction between inside and outside. In terms of the teachings, the Tathāgata never clenches the fist of teachers to keep special knowledge from disciples. Ānanda! If somebody has such thoughts: ‘I am taking charge of the monastic community’ or ‘the monastic community is under my direction,’ Ānanda, he should give some instructions concerning the monastic community. **However, the Tathāgata never harbors the thoughts ‘I am taking charge of the monastic community’ or ‘the monastic community is under my direction.’** How could the Tathāgata give any instructions concerning the monastic community? ... Therefore, Ānanda, **dwelling on the islands of yourselves.**⁵³⁰ **Be refuges to yourselves. There are no other refuges. Dwell on the islands of the teaching. Take refuge in the teaching. There are no other refuges.**”

- (2) An almost identical discussion appears in the Chinese *Chang ahan jing* (**Dīrghāgama*):⁵³¹

The Buddha spoke to Ānanda: “What does the monastic community expect from me? If there is a person claiming “I control the monastic community. I am taking charge of the monastic community,” he should give instructions in the teaching to the assembly. However, **the Tathāgata never says ‘I control the monastic community, and I am taking charge of the monastic community.’** How could the Tathāgata give instructions in the teaching to the assembly? ... **Light the fire**⁵³² by

ānanda, evam assa: ‘ahaṃ bhikkhusaṃghaṃ pariharissāmi’ti vā ‘mam’ uddesiko bhikkhusaṃgho’ti vā, so nūna, ānanda, bhikkhusaṃghaṃ ārabha kiñcid eva udāhareyya. Tathāgatassa kho, ānanda, na evaṃ hoti: ‘ahaṃ bhikkhusaṃghaṃ pariharissāmi’ti vā ‘mam’ uddesiko bhikkhusaṃgho’ti vā. Kiṃ ānanda tathāgato bhikkhusaṃghaṃ ārabha kiñcideva udāharissati ... Tasmātiḥānanda, attadīpā viharatha attasaraṇā anaññasaraṇā, dhammadīpā dhammasaraṇā anaññasaraṇā.

⁵³⁰ In terms of the meaning of the Pāli word *dīpa*, there is a long-standing debate among Buddhists as to whether it means “lamp” (Skt. *dīpa*) or “island” (Skt. *dvīpa*) (cf. Karashima 2015a: 176–177). Karashima proposes that this word is used as a *double entendre* that incorporates both meanings in traditional Buddhist hermeneutics. T.W. Rhys-Davids, in his translation of the *Dīghanikāya*, adopts the meaning “lamp” (See Eng. T.W. and C.A.F. Rhys-Davids 1899–1921: II. 108).

⁵³¹ T. 1 (I) 15a26–b13: 佛告阿難: “眾僧於我有所須耶? 若有自言‘我持眾僧, 我攝眾僧,’ 斯人於眾, 應有教命。如來不言: ‘我持於眾, 我攝於眾.’ 豈當於眾有教令乎? 當自熾燃, 熾燃於法, 勿他熾燃; 當自歸依, 歸依於法, 勿他歸依。”

⁵³² *Chiran* 熾燃 (“to light the fire/ illuminate”) is a translation of Skt./Pkt. *dīpa*.

yourselves. Light the fire with the teaching. Don't have others light the fire. Take refuge in yourselves. Take refuge in the teaching. Don't take refuge in others."

- (3) The *Bannihuan jing* 般泥洹經 (T. 6), an early Chinese translation of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, which was, according to Nattier, translated by Zhi Qian:⁵³³

The Buddha spoke to Ānanda: **"How come the Buddha is far different from the saṅgha [members]? I am always among the bhikṣusaṅgha.** The instructions in the teaching that I ought to give have already been wholly presented to the monastic assembly. Just practice vigorously and obey the teaching ... Therefore, the Buddha initiates the teaching in the world to completely show the great path to *parinirvāṇa* and to eliminate the root cause of birth and death. **Now, I have made your own body as the island (*ātmadvīpa*) so that you can take refuge in your own body (*ātmaśaraṇa*). I have made the teaching as the island so that the teaching is the refuge for your own."**

- (4) In the *Fo bannihuan jing* 佛般泥洹經 (T. 5), a Chinese translation of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* produced around the third century CE:⁵³⁴

The Buddha spoke to Ānanda: "I have already given you the teaching and precept. You just need to behave according to the teaching and precept. **I am indeed among the monastic community.** The monastic members already know all the instructions of the Buddha. **The way to pursue the master's teaching has already been transmitted to the disciples. The disciples should directly obey the [instructions] and diligently cultivate them** ... After my *parinirvāṇa*, you should by no means

⁵³³ T. 6 (I) 180a3–b9: 佛報阿難: “佛豈與眾相違遠乎? 吾亦恒在比丘眾中, 所當施為教誡, 以具前後所說, 皆在眾所, 但當精進案經行之 ... 是以佛起經於天下, 咸示泥洹大道, 以斷生死之本. 我今都為有身作*錠, 令身自歸, 為法教錠, 令法自歸.” * *ding* 錠: As Karashima (1998: 47) correctly points out, this character, instead of being a phonetic transliteration of *dīpa*, just means “lamp” (燈). About the authorship of T. 6, see Nattier 2003: 24.

⁵³⁴ 佛般泥洹經 T. 5 (I) 164b25–c21: 佛告阿難: “我已有經戒, 若曹但當案經戒奉行之. 我亦在比丘僧中. 比丘僧皆已知佛所教勅, 事師法皆以付諸弟子, 弟子但當持行熟學 ... 我般泥洹以後, 無得棄是經戒, 轉相承用, 自思中外, 端心正行, 當持戒法, 中外令如常.”

Nattier (2003: 241n.118) argues that T. 5 was probably based on the preexisting composition of T. 6. However, in light of the less elegant linguistic style and more archaic diction of the T.5, Park (2010) contends that T. 5 was an earlier translation made by Zhi Qian, while T. 6 was translated by Zhi Qian's successors.

abandon the teaching and precept. You should transmit them, contemplate your inner and external world, maintain an upright mind and correct behavior, and obey the precepts so as to keep your inner and external world agreeable to the truth.”

- (5) The third Chinese translation of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* is titled *Da banniepan jing* 大般涅槃經 (T. 7), produced by Faxian in the year 419 CE.⁵³⁵

The teaching that I have preached is your teacher, whom you should worship with your heads and protect. Cultivate them, and do not put them aside and omit them. Exert yourselves as vigorously as when I was still alive ... Now is not the time to dissuade me. In the past, I already roughly preached the essentials of the Dharma to you. Adhere to them reverently, just as if they were none other than myself.”

- (6) The Sanskrit *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* fragments contain related content:⁵³⁶

(The Buddha spoke:) “Ānanda, some people would say: ‘The monastic community is mine. I am taking charge of the monastic community.’ However, Ānanda, **it is never my thought that ‘the monastic community is mine. I am taking charge of the monastic community.’** ... Ānanda! The Tathāgata has no fist of the teacher in terms of the teaching, something that Tathāgata must want to conceal, [thinking in the way that] “there is something I know, but others must not know”? ... **Therefore, Ānanda! No matter [whether it is] today or after I pass away, people must live [utilizing] themselves as the islands and themselves as the refuges, the teaching as the islands and the teaching as the refuges, [using] nothing else as the islands or refuges.**”

- (7) The *Kṣudrakavastu* of the Tibetan Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya is a parallel of the above

⁵³⁵ T. 7 (I) 193 a7–b5: “我所說諸法，則是汝等師，頂戴加守護，修習勿廢忘，汝等勤精進，如我在無異 ... 今者非是勸請我時，向為汝等略說法要，當善奉持如我無異。”

⁵³⁶ Waldschmidt 1950-1951: II. 196–200, 14.10–22. (ya)syānandaivaṃ syāt/ (mamāsti bhikṣu)samgh(aḥ// ahaṃ) bhikṣusamghaṃ pari(hariṣyāmīti).....(mama khalv ā)nanda naivaṃ bha(vati// mamāsti bhikṣu)s(a)mghaḥ// a(ha)m (bhikṣusamghaṃ parihariṣyāmīti).....(Na tatrānanda tathāgatasya dharmeśvācāryam)uṣṭi(r) yaṃ tathāgataḥ praticchādayitavyaṃ manyeta/ kaccin me pare na *vi(dyur iti/).....(tasmād) ānandaitarhi mam(a vā)tyayād ātmadvīpair vihartavyam ātmaśaraṇair dharmadvīpair dha(rmaśaraṇair ananyadvīpair ananyaśaraṇaiḥ.)

vidyur: In the *Saṅgītisūtra* (Hoernle 1916: 23), the same same expression appears as kaccin me pare na vijānīyuh.

Sanskrit *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* fragments, and contains almost the same information:⁵³⁷

(The Buddha spoke:) “Ānanda! Some person has thoughts such as ‘the monastic community is mine,’ ‘I have to teach the monastic community’ or ‘I am leading the monastic community.’ Thinking in this way, this person should leave brief final instructions for the monastic community. However, Ānanda, **I never have such thoughts as ‘the monastic community is mine,’ ‘I have to teach the monastic community,’ ‘I am leading the monastic community.’** Is there indeed any brief final instruction that I can leave to the monastic community? ... Ānanda! In the case of the Tathāgata, he does not have the fist of the teacher in thinking that “because something is not appropriate for others to know, the Tathāgata should conceal it” ... **Therefore, Ānanda! No matter [whether it is] at present or after my passing away, people should live [utilizing] the island of yourselves, the refuge of yourselves, the island of the teaching, and the refuge of the teaching, while [not utilizing] other islands or other refuges.”**

- (8) The Chinese translation of the MSV *Kṣudrakavastu* contains a simpler version compared to the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions:⁵³⁸

No matter [whether it is] at the time when I am still here or after my passing away, be islands unto yourselves. Be refuges unto yourselves. Let the Dharma be your island. Let the Dharma be your refuge. There are no other islands. There are no other refuges. Why? No matter [whether it is] at the time when I am still existing or

⁵³⁷ 'Dul ba phran tshogs kyi gzhi, D.6, 'dul ba, da, 246a7–247a4: kun dga' bo gang zhig 'di snyam du dge slong gi dge 'dun ni bdag gi yin te/ bdag gis dge slong gi dge 'dun la bstan par bya'o// bdag gis dge slong gi dge 'dun drang ngo snyam du sems pa de ni dge 'dun gyi phyir kha chems cung zad smra bar 'gyur ba nyid na/ kun dga' bo nga la ni 'di snyam du dge slong gi dge 'dun nga'i yin te/ ngas dge slong gi dge 'dun la bstan par bya'o// ngas dge slong gi dge 'dun drang ngo snyam du dgongs pa mi mnga' na/ ngas dge slong gi dge 'dun gyi phyir zhal chems kho na cung zad bstan du ci yod/ kun dga' bo de bzhin gshegs pa la ni gang zhig gzhan dag gis shes na mi rung bas de bzhin gshegs pas bcab bo snyam du dgongs ba'i slob dpon gyi dpe mkhyud mi mnga'o// kun dga' bo de lta bas na da lta'am 'das kyang rung gang su dag bdag nyid gling dang/ bdag nyid skyabs dang/ chos kyi gling dang/ chos kyi skyabs kyis gnas par bya'i gling gzhan dang | skyabs gzhan gyis ni ma yin no.

Another similar instruction given to Ānanda by the Buddha is also found in the 'Dul ba phran tshogs kyi gzhi, D. 6, 'dul ba, tha, 242a7–b3.

⁵³⁸ T. 1451 (XXIV) 387b18–20: “於我現在及我滅後，汝等自為洲渚，自為歸依，法為洲渚，法為歸依，無別洲渚，無別歸依。何以故？若我現在及我滅度，若依法者樂持戒者，於我聲聞弟子最為第一。”

after my passing away, those who rely on the Dharma, who take delight in observing the precepts, are the foremost among my *śrāvaka* disciples.

Analysis

The connotations of the different versions of the dialogue can be understood in two ways. On the one hand, regarding the blueprint for how to pass down the religious legacy of the Buddha in the post-*parinirvāṇa* era, all of the above versions make the same claim of appointing no future patriarch: no human successor will be appointed, and the *saṅgha* members are responsible for their own spiritual progress. On the other hand, not all versions of the text express the same message about the “current” power structure of the Buddhist community, especially with regard to the significance of the Buddha.⁵³⁹

In versions (1), (2), (3), (4), (6), and (7), the Buddha, from his own lips, denies his special authority within the monastic community and instructs the monastic community members to rely on themselves and the Dharma as the only two refuges. Among those versions, the (1) Pāli *Dīghanikāya* version, (2) the Chinese *Dīrghāgama* version, (6) the Sanskrit version, and (7) the Tibetan MSV explicitly indicate that the Buddha never admits that he takes charge of the monastic community (*Tathāgatassa kho, ānanda, na evaṃ hoti ahaṃ bhikkhusaṃghaṃ pariharissāmi ti, vā mama' uddesiko bhikkhusaṃgho ti vā*; 如來不言，我持於眾，我攝於眾；*mama naivaṃ bhavati, mama'sti bhikṣusaṃghaḥ, ahaṃ bhikṣusaṃghaṃ parihariṣyāmi*; *kun dga' bo nga la ni 'di snyam du dge slong gi dge 'dun nga'i yin te/ngas dge slong gi dge 'dun la bstan par bya'o// ngas dge slong gi dge 'dun drang ngo snyam du dgongs pa mi mnga' na*). However, in the (3) *Bannihuan jing* 般泥洹經 and the (4) *Fo bannihuan jing* 佛般泥洹經, the Buddha's denial of the leadership in the monastic community is replaced by the statement that the Buddha includes himself among members of the monastic community (T. 6: 吾亦恒在比丘眾中; T. 5: 我亦在比丘僧中). That is to say, versions (1), (2), (6), and (7) focus on the question of whether the Buddha assumed leadership within the monastic community, while versions (3) and (4) address the question of whether the Buddha occupied an equal position compared to other members of the monastic community.

⁵³⁹ Cf. Bareau 1970: 145-146.

Interestingly, the (5) Chinese translation, *Da banniepan jing* 大般涅槃經 (T. 7), does not deny the Buddha's central authority. In fact, it states only that disciples should regard the Dharma in the way they regard their Teacher: "In the past, I already roughly preached the essentials of the Dharma to you. Adhere to them reverently, just as if they were none other than myself" ("向為汝等略說法要，當善奉持如我無異"). This expression is a *de facto* acknowledgment that the Buddha assumes exclusive authority over the monastic community, while the other six versions insist that there are only two refuges (viz., the disciples themselves and the Dharma). The (8) Chinese translation of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya* also avoids directly denying the Buddha's leadership within the monastic community. In this translation, the Buddha states that he is going to enter *parinirvāṇa* because his body is feeble and because Ānanda has failed to ask him to continue to abide in the world. After that, the Buddha instructs his followers to rely on themselves and on the Dharma as their islands and refuges.⁵⁴⁰

Based on the above textual analyses, it is now possible to conclude that all versions of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* agree with the proposition that the Buddha would not appoint a specific leader and that Buddhist monks would have to rely on themselves and on the Dharma after the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*. However, these different versions do not convey quite the same nuance in acknowledging the significance of the Buddha within the monastic community: the majority of the versions deny the exclusive authority of the Buddha and imply a sort of "equalitarian" relation between the Buddha and the other monastic community members, while the two Chinese translations, (5) and (7), avoid this point. In the post-*parinirvāṇa* context, the inclusion of the Buddha's self-denial as the leader in his final instructions can be understood as a strategy to illustrate how to behave as a Buddhist monk when the Buddha is absent, and encourage them to be self-reliant and faithful to the teachings.

⁵⁴⁰ The same instruction to take refuge in oneself and the Dharma is also given to Ānanda when Ānanda became extremely depressed by the *nirvāṇa* of Śāriputra (T. 1451 [XXIV] 290a11–14).

Interestingly, when Yijing, the translator of T. 1451, translated the *Foshuo ru taizang hui* 佛說入胎藏會 (**Garbhāvākraṇṭi-nirdeśa*), one *sūtra* of the *Mahāratnakūṭa* (No. 14), he adopted almost the same translation as T. 7 in rendering the Buddha's pre-*parinirvāṇa* instruction of taking refuge in oneself and the Dharma. However, the *Garbhāvākraṇṭi-nirdeśa* version clearly denies the personal cult of the Buddha and discourages blind confidence in the *saṅgha*—one should only rely on himself and the Dharma. (T. 310 [XI] 344a1–a8: "汝莫信我，莫隨我欲，莫依我語，莫觀我相，莫隨沙門所有見解，莫於沙門而生恭敬，莫作是語：「沙門喬答摩是我大師。」然而但可於我自證所得之法，獨在靜處思量觀察，常多修習。隨於用心所觀之法，即於彼法觀想成就正念而住，自為洲渚，自為歸處，法為洲渚，法為歸處，無別洲渚，無別歸處。")

However, the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* approach to passing down the authority of the Buddha could not quench the impulse to associate their lineages with an “authoritative” patriarch. As Strong (1992: 60) has already discerned, “In fact, both the Pāli and the Sanskrit traditions eventually developed lists of masters through whom the Teaching was transmitted from generation to generation.” Multiple Buddhist narratives, by presenting legends in which one disciple rivals and outdoes other disciples of the Buddha, mostly allude to the same heir to the Buddha’s authority, namely Mahākāśyapa.

5.2 Mahākāśyapa as the legitimate patriarch: The subtle competition between Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda

Mahākāśyapa⁵⁴¹ is no doubt one of the most prominent disciples of Śākyamuni, conventionally listed as the utmost of the four great *śrāvakas*,⁵⁴² and regarded as the recipient of the instructions of the *daśabhūmis* (“ten Bodhisattva levels”).⁵⁴³ It is noteworthy that his position as the foremost senior monk is mostly associated with post-*parinirvāṇa* events. It is equally noticeable that his religious significance is particularly highlighted in the

⁵⁴¹ For a brief bibliography of studies on Mahākāśyapa, see Silk 2003: 178n.10. Also see DPPN. s.v. *Mahā Kassapa Thera*; Tournier 2014; Mori & Motozawa 2004; Ray 1994: 105–188; Durt 1980: 79–82, etc.

⁵⁴² E.g., T. 125 (II) 647a1ff., 789a1ff.; T. 383 (XII) 1006a3ff.; T. 453 (XIV) 422b15ff.; T. 1421 (XXI) 170a1; T. 1435 (XXIII) 446a3ff. In the conventional lists of the four great *śrāvakas* (Chn. *sida shengwen* 四大聲聞; cf. Mori & Motozawa 2004: 2), Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana occupy less significant positions. This is partially due to the fact that the notion of the four great *śrāvakas* is widely used in the *parinirvāṇa* context: they are the group of disciples to which the Buddha entrusted the Dharma (e.g., T. 125 [II] 789a4; T. 453 [XIV] 422b16), a role that could not possibly have been accepted by Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana, who were both believed to have already entered *nirvāṇa*. However, this list of four is not entirely fixed in Buddhist traditions, and we also have lists that include Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana, especially in the Mahāyāna *sūtras*. The Mahāyāna notion of the four *śrāvakas*, usually comprising Śāriputra, Maudgalyāyana, Mahākāśyapa and Subhūti, is usually mentioned together with the eight bodhisattvas (e.g., T. 1001 [XIX] 604a14; T. 409 [XIII] 679c5).

⁵⁴³ Cf. Tournier 2017: 316ff. for the specific role of Mahākāśyapa in the transmission of the *Daśabhūmika* of the *Mahāvastu*. He comments, “Dans l’introduction narrative composite qui nous est parvenue, le rôle de Kāśyapa comme récipiendaire principal de l’instruction sur les *bhūmi* prolonge naturellement sa présidence du concile du Vaihāra. C’est à ce titre qu’il invite l’enseignant commencer son exposé et lui pose ensuite la quasi-totalité des questions. Sa position dirigeante au sein de la communauté, couplée à l’idée qu’il est le garant par excellence de la préservation du *Saddharma*, confère naturellement du crédit aux Écritures qu’il reçoit” (ibid., 316–317). However, Tournier notices that another disciple of the Buddha, Mahākātyāyana, also played an essential role in the transmission of the *daśabhūmi*: “Celui qui dispense l’enseignement sur les *bhūmi*, Mahākātyāyana, est l’objet d’une moindre attention par les compilateurs. Il n’en joue pas moins un rôle déterminant dans le mécanisme d’authentification de l’instruction relative aux *bhūmi* comme *buddhavacana* et dans l’interpolation de cet enseignement” (ibid., 317).

saṃyukta branch of the *Sūtrapīṭaka*,⁵⁴⁴ in which his knowledge outshines even that of Śāriputra in truly understanding the meaning of *parinirvāṇa* (T. 99 [II] 226b1ff.; T. 100 [II] 419a19ff.; SN. ii. 222). Mahākāśyapa's role as the best candidate for leader of the monastic community after the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa* is frequently suggested in Buddhist legends, in episodes ranging from personal interactions between the Buddha and Mahākāśyapa (i.e., the exchange of robes or sharing a seat), the funeral ceremony of the Buddha and the first council convoked by Mahākāśyapa, to the stories that Maitreya Buddha will take over Śākyamuni's legacy from the hands of Mahākāśyapa.

However, besides Mahākāśyapa, there was still another possible heir within the monastic community, namely Ānanda, Śākyamuni's faithful, lifelong attendant, who has heard the most preaching from the Buddha.⁵⁴⁵ The image of Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda as two competitors for heirship is widely apparent in Buddhist scriptures: if we carefully examine the stories in which Mahākāśyapa is praised as the legitimate heir of the Buddha, we find Ānanda acting most frequently as a foil for Mahākāśyapa's excellence.

Perhaps the most well-known examples are the stories of the funeral of the Buddha and the first council. A careful reading of the second half of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* reveals that the Buddha's funeral is not merely an occasion to demonstrate the Buddha's unmatched religious significance, but also provides a platform to illustrate Mahākāśyapa's predominant role in the post-*parinirvāṇa* monastic community. As scholars have indeed discussed, there are several signs of the rivalry between Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda at the funeral.⁵⁴⁶ The

⁵⁴⁴ For more details on the cult of Mahākāśyapa in the *Samyuktāgama* or *Samyuttanikāya*, see Tournier 2014: 26. In addition, in the *Anavataptagāthā*, his past *karmas* are narrated first, listed above those of all other disciples including Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana, whose *karmas* are placed immediately below those of Mahākāśyapa. Cf. Salomon 2008: 24–27, 42; Bechert 1961: 81–85. T. 199 (IV) 190a14ff.; T. 1448 (XXIV) 78a24ff., etc. In the *Daśahūmika* section from the *Mahāvastu*, Kāśyapa is also accredited to the reception of the Bodhisattva path (Tournier 2017: 316ff.), which reveals the high reputation of Kāśyapa in the *Mahāvastu*.

⁵⁴⁵ Cf. Hirakawa 1991 on Ānanda's position in the post-*parinirvāṇa* monastic community. There, Hirakawa (ibid., 151, 158ff.) proposes that after the Buddha entered *parinirvāṇa*, Ānanda mainly preached the Dharma in Western India, centering on Kauśāmbī, while Mahākāśyapa's influence mainly covered Central India. Cf. Also Tournier 2017: 333–334 for an extensive discussion of Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda's relationship.

Interestingly, Radich (2007: 355–356) discerns a sense of competition between Mahākāśyapa and Śāriputra in the fact that the same formulaic phrase is applied to both of them to denote their position as the Buddha's heir: “the son of the Blessed One, born of his breast, born of his mouth, born of the Dhamma, created by the Dhamma, an heir in the Dhamma, not an heir in material thing.” Radich (ibid. 356) comments that “it seems, thus, that the formula was deployed in the battles for supremacy among the followers of Śāriputta and the followers of Mahākassapa, traces of which are sometimes descried elsewhere in the canon.”

⁵⁴⁶ Cf. Mori & Motozawa 2004: 7–9; Silk 2003: 199n.70; Strong 2001: 141–144; Hirakawa 1991: 150–158.

tensions between the two great disciples first erupted upon Mahākāśyapa's arrival at the funeral: Buddhist traditions consistently report that Mahākāśyapa was not present at the time of the *parinirvāṇa*, and the gods prevented the cremation pyre from being lit because they wanted Mahākāśyapa to be present at the cremation. Nevertheless, when Mahākāśyapa arrives, the body of the Buddha has already been wrapped in cloth and placed in the coffin. In at least three versions of the narrative,⁵⁴⁷ Mahākāśyapa repeatedly asks Ānanda to see the body of the Buddha for the last time before the cremation ceremony. However, Ānanda refuses Mahākāśyapa, saying that the body of the Buddha has already been fully prepared for cremation. Until this point, Ānanda has acted as the "protocol officer" (thus described in Strong 2001: 142) of the funeral. However, this role is soon transferred to Mahākāśyapa with the help of the Buddha's supernatural manifestation: the Buddha's two feet magically appear from the coffin for Mahākāśyapa to make the last worship, publicly demonstrating the favor and support the Buddha has granted to Mahākāśyapa.⁵⁴⁸ The appearance of the Buddha's two feet then sparks another round of tension between Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda: Mahākāśyapa notices that the feet of the Buddha are soiled, and soon figures out that it is Ānanda's fault: Ānanda ushered an old woman in front of the Buddha's body, but her tears discolored the Buddha's feet.⁵⁴⁹ Mahākāśyapa is unhappy with Ānanda for this, and criticizes him later on, in the so-called "trial of Ānanda" at the first council.⁵⁵⁰ Moreover, in the power arena of the first council,⁵⁵¹ Ānanda fully submits himself to the authority of Mahākāśyapa: at first, Mahākāśyapa, as president of the council, refuses to admit Ānanda to the council, claiming that Ānanda has not exhausted his desires and has not yet attained arhatship.⁵⁵² Later, after

⁵⁴⁷ T. 6 (I) 189b28–3c; T. 1428 (XXII) 966b26–c3; T. 1 (I) 28c1–7.

⁵⁴⁸ In this regard, we may also recall the episode in which the pyre is not able to be set fire until Mahākāśyapa arrives.

⁵⁴⁹ Buddhist texts have different records of this event. The Chinese *Dīrghāgama* (T. 1 [I] 28b24–29b3), *Bannihuan jing* (T. 6 [I] 189b2–c8), *Da banniepan jing* (T. 7 [I] 206b25–207a23) and *Sifen lü* (T. 1428 [XXII] 966a19–c11) mention that tears of an old woman soiled the feet of the Buddha. The *Mahāvastu* (Tournier 2017: 457) does specify the tears were those of female disciples (ibid. 496). The Pāli *Mahāparinibbāna sutta* (DN. ii. 164–165), the Sanskrit *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* (Waldschmidt 1950–1951: III. 428), MSV *Kṣudravastu* (ibid., 429) and Chinese *Fo bannihuan jing* (T. 5 [I] 173b27–174b29) do not mention that the feet were soiled by tears. Cf. Bareau 1971: 240–243.

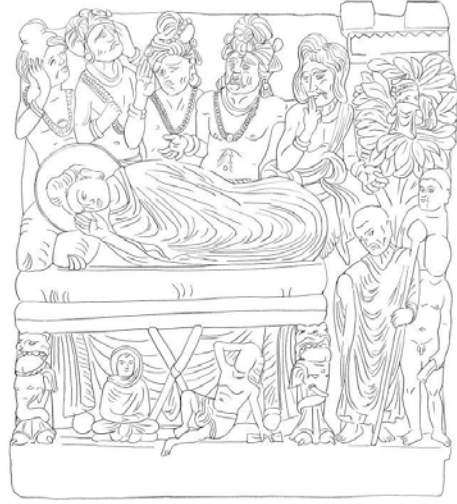
⁵⁵⁰ Tournier 2017: 334. For details on the content of Ānanda's faults as listed by Mahākāśyapa, see Tsukamoto 1963: 57. For an earlier study, see also Przyluski 1926–1928: 257–78.

⁵⁵¹ Tournier 2014: 26n.96; Nagasaki 1987; Hirakawa 1991: 150–155; Bareau 1971: 254ff.; Tsukamoto 1963; Frauwallner 1956: 161; Kumoi 1953. Cf. Tsukamoto 1963: 53–55 for references to the main texts that contain records of the first council.

⁵⁵² Cf. Hirakawa 1991: 154–156.

admitting Ānanda to the first council, Mahākāśyapa nevertheless submits Ānanda to a harsh trial for a series of severe faults he has committed, including Ānanda's failure to persuade the Buddha to abide in the world, Ānanda's role in establishing the nun community, and so forth. In this sense, the accounts of the Buddha's funeral and the first council can be read as a narrative of the two great disciples' subtle combat for the position of patriarch. The winner, as usually told, is Mahākāśyapa.

Since many academic works have shed light on the above two scenes, in the following part, I focus solely on another two narratives that suggest Mahākāśyapa as the ideal choice as Śākyamuni's heir, namely, Mahākāśyapa's acquisition of the Buddha's robe and half-seat.

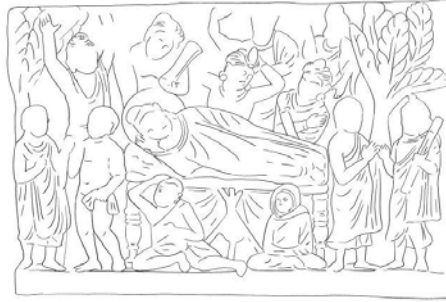


Left: Figure 8. Kurita No. 482. Victoria and Albert Museum, no. I.M. 247-1927. From Gandhāra. The Buddha's parinirvāṇa. The monk on the right-hand of the picture is Kāśyapa who is venerating the feet of the Buddha. On Kāśyapa's right stands a naked ascetic who informs Kāśyapa the Buddha's death seven days earlier (Zin 2018: 140).

Right: Figure 9. The drawing is made by Zin (2018: 163).



Figure 10. British Museum. From Gandhāra. The Buddha's parinirvāṇa. On the right side of the picture, there are a monk and an ascetic in a dialogue. Zin (2018: 146) recognizes them as Ānanda and Subhadra in the scene where Ānanda refuses Subhadra to approach the dying Buddha. Picture taken from Artstor (https://library.artstor.org/#/asset/LESSING_ART_10311440273).



Left: Figure 11. Kurita No. 482. Peshawar Museum. From Gandhāra. The Buddha's parinirvāṇa. On the right-hand of the picture is the pair of Ānanda and Subhadra, while on the left-hand of the picture is the pair of Kāśyapa and the naked ascetic (Zin 2018: 147).

Right: Figure 12. The drawing is made by Zin (2018: 167).



Figure 13. Kurita No. 481. From Gandhāra. Private collection, Japan. The Buddha's parinirvāṇa. The monk on the right-hand side of the picture is venerating the feet of the Buddha and should be identified as Kāśyapa.

5.2.1 The exchange of robes between Śākyamuni and Mahākāśyapa

The motif of Mahākāśyapa acquiring the Buddha's monastic robe is a regular feature in narrations of Mahākāśyapa's life stories; the symbolic connotations of this have already been amply discussed by scholars.⁵⁵³ In a well-known version of the episode found in the *Samyuttanikāya*, *Za ahan jing*, and many other texts,⁵⁵⁴ we find that the story of the robe exchange is embedded in the broader narrative framework of a confrontation between Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda regarding their prestige in the monastic community.

The story occurs when Ānanda comes back from a tour with a large company of monks.⁵⁵⁵ Having heard that 30 monks in Ānanda's group disrobed during the trip, Mahākāśyapa criticizes Ānanda for leading monks to group begging, a practice that was forbidden by the Buddha. Mahākāśyapa's reprimand is actually quite harsh: "Your followers are diminishing! You are like a young punk who has no judgment for propriety!" (T. 99 [II] 303a5–6: 汝徒眾消滅，汝是童子，不知籌量!).⁵⁵⁶ Ānanda appears to be offended, and responds, "I have already grown two colors of hair (i.e., gray and black), but still you call me a young boy?" (T. 99 [II] 303a7: 頭髮二色，猶言童子?).⁵⁵⁷ After Mahākāśyapa repeats his

⁵⁵³ Silk 2003: 181: "For not only does Kāśyapa preserve and transmit the teachings, but according to a widely shared tradition he vows to carry the torch — or more literally, the robe — of the Buddha's teachings and transmit it to the next buddha to arise in this world-realm, Maitreya."

Ibid., 195: "As I have suggested above, the story of Kāśyapa's acquisition of Śākyamuni's rag robes is important not only because it serves to certify the legitimate origins of the robe which Kāśyapa will, later on, pass on to Maitreya, but also because the robe is a symbol for the ascetic life of Kāśyapa himself."

⁵⁵⁴ The main texts featuring stories with this motif include: T. 99 (II) 303a22–b29 (abbreviated English translation in Silk 2003: 183–184); T. 100 (II) 418a23–c14; SN. ii. 219–221; Mvu. iii. 54–55; T. 189 (III) 653a8–b11, etc. For more detailed discussions, see Silk 2003: 183n.24; Deeg 1999a: 164ff.; Ray 1994: 105–107; Hirakawa 1991: 156–157. Since Silk (2003: 183–184) has already provided a good translation of this story based on the Chinese T. 99, and the Pāli and Sanskrit versions are also widely available in English, I will not offer a new translation of the entire story here.

⁵⁵⁵ The *Za ahan jing* places this story in a period when the Buddha had only recently entered *parinirvāṇa* (T. 99 [II] 302c14: "世尊涅槃未久"), but another Chinese translation, the *Bieyi za ahan jing*, places it at a time when the Buddha was about to enter *parinirvāṇa* (T. 100 [II] 417c9: "爾時如來將欲涅槃"). The Pāli and Sanskrit versions, however, provide no information in this regard.

⁵⁵⁶ T. 100 (II) 418a6: 汝於今者，徒眾破壞。汝今無智，猶如小兒。 SN. ii. 217: *Olujjati kho te, āvuso ānanda, parisā; palujjanti kho te, āvuso, navappāyā. Na vāyaṃ kumārako mattam aññāsī*. Mvu. iii. 48, line 19: *śasyaghātāṃ viya manye karonto nāyaṃ kumārako mātram āññāsī*.

⁵⁵⁷ T. 100 (II) 418a6: 阿難答言： "我已年邁，云何而言 '猶如小兒'?" ; SN. ii. 218: *api me, bhante kassapa, sirasmiṃ palitāni jātāni. Atha ca pana mayaṃ ajjāpi āyasmato mahākassapassa kumārakavādā na muccāmāti*. Mvu. iii. 48, line 20–49, line 2: *api hi me āyuṣman mahākāśyapa śirasī pi palitāni jātāni atha ca me punaḥ āyuṣman mahākāśyapo kumārakavādena samudācaritavyaṃ manyati*.

criticism, the nun Sthūlanandā (Pāli Thullanandā, Chn. 低舍比丘尼/帝舍難陀), a follower of Ānanda, becomes irritated. She then expresses her disrespect for Mahākāśyapa by calling him one who “previously listened to the non-Buddhist teaching” (T. 99 [II] 303a15: 本外道聞).⁵⁵⁸ Insulted by Sthūlanandā’s disrespectful words, Mahākāśyapa articulates a long self-justification:⁵⁵⁹

The Venerable Mahākāśyapa spoke to Ānanda, saying: “From the time that I renounced the world, I never recognized that there were any other teachers, only the Tathāgata, Arhat, Perfect and Complete Buddha ... I should cut off my hair and beard, and put on the *kāśāya* robe. Full of faith, homeless, I shall renounce the world in order to pursue awakening. Taking a robe worth a hundred thousand pieces of gold, I rent the fabric into pieces and made it into a *saṅghāṭi* (upper) robe. [I thought:] ‘If there are arhats in the world, I will listen to them and renounce the world.’ ... Then, with palms joined together, I made reverent obeisance to him [the Buddha] with a single-pointed mind, and I spoke to the Buddha, saying: ‘[You] are my teacher, I am your disciple.’ The Buddha spoke to me, saying: ‘Just so, Kāśyapa. I am your teacher, you are my disciple.’ ...”⁵⁶⁰

I also went following him toward his dwelling place. I took my *saṅghāṭi* robe, made from rent fabric worth a hundred thousand pieces of gold, and folded its four [corners into a square to make] a seat. At that time, the Blessed One knew my mind, and from where he was staying came down to the road. I then spread out the robe as a sitting mat and asked the Buddha to be seated, and the Blessed One then sat. He stroked the robe with his hand and said in praise: ‘Kāśyapa, this robe is light and

⁵⁵⁸ T. 100 (II) 418a16–17; SN. ii. 219; Mvu. iii. 50. Sthūlanandā insults Mahākāśyapa with the same words on another occasion, when Mahākāśyapa criticizes her for walking slowly in front and hindering Mahākāśyapa’s movement. See T. 1435 (XXIII) 291a19–23; cf. also Hirakawa 1991: 157. Sthūlanandā makes the same offensive remark further again in T. 1435 (XXIII) 292c6–10, when she stands at the city gate to judge the appearances of male passer-by but sees Mahākāśyapa entering the city.

⁵⁵⁹ T. 99 (II) 303 a22–c9. The former part of this paragraph has been translated by Silk (2003: 183). I use his translation with minor revisions. The part from “Ānanda, if people who speak right speech ...” onward is my own translation.

⁵⁶⁰ 尊者摩訶迦葉語阿難言：“我自出家，都不知有異師，唯如來、應、等正覺 ...當剃鬚髮，著袈裟衣，正信非家，出家學道。以百千金，貴價之衣，段段割截為僧伽梨。“若世間阿羅漢者，闍從出家。”...我時一心合掌敬禮，白佛言：‘是我大師！我是弟子。’佛告我言：‘如是迦葉！我是汝師！汝是弟子。’...

fine, this robe is soft and supple.’ I then said: ‘Just so, Blessed One. This robe is light and fine, this robe is soft and supple. I really wish the Blessed One would accept this robe of mine.’ The Buddha said: ‘Kāśyapa, you should accept my refuse-rag robe, and I will accept your *saṅghāṭi*.’ The Buddha then gave me his refuse-rag robe with his own hands, and I presented my *saṅghāṭi* to the Buddha.⁵⁶¹

Ānanda! If people who speak right speech ask, ‘who is the Dharma son of the Blessed One, the one born from the mouth of the Buddha, whose birth is by transformation of the Dharma, to whom [the Buddha] appointed the Dharma treasure of *dhyaṇas*, liberations, *samādhis*, and objective supports (Pāli **ārammaṇa*)?’⁵⁶² the right answer should be me. For instance, the eldest son of a *cakravartin* is granted coronation, seated on the king’s throne and obtains the king’s five desires. He obtains these not painstakingly but effortlessly. It is the same with me, as I am the Buddha’s Dharma son, the one born from the mouth of the Buddha, whose birth is by the transformation of the Dharma, who obtains the rest of the Dharma treasure [comprising] *dhyaṇas*, liberations, *samādhis*, and objective supports (Pāli *ārammaṇa*). I obtain these not painstakingly but effortless ...⁵⁶³

The confirmation of the teacher–disciple relationship between the Buddha and Mahākāśyapa is found in the first half of the self-justification. Mahākāśyapa first speaks of the very

⁵⁶¹ 我亦隨去，向於住處。我以百千價直衣割截僧伽梨，四攝為座。爾時，世尊知我至心，處處下道，我即敷衣，以為坐具，請佛令坐。世尊即坐，以手摩衣，歎言：‘迦葉！此衣輕細，此衣柔軟。’我時白言：‘如是。世尊！此衣輕細，此衣柔軟，唯願世尊受我此衣！’佛告迦葉：‘汝當受我糞掃衣，我當受汝僧伽梨。佛即自手授我糞掃納衣，我即奉佛僧伽梨。

⁵⁶² Different types of meditation are distinguished in this sentence. Usually, the meanings of *chan* 禪 (*dhyaṇa*), *sanmei* 三昧 (*samādhi*) and *zhengshou* 正受 (“concentration”) are not clearly distinguished (e.g. McBride 2012: 177n.219). However, here in the *Samyuktāgama*, the Chinese term *zhengshou* 正受 has a technical meaning. Elsewhere in the *Samyuktāgama* (*Sūtra* No. 883), four kinds of *dhyaṇa* practitioners are distinguished, including those under the term *zhengshou* 正受: 有四種禪，有禪三昧善，非正受善；有禪正受善，非三昧善；有禪三昧善，亦正受善；有禪非三昧善，非正受善 (T. 99 [II] 222c15–17); the Pāli parallel reads: “*ekacco jhāyī samādhismiṃ samāpattikusalo hoti, na samādhismiṃ ārammaṇakusalo. Idha pana, bhikkhave, ekacco jhāyī samādhismiṃ ārammaṇakusalo hoti, na samādhismiṃ samāpattikusalo. Idha pana, bhikkhave, ekacco jhāyī neva samādhismiṃ samāpattikusalo hoti, na ca samādhismiṃ ārammaṇakusalo. Idha pana, bhikkhave, ekacco jhāyī samādhismiṃ samāpattikusalo ca hoti, samādhismiṃ ārammaṇakusalo ca.*” (SN. iii. 270). *Zhengshou* 正受 refers to the *samādhi* that has the right support (*samādhismiṃ ārammaṇakusalo*).

⁵⁶³ 阿難！若有正問：誰是世尊法子，從佛口生、從法化生，付以法財，諸禪、解脫、三昧、正受？應答我是，是則正說。譬如轉輪聖王第一長子，當以灌頂，住於王位，受王五欲，不苦方便，自然而得，我亦如是，為佛法子，從佛口生、從法化生，得法餘財，法 [an error for 諸?] 禪、解脫、三昧、正受，不苦方便，自然而得 ...”

moment when he renounced the world. Mahākāśyapa abandoned his great wealth as a brahmin, made a monastic robe (*saṅghāṭi*) of exquisite and luxurious cloth,⁵⁶⁴ and became a renunciant who aspired to take refuge only in the true arhat of the world. The vow here still serves the motif that the Buddha was the only qualified teacher for Mahākāśyapa. The Buddha seemed to have known of Mahākāśyapa's vow, confirming that he was the arhat whom Mahākāśyapa was looking for.⁵⁶⁵ As we can discern, through looking back at the early days of Mahākāśyapa's renunciation and the Buddha's recognition that Mahākāśyapa was his disciple, the text straightforwardly rejects Sthūlanandā's critical claim that Mahākāśyapa was once a heretic, a disciple of other masters.⁵⁶⁶

Beyond merely acknowledging that Mahākāśyapa was a disciple of the Buddha, the text further argues that Mahākāśyapa was the foremost disciple and the authentic heir of the Buddha through the narrative of the Buddha and Mahākāśyapa exchanging robes. In religious contexts, robes usually carry rich symbolic meaning, such as denoting different religious identities or indicating religious hierarchies.⁵⁶⁷ Śākyamuni's own monastic robe, conventionally depicted as a refuse-rag robe (*pāṃśukūla*, Chn. *fensao yi* 糞掃衣),⁵⁶⁸ is of course not merely a piece of cloth to cover his body. Just like Śākyamuni's other possessions, including the food offered to him,⁵⁶⁹ his rag robe is imbued with his extraordinary power,⁵⁷⁰

⁵⁶⁴ This robe made of fine cloth not only reveals Mahākāśyapa's rich family background and his determination to renounce the world, but also stimulates the development of the narrative, as I will soon demonstrate.

⁵⁶⁵ The Buddha makes a long speech to confirm that he is the only arhat in the world. This long speech is omitted from my translation, but can be found in Jones 1949–1956: III. 50–51 and C.A.F. Rhys-Davids & Woodward 1917–1930: II. 147–148. Recall my discussion of the meaning of *arhat* in this context in chapter 1 (n. 34).

⁵⁶⁶ An inscribed fragment found in Silao (Bihār) offers us a similar record in which Mahākāśyapa was once a non-Buddhist ascetic before he encountered the Buddha. Cf. Tournier 2012b: 383–385.

⁵⁶⁷ The act of transferring robes, first of all, signifies the transmission of the teaching from the Teacher to the disciples. For an elaborate discussion of the connotations contained in transmitting robes, see HBGR s.v. *Den'e* 傳衣.

⁵⁶⁸ See the discussion of the Buddha's robe in Silk 2003: 184n.27: “Both the Pāli version (221.15–16) and the *Mahāvastu* (54.10) clarify that the robe is of hemp, reading *sāṇani paṃsukulāni nibbasanāni* and *sāṇānaṃ pāṃśukulānāṃ saṃghāṭīm*, respectively.” Cf. also T. 100 (II) 418c12: “糞掃之衣”; T. 99 (II) 303b28: “糞掃衣.”

⁵⁶⁹ It is a well-known story that the rice gruel donated to the Buddha could not be given to other monks, even to gods: the *Kasibhāradvāja-sutta* of the *Suttanipāta* (Sn. 14) tells us that a plowman named Kasibhāradvāja once offered rice gruel to Śākyamuni. However, Śākyamuni refused it because the offering was made after verses were chanted. (This refusal can be possibly interpreted as the Buddhist resistance to the Vedic way of making offerings, which frequently involves the chanting of verses.) Having explained that the

and are usually not suitable for other people to wear.⁵⁷¹ The narrative of Mahākāśyapa's acquisition of the Buddha's robe thus naturally demonstrates Mahākāśyapa's great merits and incredible power.⁵⁷² It is also noticeable that the exchange of robes was initiated by the Buddha himself, although it was Mahākāśyapa who first generated the thought of offering his robe to the Buddha.⁵⁷³ The Buddha's volition in handing over the robe is interpreted in the text as him selecting Mahākāśyapa to be his successor: just like a crown prince who was legitimated to ascend the throne of the *cakravartin*, the Buddha chose his foremost disciple, his genuine son, Mahākāśyapa, as the inheritor of the "treasure" of the Dharma. In Buddhaghosa's commentary on the *Samyuttanikāya*, the Buddha's intention to exchange robes with Mahākāśyapa is understood precisely in this way, namely, to establish Mahākāśyapa's prestige in the monastic community.⁵⁷⁴

food rejected by the Buddha could not be eaten by any other beings, the Buddha threw it into the water. Suddenly the food burst into flames in the water. From the conclusion of the story, we can infer that other people could not eat the Buddha's food because his food is imbued with extraordinary energy. For more discussions of this story, see Bareau 1995: 267–276 and Zin 2008 (on a version of this story found in the Kizil Grottos). An almost identical verse is found in the *Sundarikabhāradvāja-sutta* (Sn. 85 = Eng. Norman 1992: 51).

The belief in the great spiritual energy of the Buddha's food is actually a continuation of the Vedic view that a gift rejected by priests would be pierced with destructive heat. See Gonda 1965: 210.

⁵⁷⁰ As Silk (2003: 190) observes with acumen, "the story of Kāśyapa's acquisition of the Buddha's robe and its significance can only be properly appreciated in light of the story of the Buddha's own first acquisition of his ochre robes." In the narrative tradition of how the Buddha obtained his first monastic robe, the conventional version is that he swapped robes with a god incarnated as a hunter, trading his priceless *kāśika* robe for a humble *kāṣāya* robe. See *ibid.*, 190n.43, n.44 for references to this version in classical texts. Some Pāli commentaries, on the contrary, narrate that the Buddha chose a refuse robe discarded in a charnel ground, one that used to be worn by a female slave, and this act made the earth and the sky shake (cf. *ibid.*, 187–188).

⁵⁷¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 187, which mentions one passage from the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya stating that nobody could wear the Buddha's robe. Cf. T. 1421 (XXII) 68c15–18.

⁵⁷² This power is frequently understood as stemming from his devoted ascetic practices. See the discussions in *ibid.*, 178–179.

⁵⁷³ Having listened to the preaching of the Buddha, Mahākāśyapa thought to offer his fine robe to the Buddha. Here, we can read another emblematic meaning of the fine robe: the fine robe, splendid as it appears, indicates not only Mahākāśyapa's earnest faith in the Buddha, but the Buddha's glorious nature, which matches this kind of robe.

⁵⁷⁴ Spk. 199: *theraṃ attano thāne ṭhapetukāmatāya*. Silk (2003: 183) translates this sentence as "because he [the Buddha] wished to establish the Elder [Mahākāśyapa] in his own position."

Moreover, there is another narrative tradition connected with Śākyamuni's robe—a glorious golden robe given by his aunt Mahāprajāpatī. In this narrative, Śākyamuni directs his aunt Mahāprajāpatī to donate the golden robe to the monastic community, instead of to himself. His instruction to give the robe to the monastic community can be interpreted as the Buddha intending to establish the standing of the monastic community for

Moreover, the robe transferred to Mahākāśyapa simultaneously symbolizes the mission Śākyamuni entrusted to Mahākāśyapa, that is, to transmit and preserve Śākyamuni's teaching.⁵⁷⁵ In many other texts, Śākyamuni directly instructs Mahākāśyapa not to enter *nirvāṇa*, but to abide in the world, preserving the Dharma and Vinaya.⁵⁷⁶ Recall also how the future Buddha Maitreya will gain access to Śākyamuni's teaching: it is through the hands of Mahākāśyapa, who will abide in the world for an extremely long time due to his ability of *adhiṣṭhāna*.⁵⁷⁷ When the future Buddha Maitreya, with his own monastic community, finds Mahākāśyapa between two mountains, Mahākāśyapa will still be clothed in this robe, even though his body has become a skeleton.⁵⁷⁸ Through the emblematic act of the robe passing between Śākyamuni and Maitreya, Mahākāśyapa plays the role of messenger between the two buddhas.

Having examined the rich, emblematic meaning imbued in the act of the Buddha and Mahākāśyapa exchanging robes, we can now see how this episode fits into the power confrontation between Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda. At first, Mahākāśyapa criticizes Ānanda because Ānanda improperly leads young monks in the practice of group begging, thereby

future veneration, and to confirm the status of the monastic community as the Buddha's successors. I will return to this narrative in section 5.3.

⁵⁷⁵ For accounts in which the Buddha explicitly entrusts *sūtras* or the Dharma to Mahākāśyapa, see Mori & Motozawa 2004: 132–137. In the *Mahāvastu*, when the Buddha's body is cremated, many of his great disciples express the intention to enter *nirvāṇa*. However, they are finally dissuaded by Mahākāśyapa, who explains that the crucial task for them is to transmit and preserve the Buddhist teaching in this world (Mvu. I. 69–70 = Eng. Jones 1949–1956: I. 56; Tournier 2017: 458 and French translation *ibid.* 497).

Another narrative in which the robe is an emblem of the Dharma, as noted by Silk (2003: 195), concerns the young Maitreya's acceptance of the golden robe offered by Mahāprajāpatī, which then provides an occasion for the young Maitreya to make a vow to become the future buddha.

⁵⁷⁶ For instance, in the *Fo benxing ji jing*, T. 190 (III) 870a25–27: “是摩訶迦葉，我涅槃後，攝護我法及諸戒律，令久住世，當作法會，盡其形壽。” (“This [monk] Mahākāśyapa will protect my Dharma and all the precepts after my *parinirvāṇa*, and make them disseminate in the world for a long time. He will hold the Dharma council and fully spend his lifetime [on these tasks].”) A similar passage is found at T. 125 (II) 789a5.

⁵⁷⁷ Tournier (2014: 9–18) presents an intense and sophisticated discussion of the meaning of *adhiṣṭhāna* as Mahākāśyapa's special ability. According to him, *adhiṣṭhāna* is a power of preservation, stemming from a strongly resolute vow, that can make one's body (more precisely, the hard part of the body, such as the skeleton) endure even after the death of its agent.

⁵⁷⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 12. Similar versions are also found in T. 190 (III) 870b1–8. In his discussion of the Bodhagayā inscriptions of Mahānāman, Tournier notices that the epigraph uses a different term, *adhimuktivaśitā* (or *vimuktivaśitā*), to qualify Mahākāśyapa's supernatural power. Compared to *adhiṣṭhāna*, which is a power shared by mundane beings and buddhas/bodhisattvas, *adhimuktivaśitā* “is part of a set of masteries that only characterizes the bodhisattva from the eighth *bhūmi* onwards,” which “implies that the great disciple is being considered as possessing one of the powers of a bodhisattva.” (Tournier 2014: 14).

losing 30 followers who disrobe during the trip. However, Ānanda does not accept Mahākāśyapa's criticism but says that his hair has already turned gray. It is not difficult to understand the reason for Ānanda's unhappiness: besides the fact that he is already a monk of advanced age, being addressed as a young boy implies a demotion in the hierarchy. In this sense, the nun Sthūlanandā, representing Ānanda's side, makes the pointed argument that Mahākāśyapa is not superior enough to criticize Ānanda, since Mahākāśyapa was still not a Buddhist monk even after he had renounced the world for a long time. The final way in which Mahākāśyapa regains his advantageous position in the power confrontation is by narrating the story of exchanging the robes, arguing that acquiring the Buddha's robe symbolically appointed Mahākāśyapa as his legitimate successor. We can say that Buddhists have thoroughly established the tradition that the Buddha's robe functions as the emblem of his authority, and the recipient of the robe reflects the trajectory of the central authority of Buddhism.

5.2.2 Mahākāśyapa's sharing the Buddha's seat

A different narrative also implies that Mahākāśyapa was the Buddha's chosen successor, namely, the story of the Buddha sharing half of his seat (*ardhāsana*) to Mahākāśyapa.⁵⁷⁹ Buddhist texts frequently list these two narratives side by side to accentuate Mahākāśyapa's crucial significance in the monastic community.⁵⁸⁰

As recorded in the two Chinese *Saṃyuktāgamas*,⁵⁸¹ when Mahākāśyapa initially joined the Buddhist community, he had “long hair and was dressed in refuse clothes” (T. 99 [II] 302a3: 長鬚髮,著弊納衣), which made the other monks despise him. Perceiving thus, the Buddha offered to share half of his seat with Mahākāśyapa. The implication of the Buddha's

⁵⁷⁹ Detailed research on this narrative can be found in Iwai 2004. Versions of this narrative can be found in Div. 395; T. 99 (II) 168a11–18, 302a1–b; T. 100 (II) 416c8–24; *Zhong benqi jing* 中本起經 T. 196 (IV) 161a19–26; *Da zhuangyan lun jing* 大莊嚴論經 T. 201 (IV) 310b28–c4; *Da fagu jing* 大法鼓經 T. 270 (IX) 298b1–4; *Jiaxie fufo banniepan jing* 迦葉赴佛般涅槃經 T. 393 (XII) 1115b6–8; *Foshuo huashou jing* 佛說華手經 T. 657 (XVI) 127b13–24; *Fenbie gongde lun* 分別功德論 T. 1507 (XXV) 31b15–19; T. 1509 (XXV) 354c17; *Ayuwang zhuan* 阿育王傳 T. 2042 (L) 104b18–23; *Ayuwang jing* 阿育王經 T. 2043 (L) 138b18–26; *Sumāgadhāvadāna* (Iwamoto 1968: 63); *Sumoti nū jing* 須摩提女經 T. 125 (II) 663b7–8, T. 128 (II) 841a18, etc.

⁵⁸⁰ E.g., T. 99 (II) 168a14; T. 201 (IV) 310c4; T. 1509 (XXV) 354c17; T. 2043 (L) 138b25.

⁵⁸¹ T. 99 (II) 302a1–b1; T. 100 (II) 416c8–24.

action has been subject to many different interpretations in Buddhist traditions.⁵⁸² Mainstream readings posit that the Buddha thereby recognized Mahākāśyapa's long-standing practice as a renunciant, since Mahākāśyapa's renunciation was earlier than that of the Buddha (T. 100 [II] 416c15), and acknowledged Mahākāśyapa's excellent merits, which was equivalent even to that of the Buddha (T. 99 [II] 302a17; T. 201 [IV] 310b28–c4); the Buddha intended to praise Mahākāśyapa for his excellent mastery of the Dharma (*Foshuo huashou jing* 佛說華手經 T. 657 [XVI] 127b21). That is to say, the Buddha's sharing of his seat, just like the transfer of his robe, reflects the Buddha's intention to promote Mahākāśyapa's prestige to the same level even as that of the Buddha (cf. T. 100 [II] 416c14) and to make the monastic community feel admiration for Mahākāśyapa.

Just like the narrative of Mahākāśyapa's acquisition of the Buddha's robe, the narrative of the half-seat is also embedded in the power competition between Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda. In the version recorded in the Chinese *Za ahan jing* (T. 99 [II] 303b2–c12), Ānanda and Mahākāśyapa go together to the nuns' quarters, and Mahākāśyapa preaches the Dharma to the nuns in the presence of Ānanda. This makes the nun Sthūlanandā, the same antagonist from the narrative of the robe exchange, rather unhappy. In her opinion, Mahākāśyapa ought not to preach the Dharma to the nuns while Ānanda is present; Mahākāśyapa is like a needle vendor who is trying to sell needles in front of Ānanda, the craftsman who made the needles.⁵⁸³ Sthūlanandā's favor of Ānanda, first of all, must be understood within the tradition that Ānanda has helped the nun community on various occasions.⁵⁸⁴ Even in this story, after hearing Sthūlanandā's offensive words, Ānanda does not reproach her. Instead,

⁵⁸² Iwai (2004: 143–158) first offers an elaborate analysis of what the action of “sharing half a seat” implies in Indian literature, in both Buddhist and non-Buddhist texts. According to his summary, three implications can be specified: (1) the two who share the seat have the same physical appearance; (2) the two who share the same seat have equal authority and positions [in a hierarchy]; (3). the two who share the same seat have equivalent competence in every field. He applies these three implications to the case of the narrative of the Buddha and Mahākāśyapa, and argues that the first two implications operate in Mahākāśyapa's case (ibid., 167–169): in Buddhist texts, Mahākāśyapa is believed to share an almost equal physical appearance (i.e., the 32 signs of a Great Man) and to enjoy position in the monastic community equivalent to that of the Buddha.

⁵⁸³ T. 99 (II) 302b17–19: 云何阿梨摩訶迦葉於阿梨阿難鞞提訶牟尼前，為比丘尼說法？譬如販針兒於針師家賣，阿梨摩訶迦葉亦復如是，於阿梨阿難鞞提訶牟尼前，為諸比丘尼說法。T. 100 (II) 417b7–10: 今者云何長老迦葉在阿難前為比丘尼而說法要？如賣針人，至針師門，求欲賣針，終不可售。今者迦葉，亦復如是，云何乃在阿難前而說法？SN. ii. 215 = Eng. Bhikkhu Bodhi 2010: I. 675.

⁵⁸⁴ These include the accounts that Ānanda persuades the Buddha to establish the nuns' community; that Ānanda allows women to cry at the funeral of the Buddha, which stains the Buddha's feet; his personal meetings and talks with nuns, etc. Cf. von Hinüber 2007, esp. pp. 22–26.

he asks Mahākāśyapa to stay calm and forgive her by saying “Women are foolish.”⁵⁸⁵ However, Ānanda’s good friendship with the nuns, in the eyes of the story’s compilers, is not a laudable feature. In the *Samyuttanikāya* version of this story, Mahākāśyapa explicitly warns Ānanda not to maintain a close relationship with the nun Sthūlanandā.⁵⁸⁶ In this sense, the story not only reproaches Sthūlanandā for her abusive words but also hints at Ānanda’s improper friendship with the nuns.

Sthūlanandā’s offensive, disrespectful words naturally irritate Mahākāśyapa, and in order to justify his superiority over Ānanda, Mahākāśyapa enumerates multiple cases in which the Buddha once praised Mahākāśyapa’s excellence in front of the monastic community, including how the Buddha publicly spared half of his seat to Mahākāśyapa in the version of the Chinese *Za ahan jing*:⁵⁸⁷

The Blessed One, Tathāgata, Arhat, Samyaksambuddha, in the midst of an immeasurable assembly, spoke these words from his own mouth: “Welcome, Mahākāśyapa! Please take half of this seat!” Again, in the midst of the great assembly, the Buddha praised me, Mahākāśyapa, that I possess enormous merits that are equal to his own, that I have eliminated desires for evil and unwholesome phenomena, [repeating until the part] that I possess the supernatural power of exhausting outflow (*āsrava*).

⁵⁸⁵ T. 99 (II) 302b23: 尊者阿難語尊者摩訶迦葉: “且止! 當忍! 此愚癡老嫗, 智慧薄少, 不曾修習故。” T. 100 (II) 417b16–18: 尊者阿難語迦葉言: “止! 止! 尊者! 癡愚少智, 不足具責, 唯願大德聽其懺悔。” SN. ii. 216: *Khama, bhante kassapa, bālo mātugāmo*. Bhikkhu Bodhi (2010: 675) translates this as “Be patient, Venerable Kassapa, women are foolish.” Clearly, in this story, Ānanda’s response is understood as a defense of Sthūlanandā, which provokes Mahākāśyapa’s “stern warning not to side with the nuns against him” (von Hinüber 2007: 23).

⁵⁸⁶ SN. ii. 214: *Āgamehi tvaṃ, āvuso ānanda, mā te saṅgho uttari upaparikkhi*. Bhikkhu Bodhi (2010: 675) translates this as “Hold it, friend Ānanda! Don’t give the *saṅgha* occasion to investigate you further.” In his note (ibid., 803n290), Bhikkhu Bodhi, based on the commentary Spk., explains that Mahākāśyapa criticizes Ānanda here for offering protection to Sthūlanandā, which may lead the monastic community to investigate whether Ānanda and Sthūlanandā have developed any improper intimacy or affection.

⁵⁸⁷ T. 99 (II) 302c7–10: “世尊、如來、應、等正覺, 於無量大眾中, 口自說言: ‘善來摩訶迦葉! 請汝半座。’復於大眾中, 以同己廣大功德, 離欲惡不善法, 乃至漏盡通, 稱歎摩訶迦葉。”

Only T. 99 includes the story of the Buddha sharing his seat here. As noticed by Iwai (2004: 164–166), the story of the Buddha sparing half of his seat barely appears in the Pāli texts. Instead, the Pāli texts usually use the term *buddhapaṭibhāga* in parallel texts, the meaning of which is “the one who resembles the Buddha.” Cf. ibid., 166–167.

Just like the story of exchanging the robes, the Buddha's sparing half of his seat was understood as the ceremonial act of publicly and solemnly appointing Mahākāśyapa as his heir. It is notable that the stories of both exchanging the robes and sharing a seat are mainly found in the *Samyukta* branch of the *sūtrapīṭakas*; in their proposed hierarchy of Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda, Mahākāśyapa was always the authentic heir, while Ānanda was constantly the disadvantaged party. This observation echoes Tournier's study (2014: 42) of the Mahānāman inscription from Bodhgayā, produced between the fifth and sixth centuries CE. He states that the religious group that created the Mahānāman inscription identified Mahākāśyapa as their patriarch, and placed themselves within a lineage devoted to the faithful transmission of the *Samyuktāgama* of a certain Nikāya. That is to say, the stories transmitted through the *Samyuktāgama/Samyuttanikāya* are possibly the remote historical memory of a lineage(s) of Buddhists who identified Mahākāśyapa as their patriarch.

Apart from the above interpretation advanced in the *Samyuktāgama*, Buddhist Jātakas have attributed a different significance to the story of Mahākāśyapa's taking half of the Buddha's seat. In many versions of the *Mandhātā-jātaka*, Mahākāśyapa was identified as the god Śakra, who offered half of his heavenly throne, his great power, and immense pleasure to King Mandhātā, a previous incarnation of the Buddha.⁵⁸⁸ In return for the generosity of Mahākāśyapa in that past life, the Buddha spared half of his seat to Mahākāśyapa and also offered Mahākāśyapa the ultimate way to the true Dharma. Here, we can identify intriguing parallels between the heavenly seat and the Dharma seat, and between heavenly kingship and religious leadership.⁵⁸⁹

⁵⁸⁸ T. 196 (IV) 161b15–18; T. 202 (IV) 440b20–24; *Dingshengwang yinyuan jing* 頂生王因緣經 T. 165 (III) 405c23–26; Div. 225. Another story narrates that the Buddha shares half of his seat to repay Mahākāśyapa's kindness in a past life (T. 208 [IV] 542b14–c12). In one past life, the Buddha was Śakra, and Mahākāśyapa was the god Brahmā. Śakra was deeply worried that not enough people would be reborn in heaven, as people no longer accumulated wholesome *karmas*. Brahmā then suggested that Śakra be reborn as a lion to intimidate people into believing in Buddhism. Brahmā himself assumed the form of a brahmin and helped the lion convert the people to Buddhism. Because Mahākāśyapa assisted the Buddha in converting the people to the right path at that time, the Buddha shared half of his seat with Mahākāśyapa in this life in return.

⁵⁸⁹ In the *Zun poxumi pusa suoji lun* 尊婆須蜜菩薩所集論 ("Treatises Compiled by Venerable Bodhisattva Vasumitra"), several versions of the story of the Buddha sparing half of his seat to Mahākāśyapa are listed (T. 1549 [XXVIII] 762a13–21): 1. The Buddha, knowing that the other monks despised Mahākāśyapa, spared half of his seat to Mahākāśyapa for the sake of awakening their minds and preventing them from accumulating unwholesome *karmas*; 2. The Buddha shared half of his seat to prevent the other monks (who disrespected Mahākāśyapa) from breaking the precepts; 3. The Buddha initially regarded Aniruddha as his foremost disciple, and when the Buddha went to make monastic robes [for Aniruddha], the Buddha shared half of his seat with Mahākāśyapa (cf. T. 26 [I] 551c28 for the Aniruddha story); 4. The Buddha intended to entrust

Of course, not all texts agree with the assertion that Mahākāśyapa ranks higher than Ānanda. The Chinese *Zengyi ahan jing* proposes a different power structure, in which the two disciples are equally entrusted with the task of preserving the Dharma, and equally treated as the heirs to the Buddha's authority.⁵⁹⁰ In fact, this proposition agrees with the balanced power structure of the first council as conventionally presented in Buddhist texts: Mahākāśyapa presided over the compilation of the Buddhist Canon, but Ānanda was the reciter of the Sūtra and Abhidharma sections of the Buddhist canons.

Interestingly, a commentary on the *Zengyi ahan jing*, the *Fenbie gongde lun* 分別功德論, preserved in Chinese (ca. 3rd–5th cent. CE),⁵⁹¹ seems not to fully accept the equal position of the two disciples as proposed in the root text. Instead, it posits that Ānanda willingly submitted himself to Mahākāśyapa's superiority, and promoted Mahākāśyapa to the highest rank in the monastic community (“眾僧上座”). In Ānanda's eyes, the Buddha's sharing of half his seat symbolized that he appointed Mahākāśyapa as his heir to preserve the true Dharma.

Indeed, it is also a well-established tradition to identify Ānanda as Mahākāśyapa's direct heir: many Buddhist texts frequently cite a list of five Dharma patriarchs (Mahākāśyapa, Ānanda, Madhyāntika, Śāṇakavāsin, and Upagupta), in which Ānanda is placed in the second position, after Mahākāśyapa.⁵⁹² As Strong observes, Buddhist sectarian groups seldom argued about the authenticity of the lineage of these five ancient masters; instead, sectarian disputes mostly concentrated on who were the genuine successors after

the precepts to Mahākāśyapa, and therefore shared half of his seat to enhance Mahākāśyapa's credibility; 5. The Buddha never shared half of his seat with his disciples; 6. The Buddha indeed shared his seat to demonstrate Mahākāśyapa's great virtue.

⁵⁹⁰ T. 125 (II) 746c8–c20: “我於天上人中，終不見此人，能受持此法寶，如迦葉、阿難之比 ... 是故，迦葉！阿難！吾今付授汝、囑累汝此法寶，無令缺減。” The English translation is given by Silk 2003: 197–199: “I cannot see among the gods and men individuals equally capable of receiving and upholding this jewel of the teaching as are Kāśyapa and Ānanda ... Therefore, Kāśyapa and Ānanda, I now transmit to you, I pass on to you this jewel teaching. Do not allow it to perish!”

⁵⁹¹ Palumbo 2013:163ff.

⁵⁹² Strong (1992: 60) states, “The Sanskrit tradition, on the other hand, and in particular the Sarvāstivādins, focused on the series of Masters of the Law (*dharmācārya*). According to this tradition, the line of succession went from the Buddha to his disciple Mahākāśyapa (the president of the First Council) and then to Ānanda (the Buddha's own *paścācchramaṇa*). Ānanda then passed the Dharma on to two of his own followers: Madhyāntika (the converter of Kashmir) and Śāṇakavāsin (Upagupta's teacher in Mathurā).” Cf. also Ray 1994: 109 and Silk 2003: 204. Many Vinayas also accept that Ānanda is the successor to Kāśyapa (e.g. T. 1425 [XXII] 548b10–15).

these five masters.⁵⁹³ In this sense, the stories of Mahākāśyapa's acquisition of the Buddha's robe and half-seat perhaps reflect a more ancient memory, from when the spiritual lineages of Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda had not yet merged together but still competed with each other for legitimacy.

In summary, although the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* argues that the Buddha refused to appoint an heir, the notion of an authentic successor to the Buddha's authority has never waned in Buddhist literature. Different sectarian groups, by means of establishing a continuity of authority from the Buddha to their supposed patriarchs, demonstrated the legitimate origins of their lineages and therefore competed for the status of authenticity. Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda, whose spiritual lineages were possibly much more influential than those of the other major disciples of the Buddha,⁵⁹⁴ were two possible Dharma successors in conventional portraits of the post-*parinirvāṇa* monastic community. The imagination (or even memories) of their relationship as that of two competing parties runs throughout their life stories and stimulates the literary representations of their images. Stories of the Buddha's transference of his robe and half-seat to Mahākāśyapa imbued with rich symbolic meaning, provide a narrative perspective in this combat for legitimacy: through offering Mahākāśyapa his own robe and half of his seat, the Buddha demonstrates his intention to appoint Mahākāśyapa as his heir. Following this line of thought, the accounts of the Buddha's funeral, the first council and Mahākāśyapa's trial of Ānanda appear in a new light as narratives about legitimacy: they are stories in which Mahākāśyapa plays a predominant role, while Ānanda submits himself to the authority of Mahākāśyapa. Noticeably, the stories that undermine Ānanda's excellence while promoting Mahākāśyapa as the genuine patriarch are frequently found in the *Samyuktāgama/Samyuttanikāya*. It is hypothesized that the spiritual lineage of Mahākāśyapa had occupied a more privileged position in the textual transmission of the *Samyukta* branch of the *sūtrapīṭaka*.

⁵⁹³ Strong 1992: 61: "After Upagupta, the various lists of masters in this line began to differ from each other and obviously were the subject of much sectarian dispute. But up to him, the tradition of the five Dharma masters (Mahākāśyapa, Ānanda, Madhyāntika, Śāṇakavāsin, and Upagupta) was generally accepted, and, in fact, with some minor variations, it came to head many of the later, much longer lists of patriarchs in Chinese Buddhism, especially in the Chan school."

⁵⁹⁴ There also exist traditions that regard other major disciples of the Buddha, not Mahākāśyapa or Ānanda, as the heir of the Buddha: for instance, Mahākaccāna (Maeda 1955). In this regard, we should also be aware of Anuruddha's prominent role at the Buddha's funeral and the first council (cf. DPPN s.v. *Anuruddha*).

5.3 The *saṅgha* as the Buddha's successors

In the article “The Buddha as Ender and Transformer of Lineages,” Strong (2011) provides a fascinating reading of the passive role of the Buddha in the legends of the extinction of the Śākya tribe. Here, Strong argues that the Buddha does nothing to prevent the slaughter of the Śākya tribe because the termination of the Śākya royal lineage gives way to a new family, the Śākya monastic lineage:

It does not take much imagination or insight to see that the Śākya tribe has given way to a new family: the Buddhist *saṅgha*, populated by members who, in some instances, were still called *Śākya*putras or *Śākya*bhikṣus, but who formed a distinctly new kind of group. In this new family, old lines of genetic succession and inheritance from generation to generation are replaced by new lines of monastic ordination and *paramparā* succession. The Pāli *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*’s account of the Buddha on his deathbed refusing to appoint a successor—so popular with early Western Protestant Buddhologists—is in fact belied by narratives of the first Buddhist council, and by the northern Buddhist traditions of the succession of “Masters of the Law” (*dharmācārya*), beginning with Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda (see Strong 1992: 60–67). In East Asia, Mahāyāna monks, especially in the Zen schools, traced and still trace their lineage from master to disciple back through the generations of patriarchs all the way to the Buddha. Upon ordination, all monks receive a new surname, *shi*—short for *shi-jia-mou-ni* (Śākyamuni)—signifying that they are now a “son of the Buddha” (*fo-zi*) (Welch 1967: 279) ... In these examples, we can see how ordination effectively replaces parentage, and how the Buddha, while putting an end to the Śākya royal lineage, at the same time translates it into a Śākya monastic lineage.

In this sense, the Buddha is the master, father, and founder of the genealogy of the monastic community, while the *saṅgha* is the community of the Buddha’s spiritual sons (*śākya*putrīyā)⁵⁹⁵ and inheritors of the Buddha’s religious legacies.

⁵⁹⁵ Freiburger (2000: 221–222) examines the nuances of the word *śākya*putrīyā, and points out that it should precisely be translated as “[renunciants] who were affiliated with [the religion established by] the son of the Śākya tribe (i.e. the Buddha)” (“zum Sakyasohn [d.h. dem Buddha] gehörige [Asketen]”). Cf. also Radich 2007: 366–356 in which monks or nuns refer to themselves with the formulaic phrase “the son [or daughter] of the Blessed One, born of his breast, born of his mouth, born of the Dhamma, created by the Dhamma, an heir in

The legacies of the Buddha that are at stake here, first of all, are both social and economic in nature. Just like any other physical entity, the *saṅgha* demands sufficient material provisions to sustain themselves. In order to secure their sustenance and their social status as a sacred group(s), Buddhists (who are of course members of the *saṅgha*) have devised many exciting stories to demonstrate that they are entitled to inherit not only the Dharma but also material gains from the Buddha.

The most famous story that fulfills this political demand is perhaps Mahāprajāpatī's donation of a golden robe (or robes) to the Buddha. A version of this story is preserved in three parallel texts, namely the Chinese *Qutanmi jing* 瞿曇彌經 (**Gautamīsūtra*, from the Sarvāstivāda **Madhyamāgama*), another Chinese text titled *Fenbie bushi jing* 分別布施經 (**Dakṣiṇāvibhaṅga*, of an unclear affiliation, translated around the late tenth or early eleventh century), and the Pāli *Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅgasutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya*.⁵⁹⁶ In this story, when Mahāprajāpatī approaches the Buddha to offer him a golden robe (or robes, in some versions), the Buddha orders her to give it (or them) to the monastic community. In his explanation, the Buddha refuses the offering because a donation to the *saṅgha* would honor

the Dhamma, not an heir in material things" (MN. iii. 29: *bhagavato putto oraso mukhato jāto dhammaṃ dhammanimmitto dhammadāyādo no āmisadāyādo'ti*). Also cf. Cousins (2003: 12-13) for an analysis of *sakkaputtiya* in different Pāli texts.

⁵⁹⁶ T. 26 (I) 721c24–29: 爾時，摩訶簸遲闍鉢提瞿曇彌持新金縷黃色衣，往詣佛所，稽首佛足，却住一面，白曰：“世尊！此新金縷黃色衣，我自為世尊作，慈愍我故，願垂納受。”世尊告曰：“瞿曇彌！持此衣施比丘眾。施比丘眾已，便供養我，亦供養眾。” (At that time, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī took a new, yellow robe, woven with golden threads, and went to where the Blessed One was. Having saluted his feet with her head, she sat to one side and spoke: “Blessed One! I have made this new, yellow robe, woven with golden threads, for the Blessed One. May the Blessed One accept it out of compassion!” The Blessed One spoke to her: “Gautamī! Give this robe to the monastic community. When you donate it to the monastic community, it is a donation to me and also a donation to the community.”)

The Chinese text *Fenbie bushi jing* 分別布施經 (T. 84 [I] 903b27–c10): 一時，佛在釋種住處迦毗羅城尼拘陀樹園，與苾芻眾俱。爾時，有一苾芻尼，名摩訶波闍波提，持新氎衣，來詣佛所。到佛所已，頂禮佛足，退住一面，即白佛言：“世尊！此新氎衣我自手作，奉上世尊，惟願納受，令我長夜得大利樂。”爾時，佛告摩訶波闍波提：“汝可持此氎衣施諸大眾，所獲勝利，同供養我等無有異。”是時，摩訶波闍波提苾芻尼，重白佛言：“我本發心，唯為世尊故造此衣，願佛納受，令我長夜得大利樂。”如是三復懇勸請，佛亦如是三復答言：“但當平等施諸大眾，所獲勝利與我無異。”

The Pāli text has been edited and translated by Silk (2002: 130): *Atha kho mahāpajāpatī gotamī navaṃ dussayugaṃ ādāya yena bhagavā tenupasaṅkami; upasaṅkamitvā bhagavantaṃ abhivādetvā ekamantaṃ nisīdi. Ekamantaṃ nisinnā kho mahāpajāpatī gotamī bhagavantaṃ etadavoca: “idaṃ me, bhante, navaṃ dussayugaṃ bhagavantaṃ uddissa sāmaṃ kantaṃ sāmaṃ vāyitaṃ. Taṃ me, bhante, bhagavā paṭiggaṇhātu anukampaṃ upādāyā”ti. Evaṃ vutte, bhagavā mahāpajāpatī gotamī etadavoca: “saṃghe, gotamī, dehi. Saṃghe te dinnam ahaṃ ceva pūjito bhaviṣṣāmi saṅgho cā”ti* (MN. iii. 253). Cf. also Tomomatsu 1970: 51–55.

both the Buddha and the *saṅgha*. However, as demonstrated by Silk (2002), this explanation from the Buddha's lips is insufficiently clear and gives rise to more controversy than answers.⁵⁹⁷ Among the many ways of deciphering the Buddha's refusal of the donation, the readings proposed by Tomomatsu (1932, 1970) and further by Silk (2002) shed light on the underlying economic concern:⁵⁹⁸ this story is, first of all, a donation narrative, a discourse on how to distribute donations between the Buddha (or more precisely, images and relics as the embodiment of the Buddha after his *parinirvāṇa*) and the *saṅgha*.⁵⁹⁹ They are both effective merit-making fields and therefore could become competing parties for patronage: if donors

⁵⁹⁷ The ambiguity inherent in the Buddha's refusal of the robe indeed gave rise to various sectarian interpretations, and resulted in controversy over the status and significance of the Buddha in the Buddha–*saṅgha* relationship. Hotly debated questions include, for example: does the Buddha's refusal mean that donations to the Buddha were not as meritorious as those to the *saṅgha*? Does it imply that the *saṅgha* as the field of merit is superior to the Buddha as the field of merit? Alternatively, does this story regard the Buddha as a member of the *saṅgha*, in which case it was not necessary to donate specifically to the Buddha?

Based on how donation stories such as this one were retold in the various sectarian schools, we can identify the different sectarian proposals for the Buddha–*saṅgha* hierarchy, and outline the different relative positions of the Buddha and the *saṅgha* (i.e., whether the Buddha is placed within or outside the *saṅgha*). It is also noteworthy that all discussions of the Buddha–*saṅgha* relation in these donation stories ultimately serve the same purpose: the texts attempt to show how to make donations so that the *saṅgha* can at least share a portion of the offering. In an oversimplified fashion, purely theoretically speaking, the Mahīśāsaka monks placed the Buddha within the *saṅgha*, and therefore believed that a separate donation to the Buddha was not necessary (Silk 2002: 138–139, 145–148). The Dharmaguptaka monks argued that the Buddha was outside and above the *saṅgha*, and that donations to the Buddha could not be enjoyed by the *saṅgha* members; therefore, donations to the *saṅgha* must be explicitly indicated (ibid., 139–141). The Theravāṃsa school presented a more complex image, insisting that the Buddha was superior to the *saṅgha* while also encouraging donations to the *saṅgha* (ibid., 133–137, 150–159). Sarvāstivāda scholastic traditions even developed a way to reconcile multiple views on the Buddha–*saṅgha* relationship: if the *saṅgha* refers to the *sifang seng* 四方僧 (**cāturdiśasaṅgha*, the Buddhist community of the four directions), the *saṅgha* then includes the Buddha as its head, and donations to the *saṅgha* must be distributed between the Buddha and the *saṅgha* members; however, if the *saṅgha* means the *shengwen seng* 聲聞僧 (**śrāvakaśaṅgha*, the community of *śrāvakas*), the Buddha is not included, and this *saṅgha* is inferior to the Buddha (ibid., 161–162; cf. also Tomomatsu 1932: 111).

⁵⁹⁸ Tomomatsu (1932 and 1970) and Silk (2002) shed light on the economic significance of this sort of donation stories and investigates the different sectarian answers to the practical question of how to distribute donations between the monastic communities and the images/*stūpas* of the Buddha. Moreover, they also illuminate some theoretical issues at stake, namely, the status and significance of the Buddha in the Buddha–*saṅgha* relationship/hierarchy.

⁵⁹⁹ It is easy to understand how too many donations to the [images/ *stūpas*] of the Buddha would undermine the *saṅgha*'s continued sustenance, as donations dedicated to the Buddha's images or *stūpas* cannot always be distributed among the *saṅgha*. In schools such as the Dharmaguptaka, the *saṅgha* members were theoretically forbidden to share donations to the Buddha (cf. Tomomatsu 1932: 192–209 and Silk 2002: 139–141). The intention to compete for donations with the Buddha's images/*stūpas* is more clearly expressed in the Mahīśāsaka school, as they strongly advocated not donating to the *stūpas* but to the *saṅgha*. See the related details in Tomomatsu 1932: 114–128 based on accounts from Bhavya's *Nikāyabhedavibhaṅgavyākhyāna*, Vinitadeva's *Samayabhedoparacanacakra* and Vasumitra's *Samayabhedoparacanacakra*.

believed solely in the power of the Buddha, they would choose to venerate the embodiment of the Buddha (i.e., his relics or images) and disregard the *saṅgha*'s authority (just recall how the Lutherans competed with the Roman Catholic Church by claiming a pure faith only in God or Jesus). In this case, fewer donations would go to the pockets of the *saṅgha*, resulting in an economic crisis that would threaten the sustenance and development of the *saṅgha*. In this light, the composition of the story can be understood as a strategy devised by monks to secure their share of donations: the Buddha, with his own lips, instructed people to donate to the *saṅgha*, because donations to the *saṅgha* would honor both the Buddha and the monks (“施比丘眾已，便供養我，亦供養眾” T. 26 [I] 721c28-29; “*saṅghe te dinnam ahan ceva pūjito bhavissāmi saṅgho cā*,” MN. iii. 253), reaping the same merit as donations to the Buddha (“所獲勝利與我無異” T.84 [I] 903c9-10).⁶⁰⁰

In fact, the *saṅgha*'s demand for the status of the privileged recipient of donations proves to be theologically well founded. As the inheritor of the Dharma (Pāli *dhammāyāda*), the monastic community becomes the agent that takes charge of the dissemination and development of the Buddhist Dharma. Just as Radich argues in his elaborate and insightful discussion of the embodiment of buddhahood, the *saṅgha* is not only an inheritor but also a manifestation of Śākyamuni,⁶⁰¹ constituting “the embodiment of the Buddha after his passing as a son continues the identity of his father” (2007: 360). Consecrated by its status as the successor of the Buddha, the *saṅgha* transcends its physical experience and signifies almost the same sacredness as the “relics” of the Buddha. If people worship the Buddha's *stūpa* or image to convey their faith in the Buddha, the *saṅgha* can fulfill exactly the same purpose.⁶⁰² It is in this transcendental sense that the *saṅgha* is

⁶⁰⁰ The same economical concern is observed by Schopen (1994: 59) in his study of how the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya regulates the division of donations made to Śāriputra's *stūpa*: while the initiatory offerings [those given when the construction is just finished] are to be given to the image/*stūpa* itself and a small part is put aside for the future reparation for the *stūpa*, the large remainder is to be divided by monks.

⁶⁰¹ Radich 2007: 341: “I will argue below, in fact, in examining the canonical parallels for the notion of the *saṅgha* as the ‘heirs’ and ‘offspring of the mouth’ of the Tathāgata, that if anything, such passages might well be read as tending towards a reading whereon the *saṅgha* itself was the (or a) true ‘body’ of the Buddha after his passing, as much as or more than that his true body is somehow to be found in the teachings or some abstruse metaphysical category.”

⁶⁰² Radich (2007: 360) argues that the *saṅgha* is an embodiment of the Buddha's Dharma body, just the same as the Buddha's relics: “Several important functions of the living Buddha are continued by the *saṅgha*, some of which overlap with relics (serving as recipients of offerings and veneration, and thereby acting as a significant ‘field of merit’; embodying certain virtues and ideals, like *śīla* etc.); and some of which do not overlap so often (in particular, preserving and preaching the Dharma). If it is possible to argue that relics are an embodiment of the Buddha on these grounds, then the argument must apply in the same degree to the *saṅgha*.”

positioned alongside the buddha and the Dharma as one of the Three Jewels, the ideal merit-making fields.

There are many other donation stories that should be understood in this same light. In the versions of the story of the donation of the Bamboo Grove (*Venuvana*), although the various understandings of the relationship between the Buddha and the *saṅgha* are different, one plot element is consistent: the Buddha always ensured that the *saṅgha* had the right to make use of the grove. To be specific, in the Mahīśāsaka version,⁶⁰³ we read that the Buddha instructed the benefactor Bimbisāra to donate the grove directly to the *saṅgha*, not to himself, because the Buddha was a member of the monastic community, and a donation to the *saṅgha* would simultaneously honor the Buddha.⁶⁰⁴ In comparison, the same donation, in the Dharmaguptaka versions,⁶⁰⁵ is characterized as a gift to both the Buddha and the *saṅgha*, since this school believed that the Buddha was outside and above the *saṅgha*, and donations given specifically to the Buddha would become a *stūpa* and therefore could not be used by monastic members.⁶⁰⁶ Despite the remarkable theoretical disagreement between the Mahīśāsakas and Dharmaguptakas in terms of the Buddha-*saṅgha* relationship, the same concern is conveyed to guarantee the *saṅgha*'s privilege as the beneficiary of the donation. Further examples include the donation of the Jeta Grove by the householder Anāthapiṇḍika,⁶⁰⁷ Ambapālī's offering of the Mango Grove,⁶⁰⁸ the food offering of Roja,⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰³ T. 1421 (II) 110a22–b4. A second Mahīśāsaka version is found in T. 190 (II) 860 c3–19. However, in this version, King Bimbisāra actually gives the grove to the Buddha, which, at first glance, seems to go against the Mahīśāsaka standpoint. Nevertheless, at the end of the story, the Buddha permits the other monks to take possession of the grove, which accords perfectly with the Mahīśāsaka viewpoint: if the Buddha, a member of the *saṅgha*, can accept groves, the other members, of course, also have the right to accept groves: [時頻頭王]: “我今捨施諸佛世尊招提僧等。布施以後，唯願世尊納取受用，哀愍我故。”爾時，世尊即便受取 ... (世尊) 告諸比丘言：“汝諸比丘！從今已後，許諸比丘自畜園林。” (King Bimbisāra): “Now, I donate it to buddhas, blessed ones, and the universal community in an equal way (Silk 2002: 147). After donation, may the Blessed One accept and use it out of compassion for me.” At that time, the Buddha accepted it ... (The Blessed One) spoke to the monks: “Monks, from now on, you are allowed to take possession of groves.”

⁶⁰⁴ Silk 2002: 138–139.

⁶⁰⁵ T. 190 (III) 861b12–c2; T. 1428 (XXII) 798b10–28.

⁶⁰⁶ See also Tomomatsu 1932: 192–209 and Silk 2002: 139–141. A Theravaṃsa version of this donation story can be found in Vin. i. 38 (*yaṃ nūnāhaṃ veḷuvanaṃ uyyānaṃ buddhapamukhassa bhikkhusamghassa dadeyyan ti*. “What if I donate the Bamboo Grove to the monastic community with the Buddha at its head?”)

⁶⁰⁷ Vin. ii. 163 = Eng. Horner 1938-1952: V. 201–230; T. 1421 (XXII) 166c10–167a27; T. 1451 (XXIV) 209b7–8, 218b12–14, 230c1–3, 296c8; T. 1452 (XXIV) 449c12–14; T. 1458 (XXIV) 544b5–7; ‘*Dul ba phran tshes kyi gzhi*, D.6, ‘*dul ba, tha*, 8b1–2, 9a6–7, 33b6–7, 65b4, 180a5–6, 191b4, etc.; Gnoli 1977-1978: I. 170.

⁶⁰⁸ DN. ii. 98; T.1 (I) 14b12–21; T. 1421 (XXII) 136a7–15; T.1428 (XXII) 855c3–856c12.

and so forth. In all of these cases, the Buddha always instructs the benefactors to treat the *saṅgha* as the primary recipient of the donations.⁶¹⁰

Like a tree that has grown in a field cultivated by the Buddha, the monastic community has branched out into different regions and grown into various lineages of religious groups. Calling themselves *śākyaputrīyā*, the members of the monastic community regard themselves as the heirs of the Buddha, the spiritual sons of their father,⁶¹¹ and take the responsibility of transmitting the spiritual and material legacies of the Buddha generation after generation. However, the *saṅgha*'s role as the spiritual heir to the Buddha's authority inevitably competes with the other forms of the Buddha's embodiment in the physical world. The cult of the Buddha's images and relics no doubt assumes a significant role in representing the presence of the Buddha in the religious cosmos of Buddhist followers, and is therefore a tough competitor to the *saṅgha*, especially with respect to the distribution of donations. Just like the story of Mahākāśyapa's acquisition of the Buddha's robe, the *saṅgha* composed stories to protect its authority as the heir to the Buddha's legacies, and argued for its eligibility to obtain material necessities on behalf of the Buddha. The analysis of the *saṅgha*-Buddha interaction in these donation stories enables us to better assess Buddhism in its religious, social and economic dimensions.

5.4 Summary

Following the investigation of the dynamic and interactions between the Buddha's authority and the power of his disciples—represented by his foremost disciple Śāriputra and the dangerous schismatic Devadatta—in the third and fourth chapters, this final chapter focuses on how the Buddha's authority was passed down after his *parinirvāṇa*. After all, long lives the Dharma, but mankind lives a short life. The transmission of Buddhism has to rely on the establishment of diverse Buddhist lineages spread across vast swaths of space and time. In order to better survive fierce competitions (especially competitions within various Buddhist groups) over the course of history, Buddhist lineages have to devise ways to demonstrate their legitimacy, claiming that they are authentic groups who inherit the Buddha's religious

⁶⁰⁹ Vin. i. 248–249.

⁶¹⁰ In this regard, the *Milindapañha* argues that the *saṅgha* is dependent on the Buddha for livelihood (*tathāgatabhaddiko tathāgatupajīvī*). Cf. Silk 2002: 156.

⁶¹¹ In fact, the paternal trope was quite popular among Buddhist texts. For a sophisticated discussion of the patriarchal discourses in the early Mahāyāna *sūtras*, see Cole 2005: 41–45.

legacies. In this process, many ways of inheriting the Buddha's authority have been established among the Buddhist traditions.

We have stories in which Śākyamuni openly declares that he will not transfer his leadership even to his eminent disciples Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana. However, on the other hand, there are many Buddhist texts that frequently suggest Śāriputra as the legitimate heir to Śākyamuni. In the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* corpus, a “non-future-patriarch” proposition is advanced. Śākyamuni denies his leadership within the *saṅgha* and instructs his disciples to rely on themselves and the Dharma, negating the necessity to appoint a successor. The denial of the Buddha's authority in this remarkable scene, namely, on the deathbed of the Buddha, can be interpreted as a way to encourage and prepare his followers to be self-reliant after their master departs from the physical world.

However, despite the significant influence exerted by the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, Buddhists continue to contrive stories to authorize their lineages of patriarchs. Most Buddhist texts depict Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda as two competing candidates. Among the stories that discuss each disciple's qualifications as heir to the Buddha's authority, the dominant belief is that Mahākāśyapa outdoes Ānanda and assumes leadership of the monastic community after the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*. Subtly embedded in the struggle between Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda, stories such as Mahākāśyapa's acquisition of the Buddha's monastic robe or sharing half of the Buddha's seat establish Mahākāśyapa's status as his Dharma heir while painting Ānanda as a young boy or a woman sympathizer. The Buddha's monastic robe and his seat are imbued with the Buddha's extraordinary power and authority, and their transmission symbolically indicates the direction toward which the Buddha's authority is passed on. Moreover, the funeral ceremony of the Buddha and the first council, both of which contain many signs of rivalry between Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda, also serve as the arenas of power in which Mahākāśyapa overwhelms Ānanda. At first, Ānanda chairs the funeral ceremony of the Buddha, until the arrival of Mahākāśyapa; however, the magical manifestation of the Buddha's body then transfers this authority to the hands of Mahākāśyapa. Ānanda is also criticized for allowing women to soil the feet of the Buddha, an episode that is incorporated into the “trial of Ānanda” in the first council convoked by Mahākāśyapa. In all these episodes, Ānanda submits himself to the authority of Mahākāśyapa and recognizes the authority of Mahākāśyapa as the legitimate patriarch. We

see how Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda's roles in passing down Buddhist authority influence the literal representation of their images in Buddhist texts.

The third way of passing down the Buddha's authority as discussed in my dissertation is the *saṅgha* as the collective heir of the Dharma. As the Buddha's spiritual sons, the *saṅgha* takes the responsibility of spreading and transmitting the Buddha's Dharma. Consecrated by its status as the Buddha's heir, the *saṅgha* is a manifestation of the Dharma body of the Buddha and is listed as one of the Three Jewels, the most productive field of merit. However, despite its theological sacrality, the *saṅgha* still exists in the physical world, and material inheritance is crucially essential for its development. Therefore, diverse donation stories have been composed to secure the *saṅgha*'s share of material donations. Such stories include Mahāprajāpati's gift of the golden robe(s) and the donation of many groves. Radical schools such as the Mahīśāsaka even claimed to receive all donations, without sharing a portion with [the embodiment of] the Buddha, since the Buddha is included within the *saṅgha*. As already noted by previous scholars, such as Tomomatsu and Silk, underlying these different proposals for distributing donations are the various understandings of the significance of the Buddha, the *saṅgha* and their relationship.